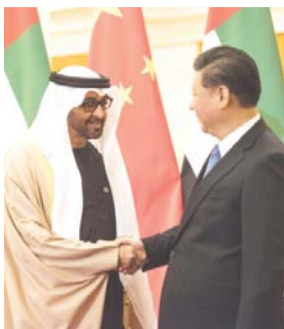


Jarrah: DNA tests required to get Kuwaiti passports



UAE, China set up \$10bn joint strategic investment fund



Arab investors pour in billions to make Bosnia a holiday hit



Barca draw Arsenal in Champions League last 16



150 FILS
NO: 16728
40 PAGES

SAUDI COMMANDER, UAE OFFICER KILLED IN YEMEN

RIYADH MOBILIZES COUNTER-INSURGENCY UNITS ON BORDER



Min 09°
Max 17°
High Tide
00:59 & 15:20
Low Tide
08:40 & 20:35



SIRWA, Yemen: A Yemeni tribesman from the Popular Resistance Committees, supporting forces loyal to Yemen's Saudi-backed President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, fires a machine gun in this area west of the city of Marib yesterday. — AFP

RIYADH: A top Saudi commander and an Emirati officer were killed in Yemen yesterday during Arab coalition operations against Iran-backed rebels, the Riyadh-led alliance said. Saudi Colonel Abdullah Al-Sahyan and Emirati officer Sultan Al-Kitbi were killed at dawn yesterday "while they were carrying out their duties in supervising operations to liberate Taez" province in Yemen's southwest, the official SPA news agency said.

A Yemeni officer told AFP that both officers were killed when rebels fired a rocket at a coastal road in the strategic province, which overlooks the Bab Al-Mandab Strait between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The rebels claimed in a statement on their sabanews.net website that they fired a Tochka missile against "a command center run by the enemy" in the Bab Al-Mandab area. The rebels claimed the attack caused "many losses in lives and military equipment," including Apache helicopters, among the Saudi-led coalition ranks. AFP could not immediately confirm these claims from other sources.

Meanwhile, SPA said Saudi Arabia has mobilized counter-insurgency units on its border with Yemen. The decision to activate the four interior ministry regiments "specializing in guerrilla warfare" comes on the eve of a possible ceasefire and United Nations-brokered peace talks in Switzerland today. "This is to support the military forces in combat when the situation demands that," SPA said, suggesting that the units would be a type of paramilitary force. "They were also given powers of security forces in seizing, arresting, searching, chasing and shooting according to the legal procedures," it said.

Continued on Page 13

from the editor's desk

DON'T RUSH TO JUDGE



By Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan

myopinion@kuwaittimes.net

Two MPs have filed to grill Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi over a variety of allegations. While filing interpellation motions is the right of law-makers, one has to look at the bigger picture, as there is a tendency to look at a person's flaws and ignore his achievements. Since assuming office, Dr Obaidi has initiated plenty of new services and has overseen the opening and refurbishment of many health facilities. He has also moved to fight corruption, like referring the Washington health office to the public prosecution.

Dr Obaidi's other achievements include working to prevent the deadly Ebola virus from entering Kuwait, facilitating health services for the elderly, developing health insurance in the country and leading the regional office of WHO. In fact, the choice of Kuwait as an integral member in the executive office of WHO that sets international health legislations, among 34 countries, is a great feather in Dr Obaidi's cap. The minister also exerted efforts to approve the pensioners' insurance law and the psychiatric board.

The new health facilities and wards opened under Dr Obaidi's watch include the new Razi Hospital and many operation theaters and wards in Amiri, Sabah, Infectious Diseases, Farwaniya, Adan, Jahra and Ibn Sina hospitals. He also oversaw the openings of a virus laboratory, the Yaqoub Behbehani bone marrow transplant center and a dermatology center in Abdullah Al-Salem. Many polyclinics have opened in various areas of Kuwait, including the Omariya and Fintas polyclinics.

While this is not an exhaustive list, the positives completely outweigh the negatives. To err is human, and those responsible have to be taken to account, but one has to acknowledge that the health ministry has seen a lot of developments under Dr Obaidi. I believe things have to be put into perspective before rushing to judge the minister's work and placing the blame about everything that is wrong in the health ministry solely on his doorstep. Give the man a chance to perform.

EX-GITMO INMATE WANTS 'TRUTH' ON UK RENDITION ROLE

LONDON: A British resident held in Guantanamo for more than 13 years has called for transparency over Britain's role in the US rendition program but has ruled out seeking criminal prosecution for British officials. "I just want people to tell the truth, like I'm doing now," 46-year-old Shaker Aamer told the BBC yesterday in his first round of interviews since being released from the US military prison in Cuba in October.



Shaker Aamer

Aamer claims that a British official was present while he was beaten by US interrogators at Bagram air base in Afghanistan following his arrest in 2002 and before his transfer to Guantanamo Bay. Aamer, who was arrested on suspicion of being an Al-Qaeda recruiter, claims he was working as a volunteer for a charity at the time. Asked by ITV whether a public inquiry was warranted, he said: "Indeed, indeed definitely. Because for you to understand what happened, to know the truth, you have to enquire, you have to ask questions."

A public inquiry is a type of official review under English law that can lead to recommendations on government policy but is not a criminal investigation. Speaking to the BBC, the Saudi national added: "I do not want to prosecute anybody... I don't believe that the court will solve this problem."

Continued on Page 13

SUPERMARKETS SELL SLAVE-PEELED SHRIMP

PAGE 14

DEAD FORGOTTEN AT NEW DELHI MORGUES

PAGE 28

TWO MPs FILE TO GRILL HEALTH MINISTER

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MPs Hamdan Al-Azemi and Rakan Al-Nasef yesterday filed a request to grill Health Minister Ali Al-Obaidi over a variety of alleged violations and exploitation of Indian nurses recruited for the ministry. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said the grilling was supposed to be placed on the agenda of the Dec 29/30 sessions, but there is a possibility that the two sessions may be held next week instead. Accordingly, the grilling will be taken up for discussion on Dec 23 and the minister will have the right to demand a two-week postponement.

The grilling is based on five major issues which include medical errors, purchasing drugs and equipment at highly-inflated prices, "playing" with contracts and squandering public funds, administrative and financial corruption and exploiting the ministerial post.

The grilling charged the minister of failing to take any action towards reports that recruitment companies for the ministry were asking Indian nurses to pay as much as KD 7,000 each to be selected. It said that although the reports were published by the Indian press and raised by the Indian government, the minis-

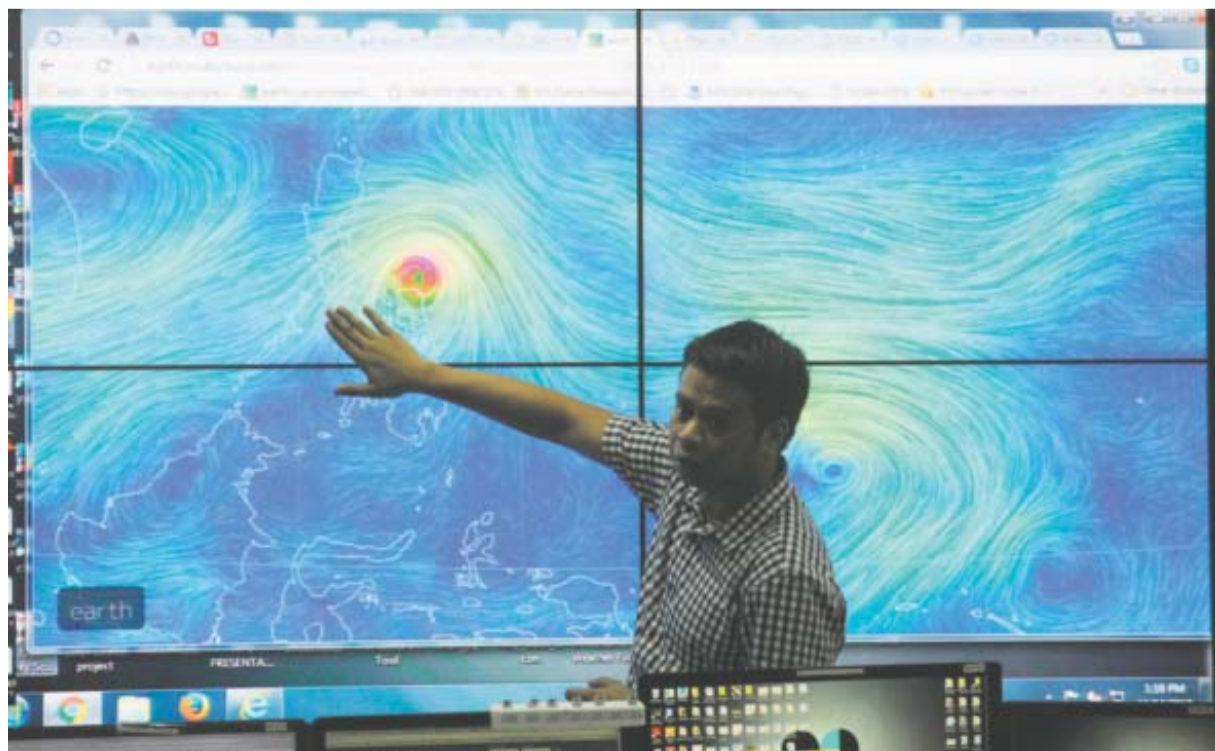
ter made no move to investigate the allegations or take any action, which negatively impacted Kuwait's image abroad.

The two MPs said they sent a question to the minister on the issue but he denied that such practices existed, saying that ministry officials met with Indian embassy representatives over the issue. The two lawmakers said that failure to take any action by the health ministry forced the Indian government to intervene and limit the recruitment of nurses to just three government companies to prevent exploitation. There are thousands of Asian nurses, mainly Indians, working at public hospitals and medical centers in Kuwait, who have repeatedly complained of problems with recruitment companies.

The grilling alleges that the ministry has awarded a number of contracts to a private company that was established by the minister himself, although he left the company days after being appointed as minister. The grilling also claims that the ministry ordered payments to a US medical insurance company despite the expiry of contract, violations and not receiving the approval of supervisory bodies in Kuwait.

Continued on Page 13

700,000 FLEE PHILIPPINES TYPHOON



MANILA: Meteorologists from the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) monitor and plot the direction of powerful Typhoon Melor at their headquarters in suburban Manila yesterday. — AFP (See Page 7)

News

in brief

Dec 24 public holiday for Prophet's birthday

KUWAIT: Thursday, Dec 24, will be a public holiday on the occasion of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) birthday, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) announced yesterday. The CSC added in a statement that all government offices and institutions would suspend work on this day. Bodies with work of special nature will decide their own holiday accordingly, taking public interest into account. Work will resume on Sunday, Dec 27.

French teacher 'invented' story about Islamist attack

PARIS: A report from a French schoolteacher that he had been assaulted by a self-styled Islamist militant yesterday, causing classes to be cancelled and an anti-terrorism investigation, turned out to be "invented", investigators said. "The teacher" is being interviewed with a view to establishing the reasons for this invented story," said an official from the Paris prosecutor's office. Earlier yesterday, other French officials told how the teacher had reported that a hooded man claiming a link to Islamic State had assaulted him with a knife-like weapon as he prepared for classes in a school in Saint-Denis, on the northern fringes of Paris. The teacher was taken to hospital after the alleged attack, which triggered an investigation by anti-terrorism officials.

41 killed in Argentina police bus accident

BUENOS AIRES: At least 41 police officers died yesterday and several more were injured when their bus drove off a bridge in northern Argentina, plunging into a dry riverbed, officials said. Officials believe a tyre blew out and caused the bus to veer off the bridge before dawn, falling some 15 m with 60 border police aboard, said the emergency chief for the province of Salta, Francisco Marinero. Ten police officers were hospitalized, four of them in serious condition, he told a local radio station. The bus was part of a caravan of three carrying police. Mayor Gustavo Solis of Rosario de la Frontera said the road where the accident occurred is known to be in poor condition. "Those of us who know the area try to avoid driving at night," he said. The accident occurred in a mountainous area with dense forests.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sees off Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev at the airport yesterday. —Amiri Diwan photos



Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah are pictured inside the Kyrgyz embassy in South Surra shortly after it was officially inaugurated yesterday.

KYRGYZ PRESIDENT WRAPS UP 3-DAY VISIT TO KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev yesterday wrapped up a three-day official visit to the country during which he held formal talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He was seen off at the airport by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanim, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Minister Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Al-Saleh, senior State officials, ranking chiefs of the Army, the Police and the National Guards.

Investment opportunities

On Sunday, Atambayev invited Kuwaiti investors to visit his country to explore the major investment opportunities there. Addressing the first meeting of the Kuwaiti-Kyrgyz investment forum, Atambayev said that his country has promising economic resources in several domains like mineral wealth, agriculture, tourism, transport and

electricity. He added that several opportunities are provided to all foreign investors seeking to benefit from the country's continued economic development. Russia and China have the largest investments in Kyrgyzstan, he said, urging all Arab countries, mainly Kuwait, to benefit from Kyrgyzstan's available opportunities and its developed investment atmosphere. He noted that Kyrgyzstan could multiply the size of foreign investments within four years, thanks to the stability of trade atmosphere and keenness of government on meeting the needs of foreign investors.

Kyrgyzstan has tremendous mineral resources, mainly gold, silver and coal, and there are investments worth \$100 million in one mine over the last few years, he made clear. He said the country's investment laws guarantee the protection of foreign investors and help businessmen start their projects without facing hindrances or problems. Atambayev looks forward to promoting economic relations with the Arab countries, mainly the State of Kuwait. He said that the political reforms, adoption of the parliamentary system, and the development of the country's institutions have contributed largely to changing Kyrgyzstan's economic map compared with situation in the country 25 years ago. As for agriculture, Atambayev revealed that his country produces many kinds of fruit and vegetables, thanks to rivers and natural water sources which generate electricity.

Trade exchange

Meanwhile, Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Abdulwahab Al-Wazan said that the Kuwait's business people welcome Atambayev's visit and desire to explore investment and commercial opportunities there. The size of trade exchange between the two countries stands at \$500,000 annually, which is below expectations, he said, adding there is still a chance to increase this figure. There are new horizons of investment, commercial and tourist cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, he said, noting hopes are pinned on this visit to promote collaboration in all fields. Wazzan stressed keenness of the governments on bolstering commercial and economic relations, indicating that the Kuwaiti investors have a great deal of experience in terms of investment in friendly countries.

During the forum, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic on means of boosting bilateral cooperation, and promoting commercial and economic relations. Earlier on Sunday, an agreement was signed to avoid double taxation and evasion of income and capital taxes, and another one was inked for encouragement and mutual protection of investments, and a third one for economic and technical cooperation. —KUNA

KUWAIT, TUNISIA SIGN 8 DEALS ON COOPERATION

KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said the eight documents signed with Tunisia on Sunday will open new horizons for cooperation various fields of vital importance.

Speaking at a joint press conference with Tunisian Foreign Minister Taieb Baccouche at the conclusion of the third session of the Joint Higher Commission, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said the new documents took to 50 the total number of deals with Tunisia since the establishment of the diplomatic ties 53 years ago. "Over the last five decades the two sisterly countries maintained high-level visit exchanges which contributed to the strengthening of the bilateral ties in all fields," he pointed out.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled welcomed Baccouche who pays his first visit to Kuwait as foreign minister, saying this visit will add momentum to the special ties between the two countries. He noted that he and the Tunisian minister had the honor earlier in the day of meeting His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who instructed doubling the efforts to realize the aspirations of the peoples of both countries.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled added that he held bilateral in-depth talks with Baccouche on the mechanisms of the partnership in all domains. "The talks showed that our viewpoints are identical on almost all issues including the security ones. We renewed denunciation of the acts of terrorisms that hit many sisterly and friendly countries, including Tunisia," he went on.

He reaffirmed Kuwait's support to Tunisia in all measures it might deem necessary for combating terrorism, drying out the sources of funding for terrorism, maintaining security and stability, and promoting democracy and the rule of law.

He added that the GCC member countries are committed to cooperation with the international community in the fight against terrorism and backed up the recent UN Security Council resolution imposing sanctions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter on sponsors and financiers of terrorism.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled reaffirmed Kuwait's support to the efforts aiming to reach a political settlement to the Syrian crisis. "We are interested in following up the outcomes of the Vienna I and Vienna II conferences and the plans for forming a transitional government in Syria in early 2016, write a new constitution and prepare for new elections within 18

months," he noted. He voiced hope that the meeting, suggested by US Secretary of State John Kerry, in New York next month will help push for a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

Democratic transition

Meanwhile, Baccouche said the successful democratic transition in his country set an example for other Arab Spring countries to follow. "The long struggle of the Tunisian civil society for democracy made the country's democratic experiment unique one that heralds a real spring in countries suffering from dictatorial regimes such as Syria and Libya," he stated.

In the meantime, he noted that Tunisia does not seek to export its experiment to any country since its policy is based on non-interference in the domestic affairs of others. "The emergency of democratic Tunisia was by no means easy; it took long years of struggle particularly in the transitional period," he said, lauding the role of the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet in this regard.

The Nobel laureate Quartet is a coalition of civil society groups that came together in the summer of 2013; it is made up of the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT), the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH) and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers. Regarding the conflict in neighboring Libya, Baccouche said his government made its utmost to bring the views of the belligerent parties closer to each other.

On the third session of Kuwaiti-Tunisian Joint Higher Commission, he welcomed the results of the gathering, saying the just-signed eight documents signal the exemplary relationship between the two countries. Since the commission failed to meet over the last five years, both sides reaffirmed the need to double efforts to expand cooperation in all fields and realize the aspirations of both peoples, he added.

Development projects

During the joint higher commission, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said that "Kuwait has contributed to the launching of 33 development projects in Tunisia in various sectors," noting that Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) oversaw the implementation of these projects. He appreciated the role of the 3,500-strong Tunisian community in the development of Kuwait which materializes the cordial people-to-people relationship and the state-to-state partnership. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah (right) speaks during a joint press conference with Tunisian Foreign Minister Taieb Baccouche on Sunday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

AMIR CONGRATULATES SAUDI KING ON MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS' SUCCESS

KUWAITI FEMINISTS LAUD WOMEN'S ELECTION

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Sunday a congratulatory cable to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on the success of the municipal elections. In the cable, His Highness the Amir praised Saudi women's participation as candidates and voters in this elections, which embodied Saudi women's effective role in the Kingdom's development.

His Highness the Amir also prayed to Allah Almighty to bless King Salman with long-lasting health and wellness, and the Kingdom and Saudi people with further development and prosperity. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Saudi King.

In the meantime, Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union President and Speaker of Kuwait's National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem hailed the notable performance of Saudi women in their first participation, as candidates and voters, in the Kingdom's third municipal elections.

"The impressive results attained by the Saudi women were a source of joy for us and for all of the analysts who relied on these elections as a historic opportunity for the Saudi women to prove their selves, speak out, and contribute to the development of their country alongside the Saudi men," Al-Ghanem said in cable he sent to Chairman of Saudi Shura Council Dr Abdullah Al-Sheikh. Ghanem also

commended Saudi King's decision of giving the Saudi women the right of participation in the Kingdom's municipal elections as both candidate and voter, describing the decision as historic.

Drastic change

Meanwhile, a number of Kuwaiti female activists lauded the election of women in municipal councils in Saudi Arabia for the first time after a ban on them taking part in elections was lifted. In separate statements to KUNA yesterday, Kuwaiti feminists agreed that winning seats in municipal councils' elections is considered a 'gain' and 'drastic change' of the general outlook to women in Saudi Arabia.

President of the Historical Society of Kuwait Sheikha Maymouna Al-Khalifa Al-Athbi Al-Sabah expressed her congratulation to Saudi women on this landmark achievement, hoping that Kuwaiti women would, eventually, win their quota in the parliaments. Sheikha Maymouna, who is also president of citizenship and development association, said Saudi women are highly educated; hence, they are worthy of their participation in the democratic process of their country.

She gave credit to the late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz for allowing women to engage in the Shura Council, and lauding King Salman bin Abdulaziz for completing this march of giving women their rights by providing a quota for real participation in the councils.

Saudi women are qualified for effective partici-

pation in elections; this achievement will "put women in the right path" to help, side by side with their fellow men, in the country's development, Secretary of Kuwait Women Cultural Social Society Lulua Al-Mulla voiced out on Saudi women's capabilities as decision-makers.

Seham Al-Furaih, a professor of Arabic Literature at Kuwait University, meanwhile, said that Saudi women have already excelled in the fields of medicine and science and academics where they won many international prizes; hence, it is only natural to be part and parcel of the country's advancement by being elected in municipal councils.

A total of 979 women registered as candidates, alongside 6,917 men, to win 2,106 seats at municipal councils across Saudi Arabia is a number that should not be taken 'lightly' especially since it is their first female participation in a centuries dominate-male terrain, Furaih stressed.

Unprecedented participation

This strong unprecedented participation indicates that Saudi women are "successful," social and political advocate Nabilah Al-Anjari pointed out. Saudi women will have bigger opportunities now to engage in many social activities in their country, she added. The two previous rounds of voting for the municipal councils, in 2005 and 2011, were open to men only. Number of municipal councils across the country are 284 with a total of 3, 159 members, including 2,016 elected ones. — KUNA

TURKISH AMBASSADOR STRESSES KEENNESS ON IRAQ'S SECURITY

FM TO ATTEND KUWAIT-QATAR COMMITTEE MEETING NEXT MONTH

KUWAIT: Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Murad Tameer stressed late Sunday his country's keenness on Iraq's security and its territorial integrity as well as promoting relations with Baghdad. The ambassador made the statement to reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony held by the Qatari embassy here marking Qatar National Day.

Turkish forces have been in northern Iraq since a year and half, and the Iraqi government knows this fact, he said, noting that the Turkish army increased its forces there to deal with attacks launched by the Islamic State (IS).

Concerning Iraq's call for withdrawing the Turkish forces from its territories, he said this matter will be discussed between the two sides, noting Turkey's Prime Minister will visit Baghdad to discuss the issue with the Iraqi leadership.

He affirmed that the two countries share the same view concerning combating terrorist groups, especially IS, referring that the international law gives the right to countries to defend their territories if there is a threat. Iraq submitted on Saturday an official complaint to the UN Security Council against Turkey under the pretext that Ankara violated the UN charter when it sent forces in

northern Iraq on December 4.

Joint committee

Meanwhile, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah announced that he will travel to Doha to attend the Kuwaiti-Qatari joint higher committee meeting next month to promote bilateral relations in all fields.

During the ceremony, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled stressed in a statement to reporters keenness on opening new horizons of cooperation in different fields between the two countries. He expressed his joy that Qatar achieved progress, prosperity, achievements and stability. The minister extolled the depth and solidness of the Kuwaiti-Qatari relations supported by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

In the meantime, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah in a similar statement said: "We look forward to attending the meeting next month in order to give the bilateral relations a strong push". Holding meetings with sisterly and friendly countries lead to several ideas and views aiming to bolster bilateral relations, he added. —KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, ambassadors of GCC states and other officials cut the ceremony's cake.



His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah is pictured with officials and guests in attendance.

— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



LAWMAKER SUGGESTS REPLACING EXPAT WORKERS WITH BEDOONS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: MP Jamal Al-Omar called for establishing a special center to train stateless people with university degrees and those who had finished high school in various fields needed for local labor market so that they could gradually substitute expatriates. Omar added that bedoons could be utilized as automobile mechanics, carpenters, constructions laborers, factory technicians, clerks, receptionists and farmers.

Subaih's grilling

Responding to an inquiry filed by MP Mohammed Al-Huwailah concerning disabled citizens, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih said the delay in building the new disabled authority's headquarters was due to some Municipal Council's procedures and adjusting the project's blueprints to increase the total area. Meanwhile, MP Majed Moussa

announced supporting his colleague Mohammed Tana Al-Enezi's grilling motion against Subaih, noting that the latter had allowed the spread of rumors and defamed some MPs in a recent interview with Al-Majles TV channel. "Undocumented accusations are unacceptable when made by a senior official," he underlined urging the minister to name visa traffickers and prove that some MPs were involved as she claimed.

Players suspended

Jahra Sports Club decided punishing footballers who assaulted the referees during a recent match between Jahra and Khaitan in His Highness the Crown Prince's Cup. The penalties include suspending players Ibrahim Al-Otaibi and Soud Othman for two seasons, Humoud Melfi for one season and Abdul Rahman Al-Sarbal for four matches. The board of directors also accepted the resignation of coach Yousef Kareem and Abdul Aziz Madloul.

FINANCE MINISTER SUBMITS HIS FINANCIAL DISCLOSER

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Acting Oil Minister Anas Al-Saleh submitted his financial discloser to the Public Authority for Combating Corruption (PACC), Finance Ministry Spokesperson Khaled Al-Rawaye said yesterday.

Rawaye, who is also the Finance Minister's advisor, told the press that this submission came in line with the government's commitment to transparently abid-

ing by laws and regulations that would, ultimately, prevent abuse of public positions for personal gains.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad was the first to submit his financial discloser, becoming a role model for fellow members in the government, as well as, stressing the importance of following all measures that would lead to combating all kinds of corruption in the country. — KUNA

SHEIKH MOHAMMAD AL-YOUSUF NEW BORDER SECURITY CHIEF

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah issued a ministerial decree appointing Major General Sheikh Mohammad Youssef Saud Al-Sabah as Assistant Undersecretary for Land Borders Security Affairs. As per the decree, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Youssef was also asked to present his financial worth to the Public Anticorruption Authority within two months.



Major General Sheikh Mohammad Youssef Al-Sabah

for swindling. A Jordanian national had told Salmiya police that she was swindled by a person only known to her as 'Saad', who told her he is Kuwaiti and took KD 400 to hire a lawyer for her imprisoned sister. Detectives were able to identify the suspect and found he is Iraqi. He confessed to committing the theft and was sent to concerned authorities. Meanwhile, Hawally detectives arrested a Syrian man for beating an Egyptian naional; who complained at Nugra police station. In another case, an Egyptian man was arrested after being accused of stealing money resulting from the sale of company products.

GOVT PERFORMANCE, PRESS LAW TOP SESSION'S AGENDA

KUWAIT: The National Assembly holds a regular session today with an agenda topped by a report by the parliamentary priorities committee on its follow-up on the Government performance, during the last legislative term, in addition to laws on economic and social planning and regulating trade agencies.

The Parliament is scheduled to discuss the third report by the parliamentary commission of educational and cultural affairs, amending some provisions of law number 3/1961 regarding publications and press law.

The committee's agenda includes official letters received from the Government,

reports filed by the Ministry of Electricity and Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) on power outages in different parts of the country on February 11, 2015.

It also includes an official letter from the finance minister tackling income diversification, an official letter from the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, accompanied by a note on "violations by the President and members of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Transparency Society." The lawmakers will also address a request submitted by some MPs on the issue of the 180 employees of Kuwait Airways to clarify the government's stand regarding this problem. — KUNA

DECISIVE STORM CRITIC'S CASE ADJOURNED

By Meshaal-Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The criminal court yesterday heard a case filed by state security against lawyer Khaled Al-Shatti and a university professor for criticizing the 'Decisive Storm' operation in Yemen. The hearing was

adjourned and postponed to Jan 11, 2016. Notably, both suspects were referred to prosecution over posting tweets criticizing the operation. The criminal court also heard a case filed against activist Rania Al-Saad, media figure Saleh Al-Saeed and a blogger for slandering Saudi Arabia.



KUWAIT: The Kuwait National Guard's (KNG) precautionary inspection unit recently started scanning and searching all sites guarded by KNG officers to enhance security levels, said the department's director Major General Faleh Shoja'a, noting that modern equipment and technology would be used in detecting and disposing of explosives.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah chair the cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

PUBLIC URGED TO ATTEND JABER STADIUM FESTIVAL

CABINET OKS ANTICORRUPTION BILL

KUWAIT: The cabinet has invited citizens and expatriates to participate in a grand festival slated on Friday for the opening of the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium. This came during a cabinet meeting held yesterday at the Amiri Airport under chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The cabinet highly commended the great and sincere efforts exerted mainly by the organizing committee and the Ministry of Interior for the inauguration of this giant sports edifice, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said in a press statement following the meeting. The festival will be opened under the aegis of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, he added.

Ant-corruption

Meanwhile, the cabinet has approved a draft law on the fight against corruption, and has sent it to His Highness the Amir ahead of referral to the National Assembly, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah said. Earlier in the day, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said that the government would pres-

ent soon an anti-corruption draft law to the assembly.

Sincere efforts

During its meeting, the cabinet highly appreciated the sincere efforts by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and fellow leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) during the recent 36th GCC summit, voicing satisfaction with the summit's positive and fruitful outcome. In Riyadh, the leaders discussed all GCC-related topics, besides means of enhancing the blessed march of the bloc, in addition to the political, economic and social developments the region is experiencing, and the implications on the member states.

At the beginning of the meeting, the ministers were informed of the message from Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev to His Highness the Amir inviting him to attend the international exhibition Expo 2017 in Astana, Sheikh Mohammad said.

COP21

Then His Highness the Prime Minister notified the cabinet on the outcome of the recent UN conference on climate (COP21) held in Paris. Kuwait has reiterated its keenness on curbing

emissions at the global gathering.

In addition, His Highness the Premier apprised the meeting with the outcome of the recent visit to Kuwait by Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev, during which the two sides discussed means of boosting bilateral ties in all fields, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah added.

The First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah apprised the cabinet of the outcome of his participation in the 3rd session of the Kuwait-Tunisia Joint Higher Commission recently held in Kuwait. The committee approved a host of resolutions and recommendations for fostering bilateral ties in all fields, and signed a host of agreements and MoUs.

Municipal elections

The cabinet also congratulated Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and the Saudi people on the successful municipal elections. Meanwhile, it offered condolence to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud over the killing of a Saudi colonel in Yemen early yesterday. Saudi Colonel Abdullah bin Mohammed Al-Sahyan was killed in Yemen's city Taiz while doing his duty as part of the 'Operation Restoration of Hope' in the country. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled, Cabinet Affairs Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah and other officials tour the Jaber Stadium.

SPEAKER, MINISTERS CHECK JABER STADIUM REOPENING PREPARATIONS

KUWAIT: Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem said Sunday the security personnel were able to make successive achievements in maintaining the security of the country thanks to their perseverance and vigilance. He called on the hardworking policemen to maintain their high level of preparedness particularly in the run-up to the grand opening of Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, due on Friday, December 18, according to a statement by the Interior Ministry's Security Media Dept.

Ghanem made the comments during a meeting, chaired by him, with Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. He voiced satisfaction with the efforts of the organizing committee for the celebration, expecting the event to be a resounding success that "will reflect the civilized portrait of Kuwait."

Meanwhile, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled appreciated the efforts being made by the organizing committee and the efforts of the security personnel who live up to the expectations pinned on the event patronized by His Highness the Amir. He expressed confidence in the ability of the security personnel to protect the celebration and ensure its success, according to the statement.

After the meeting, Ghanem, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled and Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah as well as security field commanders made an inspection tour of the facilities of the Stadium where they were briefed on the preparations for the celebration. The meeting gathered also Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad, Director General of the Public Authority for Sport (PAS) Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and representatives of the organizing committee. — KUNA



An armored vehicle parked outside the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.



Ambulances lined up outside the stadium.



KUWAIT: A group photo for officials in attendance at the press conference yesterday. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh and Yasser Al-Zayyat

VIEWS CARAT ANNOUNCES RESULTS FROM ITS GROUND BREAKING CONSUMER STUDY FOR KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Views Carat announced the Kuwaiti results of its globally renowned Consumer Connection System (CCS); the world's leading research, insight and planning tool which uncovers consumer attitudes towards the most important media channels and how those same consumers will engage and use any touch point that can influence buying behavior.

It is no surprise that social networking sites are an important digital touch point, but CCS highlights the need to have a social-engagement strategy that is integrated and geared towards generating earned media. 71 percent of Kuwait consumers believe their online identity is an important part of who they are, revealing just how important it is for brands to have a strong

consumers regularly use hashtags that they have just seen on TV.

Despite the ever growing importance of digital, traditional media still plays a vital role along the path to purchase. Insights into the Out Of Home revealed that 63 percent of consumers highlighted that they notice what is being advertised on posters they regularly pass by. Radio had a slightly

deeper level of actionable insight on attitudes towards specific media channels in the region, thereby introducing greater accountability into any integrated communications plan that incorporates bought, owned and earned media channels.

Unrivaled servicing

Karim Bitar, CEO of Views Carat said: "We are extremely excited to launch CCS to the Kuwaiti market, which will only improve our local knowledge and ability to provide unrivalled client servicing. With this level of information, Views Carat can introduce



A general view of the audience.

In doing so, Views Carat, who announced their new partnership in August of this year, has gained an unrivalled level of insight that moves beyond understanding media consumption: For the first time in Kuwait, CCS has measured consumer interaction with the entire media landscape in a single study and examined how communication channels influence a decision making process across a wide range of specific industries. These invaluable insights into many of the traditional and new forms of communication touch points will help brands build accountability and effectiveness into their media planning.

social presence that allows them to interact with their fans and followers. So what can brands do to ensure they are reaching their audience? It is now more important than ever for brands to create an immersive consumer journey on and offline that tells a story to their followers.

Figures

The figures revealed that over 57 percent of Kuwaiti consumers are likely to search for more information about a brand or product on the internet as a direct result of watching their TV advertisement, while 31 percent of

lower affinity among consumers with only 34 percent highlighting that radio reminds them of brands they might need to use.

This is the first time CCS data has been available for the Kuwaiti market, having had its inaugural launch to the region in 2012. The research, along with Carat's other proprietary tools, helps brands, in any sector or industry, understand the most effective touch points relevant to their target audience.

CCS also includes comprehensive data on demographics, lifestyle habits, daily routines and brand information. The result is a far

greater precision to our communications planning and make sure we deliver the most effective campaigns for our clients."

Martin Boot, General Manager of Carat Qatar and Kuwait added: "Our new offering will allow us to assist our existing and potential clients in obtaining truly cost efficient advertising that gives them the greatest return on investment. CCS will uncover nationally-representative insights which are not widely available in this market which will prove invaluable to brands who wish to instantly understand the Kuwaiti consumer". The results were announced at the Views Carat launch event on 13 December 2015 in Kuwait City.



Karim Bitar, CEO of Views Carat speaks at the press conference.



KUWAIT: The Finance Ministry's Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Foreign Trade Fawaz Al-Shallal inaugurates the exhibition.

'REAL ESTATE FAIRS CRUCIAL TO PUSH ECONOMY FORWARD'

KUWAIT: The Finance Ministry said yesterday that real estate exhibitions held in the country are 'crucial' to pushing the economic wheel forward. The ministry's Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Foreign Trade Fawaz Al-Shallal made this remark to the press after the opening of

'The Elite Real Estate Exhibition' being held under the patronage of Minister of Commerce and Industry Dr Youssef Al-Ali from December 14 to 19.

The exhibition aims at boosting real estate sector in the country, attempting to remove obstacles that face investors

and consumers alike and presenting everything new in the real estate business. More than 70 local and international companies are presenting more than 200 real estate projects worldwide at the expo; it is also seeing the participation of banks and funding companies as well,

Shallal added.

He pointed out that the Kuwaiti investor is 'smart'; he can recognize good investing opportunities whether for personal use or for financial gain. The Ministry's job is to provide a link between investors and investees. —KUNA



Assistant Undersecretary Fawaz Al-Shallal speaks to reporters. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) Chairman of the Board of Directors Ali Al-Mousa honored employee Suleiman Al-Qassar for winning the 8th Shooting Championship that was organized recently by the Kuwait Banks Club.



Assistant Undersecretary Fawaz Al-Shallal tours the exhibition.

In my view

FIGHTING THE CULTURE OF HATE



By Labeed Abdal

local@kuwaittimes.net

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon's call to fully respect the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) on the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime is a highly significant perspective to boost awareness and eliminate some of the bad images about inhumane practices in some parts of the world.

Despite the presence of a convention to prevent and incriminate genocide since 1948, this did not prevent some devastating violations of the principles of prohibiting killing mankind or a certain race over delusions about the supremacy of a race or a religion over another.

Ban's emphasis that genocide means more warnings and preparation to take immediate measures to solve the problem and show respect to human rights all the time everywhere for protecting victims and their families' rights, especially since those violations were not incidental forms of conflicts (as he put it) and are, most of the time, systematically planned for defined purposes that can happen without any conflicts, means that solutions should be systematic, especially as poverty, famine and ignorance have spread as planned by certain regimes in certain spots to keep certain groups under constant pressure.

We must overcome shortsighted concepts based on fanaticism and hate for others worldwide according to their identity, religion, race or others to consequently create fake excuses to commit some dreadful and vicious actions that violate the simplest rights of life and enhance humiliation of the human race, be that in times of war or peace. There is more of 'we and them' or 'north and south', which is totally against all international justice and etiquette rules.

The secretary general's emphasis on preventing genocide reflects commitment to international laws, and governments have to keep such commitments by investing in prevention, taking effective steps that call for the international community's respect to principles called for by various religions, and accordingly prevent barbaric behaviors built on ideas that are supposed to have become instinct because we belong to the human race that had been created to build and construct rather than destroy earth.

In my view

GLOBAL MODELING

By Nada Borisly

"A Leader's Legacy begins with stepping to the zone of the uncomfortable debate."

Walking the extra mile involves limitless boundaries; leaders aim to model and create their own individual aspects revealing their success towards a purposeful reputation not replicated but originated according to one's understanding of being able to demonstrate unique personal branding.

Never has it been more necessary for teams to be able to work through the Zone of Uncomfortable Debate (ZOU) - that unspoken process that prevents questioning yet generates sensitivity. Activists stepped in apart from their diverse views to create a historical moment that portrayed leadership traits emerging across all individuals to debate deep conceptualizations, which lead to challenges hidden for years.

Today, we are able to observe how the Paris Climate Change Summit evolved around many years of managing uncertainty by leaders taking ownership of a global aspect, the "ZOU" became an astonishing moment to view. Mature adaptability recognized by a series of theories and literature reviews enforced to allow leaders to congratulate one another in the agreement that enabled to set a pathway for future diagnostic challenges relating to the zone that has been ambiguous but as a result defined the correct view of "global modeling."

Over the past month, we have experienced and observed damaging ironic situations of terrorism and volatility. Severe disruptions still caused worldwide in terms of security and calmness among nations. On the contrary, global collaboration and unity today, managed to illustrate a different scene of memorable incidents.

We have observed high leadership standards in face of solidarity from diverse schools of thought representing visionary acts that reflected signs behind the concept of global modeling according to projecting sufficient analysis:

- Solid transformation of deliberate emotional intelligence that represents displaying learning agility.
- Political awareness forecasting the catastrophic situations by rural nations suffering.
- Dismissal of dysfunctional organizations creating threatening delays by forcing ineffective decisions.
- Competitive discussions generated debating the sincere need of considering solutions for unpredictable situations.
- Commitment to managing uncertainty towards resembling shared knowledge.
- Engagement towards value creation based aspects.
- Anticipating the change through vision leadership - Business Models

The regulations established proved senior leadership units are figures of speech and action, without a conceding voice the cycle of human nature will not sustain, it is an act of empowerment for all to redefine the challenges encountering all species on the planet. The global public understanding transformed due to the effect of ministers and negotiators art of compromise lead by exemplifying the outcomes as evidence to endorse GLOBAL MODELLING approach. The path of creating hope was collectively determined through findings that supported ambitious compromise leading to success as expected by all nations' contribution and participation, a dream guided by an aim for forceful success.

As Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary UNFCCC stated, "The Paris UN Climate Conference represents an historic opportunity to put the world on course to meet the climate change challenge. The world needs a new model of growth that is safe, durable and beneficial to all. The Paris Agreement is not only possible, it is necessary and urgent. We are counting on everyone's contribution."

The closure observed lead to realizing the ability to work effectively in the 'Zone of Uncomfortable Debate' a capability that distinguishes effective performance amongst leaders and nations, external and internal influences, realistic and unpredictable matters, all delivering a huge transformation to interpret challenging situations yet legacy blueprints in favor of long awaited critical concerns unmanaged affecting tomorrow's generation to come.

our branches

across Turkey

at your service



We at Borgan Bank go the extra mile to serve you and fulfill all your banking needs wherever you are. We welcome you to any of our branches spread out all over Turkey.

- 27 branches in Istanbul
- 29 branches across other cities in Turkey

follow us on:  Borgan Bank Official page  @burqanbankgroup  www.youtube.com/burqanbankchannel

For more information call 1804080, or visit www.burqan.com



Crime

Report

ELEVEN ARRESTED FOR USING ‘FAKE FINGERPRINT’

KUWAIT: Eleven Kuwaiti citizens were found using “silicone fingerprints” on behalf of 344 employees at the ministry of electricity and water in Khairan, Zour, Mina Abdullah, Khaitan and Salmiya. Criminal detectives learned about the forgery and launched an investigation, and were able to catch the forgers red-handed with the silicone prints, for which they used to charge KD 50 per month each.

Taxi driver robbed

A man claiming to be a policeman hit a taxi driver in his eye and stole his money, mobile phone and IDs before escaping. The Indian driver was in Andalus when a seemingly angry man stopped behind him and told him, “Can’t you stop properly?” He then punched him and stole the items. A pedestrian told police about what happened, so they came with an ambulance to the scene. Investigations are underway. Meanwhile, an Egyptian man accused three persons of beating him and taking KD 980 that belonged to the company he works for. He went to Nugra police station and gave policemen a medical report stating the injuries he suffered. Detectives began working on the case.

Drunk driver arrested

A citizen who was drunk told police at a checkpoint in Nugra: “I am really drunk and not in the mood for anything.” Police found a glass in his hand, and a bottle and a half of imported liquor. The man was arrested and taken to Nugra police station for further legal action.

Search for reckless driver

A citizen complained against a driver who escaped after ramming her car when she ignored him. A security source said a citizen told Sharq police station that while driving on Arabian Gulf Road, a man harassed her, but when she ignored him, he hit her car and escaped. She gave police the license plate number of the car, and detectives are investigating.

Campers’ dispute

Abdullah Port policemen arrested a citizen who threatened the owner of a camp of killing his horse with a knife he was carrying, then smashed the window of a patrol car. Police received a call from a man about a person who attacked him in his Wafra camp, with whom he had previous disputes. Police went to the scene, arrested the suspect and took the knife that was with him, and put him in the patrol car. The police source said the suspect smashed the rear window in an attempt to escape but failed. —Al-Rai



Al-Anbaa

500 DINARS

By Sami Al-Khorafi

A handsome, nice-looking man once stood boasting before Socrates, who told him to ‘speak so that he could see him’, which indicates that a man’s true essence lies in the way he thinks and acts, not in his looks. Fake appearances have been tearing our GCC societies apart and everybody is now talking about the latest world-famous brands in GCC markets in order to purchase them, though a wise man once said “famous brands are nothing but a promotional lie invented by smart people to rob the rich, but ended up believed by the poor!”

I recently attended a wedding held in a hotel adjacent to a famous shopping mall and after the wedding, a friend asked to go into the mall to buy something for his wife. Going into a store full of famous international brands, he asked about the price of a pair of shoes, and to our surprise, the salesman said it was KD 500. “Does anybody actually pay that much for a pair of shoes?!” I asked the salesman, who smiled and asked me to check the price of another pair, which was even higher.

“Many people like boasting by buying such expensive shoes. They even brag about purchasing certain items from certain places. Some of them may borrow to buy such things or even use credit cards to show others that they are wealthy enough and

have no problem in buying whatever they want, while they are really penniless,” said the wise salesman, adding that stores such as his would have closed down if it had not been for such customers. My friend and I left without buying anything, of course.

It really makes me sad how some people are keen on false appearances and pretense without knowing that an arrogant person is like someone standing on top of a mountain, seeing people as tiny, without realizing that they, as well, see him as tiny!

Going to such malls, one can see examples of such sick-minded people without knowing any reason for their sickness. This reminds me of a story when a rich arrogant man saw a poor man approaching. “As usual, these scum - poor people - keep following me for charity,” he said, but was astonished when the poor man reached out handing him his wallet. “You dropped this, sir”, said the poor man.

Finally, we have to know that our Prophet (PBUH) was very modest and stressed that Allah does not like arrogant people because we will all be buried under the same dirt one day, leaving nothing behind but good memories and reputation.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

DNA TESTS REQUIRED TO GET KUWAITI PASSPORTS: JARRAH

KUWAIT: Commenting on withdrawing the citizenship of cleric Nabil Al-Awadhi, the Ministry of Interior’s Assistant Undersecretary for Citizenship and Passports Major General Mazen Al-Jarrah stressed that MP Kamel Al-Awadhi arranged for a meeting with him (Jarrah) prior to the withdrawal of the citizenship, in which Awadhi offered to “do anything to cancel the decision”. Speaking in a meeting at writer Saad Al-Motesh’s National Unity Diwaniya in Sulaibikhat, Jarrah stressed that meeting him at Awadhi’s diwaniya in Daiyah, Nabil Al-Awadhi told him that he was “ready to do anything the authorities wanted him to do and asked for 24 hours grace to turn Twitter upside down”. He meant to arrange things with his allies,” Jarrah said.

Speaking about the new Kuwaiti passports, Jarrah said that DNA tests will be a condition to issue them with the aim of building a database with citizens’ DNA information. He explained that issuance of the new passports would start by the beginning of the year, starting with diplomats before offering it to all citi-

zens through service centers, where a special criminal investigation clerk would be present to do the DNA tests for applicants. “DNA will be a condition to register babies older than six months, be born in or outside Kuwait in order



Major General Mazen Al-Jarrah

to prevent unlawfully adding anybody to citizenship files,” he explained, noting that he followed up this measure with a ruling family member.

bedoons

Speaking about bedoons, Jarrah dared former speaker of the house Ahmed Al-Saadoun to raise the subject now and expressed amazement at his comment on withdrawing former MP Abdullah Al-Barghash’s citizenship. Jarrah also denied any intention to withdraw the citizenship of columnist Mohammed Al-Weshaihi, noting that he willingly left the country and that he would not have been able to do so if he was in violation of any laws.

“The bedoon issue is becoming more like a boil that everybody was afraid to approach except me...I cut it open,” he added, explaining the central apparatus or illegal residents would continue granting bedoons Comoros citizenship for those who want it. “This citizenship is officially approved by the Comoros president and speaker in a bilateral agreement”, he

added, denying any intention to deport them once they get the citizenship. “They will be given residency visas and a chance to get Kuwaiti citizenship in the future as long as they do not break any laws,” he added.

Jarrah explained that an agreement was made with the Comoros to economically support them, build special residential complexes and schools in addition to a branch of the Zakat House for bedoons there. He also noted that Kuwait was currently consulting with Iraq, Syria, Iran and Saudi Arabia to investigate and uncover bedoons’ real nationalities. He added that the total number of bedoons registered in the 1965 census were 34,000, and the state was entitled to consider granting citizenship to any of them if it wished to do so, while 80,000 unregistered others were unlawfully added and their files would be completely ignored. Finally, Jarrah stressed that he was ready to tour bedoons’ diwanias in Sulaibiya and Taima to explain the advantages of getting Comoros citizenship for those wishing to legalize their stay in Kuwait. —Al-Rai

US DEFENSE SECRETARY SIGNS KANDARI’S RELEASE

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources said that the US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter has signed the release of the Kuwaiti Guantanamo Bay detainee Fayeze Al-Kandari. The sources explained that this step was preceded by other procedures and measures taken to free Kandari and return him to Kuwait. “Signing the release is an important step towards putting an end to the sufferings of the last Kuwaiti Guantanamo detainee,” stressed the sources. Notably, the US had agreed last month to transfer 33 Guantanamo detainees as part of President Barack Obama’s efforts to empty the prison of all detainees. —Al-Rai



Fayeze-Al-Kandari

LIBERTIES DIMINISHED AFTER BOYCOTTING PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS: OPPOSITION

KUWAIT: Members of the ‘Majority Bloc’ opposing the one-vote parliamentary elections system law were hosted in a seminar organized by Al-Rai to get their opinions and assessment of their ‘boycotting’ experience now, three years since it was established after the 2012 parliament was dissolved.

Answering the question, the Public Constitutional Movement (Hashd) member and former MP Ali Al-Deqbasi said that electoral systems should be amended by laws responding to public demands. “We currently need a new political scene that ensures the participation of the majority and the opposition in political life,” he said, pointing out that the problem was beyond the parliament. “Some parties are trying to deface the opposition and mix things up in order to act solely,” he underlined, explaining that everybody was free to decide whether to run in the coming

election or not, but stressed that he would still boycott it in view of the current system.

On his part, member of the Development and Reform Bloc, former MP Dr Waleed Al-Tabtabaei said speaking about parliamentary elections seems insignificant in view of the recent regional developments. “Let us be sure that Kuwait will last 18 months more, then let us talk about elections,” he warned. He stressed that his bloc would continue boycotting parliamentary elections even if the elections were made the following day. “The government may someday see reason and return rights to citizens...but it is currently very snobbish and refuses dialogue,” he said, pointing out that the public opinion was dissatisfied with the current situation and believes that the opposition’s participation in the election would not straighten things up.

“We believe it will only make things

worse because the government has to undo what it has done,” he added noting that liberties were becoming less every day, reminding that citizens could go to Irada Square to voice their complaints, but now everybody is afraid to do so.

Member of the Salafist Islamic Alliance Abdullatif Al-Omairi said that it would be wrong to speak about the one-vote electoral system as a fact and warned that if it is taken for granted, that would be the end of the people. “It is not a matter of the electoral law itself, it is rather a matter of legislative authorities,” he underlined, pointing out that driven by depression and hopes for a better future, some of the voters who had boycotted the previous elections may take part in the coming elections. “They cannot be more wrong because the government has destroyed the parliament regardless of our participation,” he rued. —Al-Rai

getting any handsome rewards, seasonal transfers between clubs or media exposure. Nonetheless, our sports reached stardom and creativity levels!

We feel sorry for sports built on dedication that were not regulated by laws. They were rather regulated by norms that soon turned into commitment and respect that gave sports more prestige, honor and manners. This is the opposite of what we see nowadays. Laws and regulations are torn between politics and personal interests and are not equally and fairly applied to all, with the result of losing this sport and officially suspending our participation in foreign competitions. In addition, the remains we still domestically have are very disfigured because of the ill manners we have been witnessing.

After all, sports is an indicator of development and government management. The more those develop, the more it does as well.

After all, sports is an indicator of development and government management. The more those develop, the more it does as well. However, if sports reaches very bad levels, this is but a real reflection of the general condition of the state where everything is deteriorating including political, economic, cultural or social performance. That scene of the Jahra football match battle is the same, dominating everything in Kuwait with only one slight difference - location and the culprits.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

After all, sports is an indicator of development and government management. The more those develop, the more it does as well. However, if sports reaches very bad levels, this is but a real reflection of the general condition of the state where everything is deteriorating including political, economic, cultural or social performance. That scene of the Jahra football match battle is the same, dominating everything in Kuwait with only one slight difference - location and the culprits.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

RESIDENCY DETECTIVES BUST 30 FAKE COMPANIES

KUWAIT: Residency affairs detectives discovered 30 fake companies including 18 that only existed nominally and had no offices at all, said security sources. The sources explained that in collaboration with the manpower authority and under direct instructions from the Interior Ministry’s Assistant Undersecretary for Citizenship and Residency Affairs Major General Mazen

Al-Jarrah, the detectives discovered that 430 workers had been sponsored by fake companies who brought them to Kuwait and left them to seek other jobs in local markets, posing considerable security threats. The sources said that a large number of these laborers had been arrested and interrogated while a search is still in progress for the others where they live or work in

Mirqab, Hawally and Sharq’s vegetable and fruits market. The source also highlighted that this step comes within the instructions given by MSAL Minister Hind Al-Subaih to cooperate with residency detectives in a bid to fight visa traffickers and reduce marginal and loose labor in order to ultimately create a demographic balance in Kuwait. —Al-Rai



Al-Anbaa

PREPARE MEDICINE BEFORE THE INJURY

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

Before going into our column today, we should explain the title. It is a Kuwaiti proverb that simply means “when someone comes with an excuse before doing something”. I do not know why I recall this proverb every time I read or hear something related to the issue of gender segregation at the university, which was passed by the National Assembly in 1996. Regardless of the circumstances of its approval and the hands that worked for it, the issue of segregation remains, and here is where our issue starts and here comes the proverb “prepare the medicine before the injury”.

It refers to our National Assembly, which prepares excuses before it takes any action, so the following assemblies come in and discuss issues that were approved without studies and enough and full preparation, and the best example we are going through now is gender segregation.

Did Kuwait have enough university buildings, so what was passed by our respected Assembly could be applied on the students?

Before those who separated genders in 1996 Assembly did it, and after many assemblies came following that decision, we ask them a few questions:

Did Kuwait have enough university buildings, so what was passed by our respected Assembly could be applied on the students? Did the legislative and executive branches build universities that can accommodate the decision’s requirements? Where are the Kuwait University rectors over that decision? Why did you today, all of a sudden, deal with and referred the proposal to satellite channels? Did you, after failing to implement the decision in deteriorated universities, refer the matter to the people?

Many questions come out from that decision and other similar decisions, so we can only say: “Prepare the medicine before the injury.” Yes, you passed the segregation law and you do not have the facilities to implement it, just to appease some over the fate of a nation, and after the appeasement, and as some have forgotten that decision, there come some people today to discuss it when you failed to implement it for many reasons, and now you bring it up to cancel it by the people who gave you confidence with their faith.

—Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Jarida

THE BATTLE OF JAHRA

By Dr Hassan Jouhar

The battle Kuwait’s sports arena recently witnessed outside the pitch after a football match between Jahra and Khaitan in His Highness the Crown Prince’s Cup was not and will not be the last in successive sport farces. The dreadful scenes of assaulting the referees do not only harm Kuwait’s image, they also do a lot of damage to its people and sports history that we barely have parts of left.

We definitely call for taking all possible legal actions against those responsible and activating KFA’s charter against them. However, the whole scene calls for a stand. On the one hand, the number of those involved in the fight exceeded the number of fans who watched the match, which indicates that they are no longer interested in football to support their teams the way fans did in 1960s when simple playgrounds were flooded with fans standing behind fences surrounding the pitch regardless of hot or cold weather.

Yes, indeed. We miss that wonderful time when footballers were fit all through the season and kept playing until they were almost 40 despite lack of modern medical and sport equipment, vitamins and manufactured proteins. They also played on very rough pitches without

After all, sports is an indicator of development and government management. The more those develop, the more it does as well.



'Unit 732': The French anti-IS volunteers



ALBAY PROVINCE: A resident walks past big waves spilling over a wall onto a coastal road in the city of Legaspi.—AFP

700K FLEE AS TYPHOON SLAMS PHILIPPINES

NO IMMEDIATE REPORTS OF CASUALTIES OR DAMAGE

NEW AIRSTRIKES HIT DAMASCUS SUBURB

BEIRUT: Syrian government helicopter gunships yesterday struck a suburb of the capital, Damascus, a day after airstrikes in the area killed at least 45 people, activists said as a visiting UN official said the humanitarian situation in the war-ravaged country is "a blot on our collective conscience."

Sunday's barrage - in which government airstrikes and bombardment of several opposition-held eastern Damascus suburbs killed at least 45 people, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights - was particularly heavy. It followed volleys of mortar shells fired into Damascus by rebels in the area that had killed three people, including a child, just hours earlier.

Yesterday, the UN humanitarian chief Stephen O'Brien said he was "deeply saddened" by the uptick in violence Sunday. He spoke to reporters in Damascus at the end of a three-day visit during which he travelled to the central Syrian city of Homs and met with officials in the capital. "This is a tragic reminder of the urgency of finding a political solution and security a nationwide ceasefire," he said. "Such indiscriminate attacks are unacceptable and we must do our utmost to protect innocent civilians."

There was no immediate word on casualties from Monday's attacks, which targeted the southwestern suburb of Daraya. In Sunday's government attacks, 49 people were killed in the Douma, Saqba and Arbeen suburbs, according to another activist group, the Local Coordination Committees. Syria's state-run news agency and residents said that in rebel attacks.—AP

MANILA: More than 700,000 people in the central Philippines fled to safer areas for fear of giant waves, floods or landslides as Typhoon Melor slammed into the archipelago nation yesterday, officials said.

Melor brushed the northern tip of Samar, a farming island of 1.5 million people, early yesterday with winds gusting up to 185 kilometers per hour, the state weather bureau said. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. Samar was among areas devastated in 2013 by Typhoon Haiyan, when giant waves wiped out entire communities and left 7,350 people dead or missing.

Authorities warned that Melor's powerful winds might whip up four-meter-high waves, blow off tin roofs and uproot trees. They said heavy rain within its 300-kilometre diameter could trigger floods and landslides. In Albay province in the southeast of Luzon Island, almost 600,000 people were evacuated due to fears that heavy rain could cause mudslides on the slopes of nearby Mayon Volcano, according to the national disaster monitoring office.

Residents carrying bags of clothes and water jugs clambered onto army trucks in Albay's Legaspi City as authorities sounded an evacuation alarm, according to an AFP photographer at the scene. Huge waves crashed into the city's deserted boulevard as palm trees swayed from the wind.

'Ghost town'

"The whole province is now a ghost town. We shut all establishments. No school, no work," Albay governor Joey Salceda said on ABS-CBN television. Albay, a province of 1.2 million people, has become a model for disaster preparedness. It recorded zero casualties from Typhoon Hagupit last December due to prompt evacuations.

An additional 130,000 people were evacuated in Sorsogon province south of Albay. The typhoon is expected to cut across the central heartlands in the early hours of Tuesday before heading out to the South China Sea in the west. The storm's outer rain bands could hit the capital Manila, where the second lowest in a four-step storm warning system may be raised yesterday night, state weather forecaster Robert Badrina said.

Stormy weather has forced the cancellation of 40 domestic flights and halted 625 passenger and cargo ferry trips, the disaster monitoring agency said. The government had prepared more than 200,000 food packs and other emergency items before the storm's landfall, social welfare secretary Corazon Soliman told DZMM radio. The Philippines is battered by an

average of 20 typhoons annually. Two of these usually hit in December, Badrina said, and are often among the strongest.

Last year Typhoon Hagupit brought floods and landslides to the central region, killing 53 people. A low-pressure area, which could either strengthen into a typhoon or dissipate because of cold winds blowing from the north, was spotted east of the main southern island of Mindanao, Badrina said. The weather bureau is studying the link between the increasing strength of year-end storms and climate change, he said. Typhoon Koppu, the last deadly storm to hit the country this year, killed 54 people and forced tens of thousands to flee their homes after it pummeled the north in October. — AFP

LA PLUS BELLE

Where Style is Created

We are offering you the chance to do what you love

Job Vacancies Include

1. Salon Supervisor

2. Sales Manager

3. Receptionist

4. Cashier

5. Massage Expert

6. Manicure & Pedicure Specialist

7. Expert Moroccan Bath

8. Expert Make-up Artist

9. Expert Hair Coloring

10. Expert Hair Cutting

11. Stylist Assistant

12. Hair Coloring Assistant

13. Hair Treatment Specialist

14. Assistant Hair

15. Treatment Specialist

16. Expert Facial

Minimum experience two years

Please send your CV over to : Recruit.hr@laplusbellico.com

Or Call: 95591977

المراعي

Almarai

Almarai is the largest integrated dairy foods company in the world with an unrivaled reputation synonymous with delivering excellence and quality across its entire range of products. Operating across the gulf region, Almarai currently employs over 38,000 employees servicing some 50,000 retail outlets daily across the GCC with a turnover that exceeded USD\$3.36 billion in 2014.

URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR QATAR

VAN SALESMAN:

Candidate should be between 21 to 40 years old with a minimum 2 years FMCG experience as a Salesman. He should be physically fit, healthy and would be able to deliver the targeted volume and margin of all Almarai product range in his route by achieving the right product distribution and ensuring good customer service in the most efficient manner adhering strictly to company trade, quality and safety policies. **(Must have valid Kuwait/UAE/ Bahrain/Oman / Qatar Heavy or Light Driving License)**

DELIVERY DRIVER:

Candidate should be between 21 to 40 years old with a minimum 2 years Van sales or delivery experience in FMCG business. **(Must have valid Kuwait / UAE/ Bahrain/Oman / Qatar Heavy or Light Driving License)**

Interested applicants are advised to send their **Updated Detailed Resume** by email to qatar.recruitment@almarai.com or by fax to +965 24344536. or drop your CV to Almarai Office Dajeej behind KFH bank Alfaisal complex, within a week from the date of publication of this advertisement. For email, the position applied for should be mentioned in the subject line.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Presents

REALTY INDIA EXPO 2015

Fri 18th & Sat 19th December 2015 • 11:00 am - 7:00 pm

Hotel Ramada, Riggae, Kuwait

Own a Flat In India at just INR 9.5Lacs/-

OFFERS Like Never Before Only during exhibition

Own a Plot In India at just INR 5Lacs/-

♦ Reputed builders from across India ♦ 100+ stunning Indian properties ♦ Super luxury to affordable properties ♦ Best time to explore Real Estate options in India ♦ Grab the best benefits on NRI investment ♦ Educate about the modern developments in India ♦ Avail special discounts & offers during expo

PARTICIPATING EXHIBITORS FROM

Ahmedabad • Bangalore • Chandigarh • Chennai Coimbatore • Delhi NCR Goa • Gurgaon • Hyderabad Kochi • Kolkata • Lucknow • Mangalore Mumbai • Mysore Ooty • Pune • Thrissur • Trivandrum and many more cities....

Walkin & Win Free Ticket to India

FOR MORE DETAILS 51125385

ENTRY FREE

PARTICIPATING BUILDERS

ASSET HOMES MJ Group ansal HOUSING IIFL BHANDARY BUILDERS SRAASH KSR

ORGANIZED BY

Real Estate Exhibitions and Events

MUGABE'S FRAILTY INTENSIFIES ZIMBABWE LEADERSHIP RACE

VICTORIA FALLS: Zimbabwe's ruling party at the weekend publicly endorsed 91-year-old President Robert Mugabe as its candidate for elections in 2018 — but his visible frailty means that backstage the focus was on his successor. Mugabe has stumbled twice in recent public appearances, and in September read a speech to parliament apparently unaware that he had delivered exactly the same address a month earlier. These signs of weakness in a man who has ruled Zimbabwe with an iron fist for 35 years have injected new urgency into factional battles led by the elite within his ruling ZANU-PF party.

"The focus is on retaining power or accessing power as a way of securing their gains and privileges," said Godfrey Kanyenze, head of the Labour and Economic Research Institute of Zimbabwe.

"They know if they lose power their farms and businesses will be undermined. That's why we saw the First Lady (Grace Mugabe) joining in the fray."

Grace, 50, was appointed leader of the powerful ZANU-PF women's wing last year and led a vicious campaign that brought about the expulsion of Mugabe's deputy president and possible successor Joice Mujuru. Mujuru is believed to be planning to form a new party to contest the next elections, but given ZANU-PF's record of vote rigging analysts say the real battle for power lies within the ruling party itself.

Vice-President Emmerson Mnangagwa is seen as a front-runner, but there are signs that Mugabe and his wife could be planning to keep power within the family. At the party's annual conference in Victoria Falls at the weekend, the women's wing pressed for

a quota system ensuring that one of Mugabe's two deputies be a woman—a post which could go to Grace and put her in pole position to take over.

'Political feuding'

"The succession question is the mother of all problems bedeviling the party and it will continue to haunt the party until its resolved," said Eldred Masunungure, a political scientist from the University of Zimbabwe. "National development is being sacrificed at the altar of political feuding." Zimbabwe's economy has been in crisis for 15 years since land reforms led to a collapse of agriculture, while hyper-inflation wreaked havoc, unemployment boomed and millions of Zimbabweans fled abroad.

At the same time, many within the ZANU-PF elite seized farms and enriched

themselves—and it is these gains that they fear losing if they are on the wrong side of the succession struggle. Grace Mugabe's dairy company provided milk, drinks and yogurt to delegates at the Victoria Falls conference. Mugabe, who has refused to name a successor, used the meeting to call for an end to factionalism.

"We don't want to hear people saying 'these ones belong to (second vice-president Phelekezela) Mphoko, these ones to Mnangagwa'. If all people belong to factions, who then are mine?" It is a good question, and there is increasing suspicion that the answer lies with Grace.

Despite the infighting within the ruling party, the chances of an outsider winning the next election are seen as slim, and not only because of ZANU-PF's history of manipulating elections. "The opposition is

nowhere," said Masunungure. "Ordinarily, you would expect them to take advantage of the deep and profound problems in ZANU-PF but they are in a comatose state."

"That's why ZANU-PF can afford to engage in factional fighting because they know there is no strong opponent outside the party. As things stand the real rivals for ZANU-PF are within ZANU-PF." Former trade unionist Morgan Tsvangirai led his Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) to victory in 2008 parliamentary elections and won the first round of the presidential vote. But he backed out of the second round after 200 of his followers were killed in a wave of violence unleashed by ZANU-PF. He later served as prime minister in a unity government brokered by neighboring states, but his reputation suffered and his party has split several times. — AFP



DAQUQ: A French volunteer surrounded by Iraqi Kurdish forces flies a small drone carrying out a reconnaissance mission over a frontline with the Islamic State group. — AFP

MEET 'UNIT 732': THE FRENCH ANTI-IS VOLUNTEERS IN IRAQ

TINY CONTINGENT WELCOMED BY IRAQI KURDS

DAQUQ: The translator rushed towards the rudimentary trailer housing the French volunteers who came to Iraq to fight against the Islamic State jihadist group alongside Kurdish forces. "Come quick, the general wants to see you! And bring your helicopter," he told them, as an armored convoy assembled and prepared to leave the base. General Araz Abdolkader, who commands the Kurdish peshmerga forces stationed in Daquq, a town around 200 kilometers north of Baghdad, had just received information on possible jihadist movements near the front line.

What the translator calls a helicopter is in fact a small commercial drone which can be carried in a backpack and has turned out to be the French volunteers' most valuable "weapon". Fred, Kim and Pascal are among six former servicemen from France forming the French contingent in Daquq, not counting Bella the dog, the group's mascot. They have called themselves "Unit 732", a reference to the date of a battle that saw Frankish-led forces defeat the troops of the Umayyad caliphate in central France.

All six have significant military experience, but the peshmerga keep them mostly in the rear and they have not yet fired a shot in anger. "We're working on a training program and, mostly, what we do is recon and intelligence gathering," said Pascal, a Corsican sporting a salt-and-pepper moustache. With 25 years' experience in private security in France, Africa and the Middle East, he's the group's veteran.

who are some of the main recipients of Western military aid to fight the Islamic State (IS) group. France has good relations with Iraqi Kurdistan, and the Daquq front line, where the autonomous region's forces are deployed, is one of the areas where the French jets that are part of the US-led coalition have been the most active. "These six men are worth many more, they master some technologies we don't," the peshmerga general said. "They brought this drone from France, it is very useful to us."

That day, the small device—which has a range of four to five kilometers — flew across a wide open plain to monitor and record enemy movements without exposing a peshmerga reconnaissance unit on the ground. The volunteers in Unit 732 got together on social media following the January attacks which IS claimed against satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo and a Jewish supermarket in Paris.

"It started with Charlie Hebdo... something happened inside of me," said Pascal, who wears the Kurdish flag on one arm patch and the French tricolor on the other. Other foreigners have volunteered to fight alongside the Kurds in Iraq and Syria since 2014, but no Western country has been harder hit by IS than France and the deadly November 13 attacks in Paris spawned new volunteers. "The attacks at the Bataclan (concert hall) sparked a wave... Many people want to join us now," said Pascal, warning nonetheless against a mass influx.

apolitical and non-religious nature of the group. "We're not Crusaders, we didn't come here because we're unemployed or bored," said Fred, another member of the group who served 10 years in the army. "We are all fathers and have families... We came here to defend our values," he said.

Sipping tea at the little blue plastic table outside their trailer, the volunteers also speak of their love for adventure, and some of them feel confined to a token role. "I don't necessarily want to kill, and even less be killed, but we'd like to get more involved," said one of Daquq's Frenchmen, who gave his name as Kim. He and his comrades are aware their presence is essentially a PR windfall for the peshmerga, who have cast themselves as the world's first rampart against IS, and do not plan to stay longer than three months. They could not afford to stay much longer, given that they all arrived in Iraq with barely enough cash for a hotel room and are only housed and fed by the peshmerga but not paid. That is one of the conditions for a smooth return to France, where diplomatic sources say they are unlikely to run into any legal trouble, having not fought as mercenaries nor in the ranks of a terror-listed organization. France, a leading member in the coalition against IS, is busy trying to track the hundreds of nationals it has among the very jihadists that Unit 732 wants to battle. Kim, himself a Muslim, explained that IS' recruiting prowess in France was a motivating factor in his decision to come to Iraq. "These people are not Muslims, they're pigs," he said. "I wanted to show that there were French people fighting on the other side too." — AFP

Paris attacks

The tiny contingent was welcomed by Iraqi Kurds,

'Not crusaders'

Despite its name, the six Frenchmen insist on the

OFFICER QUESTIONED IN PALESTINIAN SHOOTING

JERUSALEM: Israeli authorities on Sunday said they have opened an investigation into the actions of a police officer who fatally shot a 16-year-old Palestinian girl during a stabbing attack in Jerusalem last month.

In a statement, the Justice Ministry said it was looking into whether the officer used excessive force while stopping a stabbing attack by two teenage Palestinian girls. In the Nov 23 incident, the 16-year-old girl, along with a 14-year-old accomplice, stabbed and wounded a 70-year-old man with scissors before they were shot by the officer.

The ministry said the attorney general had requested the investigation into claims that the officer shot the 16-year-old girl after she had already been restrained. During questioning, the officer said he believed the girl still posed a threat, the statement said.

The incident was filmed by a security camera and the footage was released to the media. The younger girl was wounded. Palestinians have accused Israel of using excessive force during a three-month wave of violence, and Sunday's announcement appeared to be the first official investigation into the actions of Israeli security forces during the unrest. Israel says its tactics are a legitimate response to stabbings and other attacks.

A total of 19 Israelis and an American seminary student have been killed by

Palestinian attacks, mostly stabbings, while at least 112 have been killed on the Palestinian side, including 75 people said by Israel to be attackers. In the latest unrest, Israeli forces shot a young Palestinian woman Sunday after she allegedly attempted to stab a pedestrian in the West Bank.

The military said the woman was evacuated to a Jerusalem hospital. It did not say how close the woman got to her target. The incident occurred Sunday in Hebron, a frequent flashpoint of violence. Several hundred Israeli settlers live in heavily guarded enclaves in the city, which is home to 270,000 Palestinians.

Israel says the violence is fueled by a Palestinian campaign of lies and incitement. The Palestinians say it is the result of frustrations rooted in Israel's nearly 50-year occupation. Late Sunday, the Israeli army said Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired a rocket that landed in an open area of southern Israel. No injuries were reported.

"Early yesterday, Israeli aircraft struck what the military said were two military posts belonging to Hamas, the Islamic militant group that controls Gaza. Israel and Hamas fought a 50 day war last year. Although Hamas has largely observed a cease fire since then, Israel said it holds the group responsible for "all attacks emanating from the Gaza Strip." There were no immediate reports of casualties. — AP

EGYPT: NO SIGN OF TERRORIST ACT IN RUSSIAN PLANE CRASH

CAIRO: A preliminary investigation into the crash of a Russian passenger plane has found no indication yet of any "illegal or terrorist act," Egypt's chief investigator said in a statement released yesterday. The vaguely worded statement by Ayman El-Muqadam said the investigation committee so far has not found "any evidence" indicating foul play in the Oct 31 downing of

the plane, killing all 224 people onboard, mostly Russian vacationers returning home from the Red Sea resort of Sharm El-Sheikh. The committee is "continuing its work," it said.

Russia has said an explosive device had been placed onboard the Airbus A321-200 and the Sinai branch of the Islamic State group has claimed respon-

sibility. The crash led Russia to suspend all flights to and from Egypt, dealing a heavy blow to the country's vital tourism industry.

El-Muqadam said the investigating committee completed its preliminary report Sunday evening, which contained all available information that will be further investigated. He said the search for wreckage extended more than 16 kilometers (10 miles) from the main crash site and that the committee provided all parties that are part of the investigation, including the insurance company and Russian working teams, the chance to examine the wreckage.

The investigators analyzed the plane's 38 computers and two engine computers and is currently checking the technical details of the plane and repairs carried out since it was manufactured in May 1997. El-Muqadam said the investigation committee made 15 visits to the crash site, and the team was coordinating with the air force to move the wreckage to a safe location in Cairo for further study. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov declined to comment directly on the Egyptian statement, but told reporters in a conference call, "I can remind you of the conclusion of our experts from the special services, who came to the conclusion that it was a terrorist action." Aside from a joint technical investigation into the crash by experts from Egypt, Russia, France and Ireland, the Egyptian authorities also opened an investigation into a possible security breach or infiltration by militants of the Sharm El-Sheikh airport staff, security officials have said. That investigation has focused on baggage handlers, their security supervisors and also personnel involved in aircraft catering, according to the officials. — AP



HASSANA: In this Sunday, Nov 1, 2015 photo provided by Russian Emergency Situations Ministry, Egyptian Military on cars approach a plane's tail at the wreckage of a passenger jet bound for St Petersburg in Russia that crashed. — AP

BANGUI'S PK-5 DISTRICT VOTES IN CRUCIAL CAR REFERENDUM

BANGUI: Peacekeepers massed in a flashpoint district of the Central African Republic capital Bangui yesterday to enable people to vote safely a day after violence prevented them from casting ballots in a key referendum. Five people were killed in clashes Sunday in the Muslim-majority PK-5 district, heightening fears over whether long-delayed elections can go ahead on December 27.

Another 20 people were wounded, several seriously, in fighting involving rocket launchers and machine guns, the Red Cross said yesterday. UN peacekeepers and French soldiers massed yesterday in the PK-5 district, and a military helicopter circled overhead, to allow its voters to complete polling in a constitutional referendum aimed at ending Christian-Muslim sectarian strife.

Turnout was strong and no new violence was reported by midday in the district, normally Bangui's bustling trading hub. The Muslim community in PK-5 is split between a majority who favor the electoral process and those opposed, now labeled the "enemies of peace".

'Live in peace'

"We agree to live together with the Christians. We want to live in peace but we have been taken hostage" by armed groups, said Hassan Brassoul Moussa, a spokesman for Muslim youth in PK-5. He demanded the arrest of "criminals who want to sow chaos amongst us" and Abdoulaye Hissene, a former Seleka "general" accused of orchestrating Sunday's violence, came in for special vitriol.

"This has to stop," said a young vendor, Mustapha Younous, as people cheered around him. "If Abdoulaye Hissene (and associates) want to do politics they can do it somewhere else. We are businessmen and we want to do business!"

A pensioner wearing a baseball cap with the word "Paix" (peace) emblazoned on it said: "Let them be beheaded if need be. While we have to pay for the broken goods, they go around freely in their cars with tinted glass. We

have had enough, enough!" Makeup balloting was also held elsewhere in the troubled former French colony where armed men interfered with Sunday's polling, electoral authorities said.

An unnamed source in the UN peacekeeping force MINUSCA, sent in to quell fighting that has forced 10 percent of the population to flee their homes, reported scattered violence in the north and east of the landlocked country.

Some supporters of the mainly Christian militia known as the "anti-balaka" (anti-machete) also opposed the vote, namely backers of ousted president Francois Bozize, whose candidacy for the upcoming presidential election has been rejected by the constitutional court.

'Historic step'

Late Sunday, UN special envoy Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, praised the voters for their "courage," saying they overcame "all fears and threats" to cast their ballots. "The Central Africans took a historic step in their march towards greater democracy," he told reporters.

The UN Security Council was to discuss the situation following the referendum yesterday. The vote is seen as a test run for presidential and parliamentary elections set for December 27 to end more than two years of conflict between the Muslim and Christian militias. The proposed constitution would limit presidential tenure to two terms, fight institutional corruption and rein in the armed militias, blamed for years of chaos and terror.

If adopted, it would usher in the sixth republic since independence from France in 1960 and mark the 13th political regime in a country notorious for its chronic instability. Results are expected in the next two days. Unrest has forced the impoverished country to postpone elections repeatedly despite intense international pressure to hold them. The Central African Republic plunged into its worst crisis since independence after Bozize was ousted by rebels from the Seleka force in March 2013, triggering a wave of tit-for-tat violence with "anti-balaka" militias. — AFP



BANGUI: A Muslim man sits inside the polling station at the Koudoukou school in the flashpoint PK5 district. — AFP

RISING SAFETY CONCERNS FOR AMERICAN MOSQUES

CORONA: From the suburbs of Los Angeles to the outskirts of Washington, DC, mosques around the United States are warily stepping up security in the face of growing fears about reprisals on American Muslims.

The increasing safety concerns described by American Islamic leaders - and the steps they are taking in response, including hiring armed guards - represent the flip side of the rising public anxiety about Islamic State-inspired terror after attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California. The call by Republican presidential contender Donald Trump to ban Muslims from entering the United States only amplified concerns about an anti-Islamic backlash at mosques and community centers, religious leaders and organizers say.

Security facilities

At least two mosques - one in Phoenix and the other in suburban Virginia - are working with the Department of Homeland Security to check up on the security their facilities provide for worshippers in recent weeks. Others report taking a range of steps, including hiring armed

guards, because of fears that an American mosque could be a target for an attack.

"We are always concerned about lone wolf attacks," said Usama Shami, president of a Phoenix mosque that has been working with the Department of Homeland Security to review its security measures since the Paris attack last month.

Over the weekend, police arrested a 23-year-old man suspected of setting a fire at a Southern California mosque in what authorities are describing as a hate attack, following the massacre of 14 people in San Bernardino on Dec 2 by a Muslim couple, US-born Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, and his Pakistani-born wife Tashfeen Malik, 29. Authorities have not said if the suspect was motivated by the shooting.

That fire set on Friday at the entrance of the Islamic Society of the Coachella Valley caused no injuries. But it charred the building's stucco front entrance and left it littered with debris. The FBI is also investigating an incident in Philadelphia in which someone drove past a mosque and threw a severed pig's head at it from a passing truck as a possible hate crime.

On Thursday, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, an advocacy group, was forced to evacuate its office on Capitol Hill after receiving a letter containing white powder. The note said, "Die a painful death, Muslims," CAIR attorney Maha Sayed said. "Our fear is at a pretty high level at this time, given the anti-Muslim rhetoric going on," said Sayed.

'Fearful' security guards quit

Given the rising tensions, some mosques say they have struggled to hire and keep security guards. In Dulles, Virginia, a suburb of Washington with a large Muslim community center, security guards abruptly quit after the San Bernardino attacks, said Rizwan Jaka, chairman of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society. "Security guards resigned because they were fearful of getting hurt in the backlash," Jaka said. "People were concerned."

The mosque has now hired armed guards and the imam of the mosque, Mohamed Magid, said security had been increased for programs in which children take part. "We are concerned about the feeling in the larger com-

munity about Muslims," he said. Jaka said that after the San Bernardino shooting federal law enforcement officials had also completed a security assessment for the mosque.

At the East Plano Islamic Center near Dallas, Texas, Nadim Bashir, the imam, said the mosque had hired an armed security guard ever since the Paris attacks. "We're just trying to ramp up our efforts in the community and get a better name," said Bashir.

A mosque in Corona, California, which, like San Bernardino, is a working-class suburb on the dusty eastern edge of Los Angeles, has spent \$10,000 over the past two weeks to increase security. It is now asking for donations from the congregation to defer that expense, Imam Obair Katchi told Reuters.

The Islamic Society of Corona-Norco has also put up a banner on its website denouncing the San Bernardino attack. The mosque has faced extra scrutiny after it emerged that Enrique Marquez, who supplied guns used in the San Bernardino massacre, had once attended. "The Muslim community stands shoulder to shoulder with our fellow

Americans in repudiating any twisted mindset that would claim to justify such sickening acts of violence. We encourage everyone to be extra vigilant," the mosque's website says. Not all mosques see the need for new security. Mufti Ikram Ul Haq at the Rhode Island Masjid Al-Islam said the mosque there is relying on a police presence during prayer times.

"We have surveillance. We lock our doors and we have an alarm system," he said. Local police, Haq said, "have been increasing patrols around our places of worship, and that gives us enough sense of security." The FBI will not release data on hate crimes for 2015 until next year. Some critics, including CAIR, say the official statistics undercount reported incidents targeting Muslims. For 2014, FBI data showed that out of 1,140 victims of anti-religious hate crimes, approximately 16 percent were victims of an anti-Islamic bias. "Anecdotally, there is no question that we have had something of a flood of anti-Moslem hatred and hate crimes," said Mark Potok, a senior fellow at the Montgomery, Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights group. — Reuters



RIO DE JANEIRO: A protester with a mask depicting Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff takes part in a demonstration in support of her impeachment, at Copacabana beach. — AFP

BRAZIL IMPEACHMENT PROTESTS SMALLER BUT STILL DETERMINED

SAO PAULO: Thousands took to the streets in cities across Brazil on Sunday demanding that embattled President Dilma Rousseff-facing a weak economy and calls for her impeachment be removed from office. Rousseff is fighting for her political life as she stands accused of illegal budgeting maneuvers that she says were long-accepted practices by previous governments.

A one-time political prisoner during the 1964-1985 military regimes, Rousseff derides the attempt to bring her down as a "coup." "Time has shown that Dilma is unable to govern. She's thrown the country down a well," argued Adriano de Queiroz, 36, a protester in the capital, Brasilia. One small bit of good news for Rousseff was that turnout at the rallies, seen as a barometer of the national mood, was lower than expected.

The turnout hit a total of about 83,000 across 87 cities, the Globo G1 news website cited police as saying. Organizers disputed that figure, saying that 407,000 had marched in protest. Either way, the figures are sharply lower than the 2.4 million anti-Rousseff marchers that took to the streets on March 15, or the nearly 900,000 that marched in mid-August.

Just days ago, pro-Rousseff and opposition lawmakers shoved and screamed at each other in Congress during a vote to form an impeachment commission. But protesters in the streets were much calmer Sunday. In Brasilia, thousands marched peacefully behind a giant inflatable

able Rousseff dressed up as Pinocchio. And about 30,000 rallied in the country's wealthy industrial and financial hub Sao Paulo, G1 reported.

Fourth national protest wave

It was the fourth time this year that demonstrators across the sprawling nation of 204 million marched to demand the removal of the country's first female president. Organizers blamed the weak turnout on calling the march with just 15 days notice. "We were expecting fewer people (on Sunday) because in the other marches we had two to three months to organize ourselves," said Kim Katagui, national coordinator for the Brazil Libre protest group.

Katagui told AFP at the Sao Paulo rally to expect much larger protest marches next year. The turmoil is stirring strong passions in Brazil, where Rousseff's leftist Workers' Party has been in power since 2003 with the help of its ally PMDB. The protests come as Brazil prepares to host the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, the first time the Games will be held in South America.

Political uncertainty is adding to the country's economic woes, 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 undermined investor confidence. — AFP

TRUMP BACKERS CONFUSED BY MUSLIM PROPOSAL CRITICISM

'YOU DON'T KNOW IF THEY HATE US'

GREER: Tracy Hooker isn't interested in debating the merits of Donald Trump's proposal to temporarily block Muslims from coming into the United States. She knows some people think it's bigoted. That others argue it's impractical, legally dubious or both. And that every other Republican running for president has, in some way or another, rejected the idea the plan is even worth talking about.

That's why the hot dog stand worker in the conservative southern state of South Carolina says Trump is "my guy." In the wake of the attacks in Paris and shootings in San Bernardino, she and other Trump supporters say the Republican presidential frontrunner is the only one is taking on what they believe is a clear and present danger to America and its citizens.

"Think about it. You don't know what you've got here. You've got no clue," she said of the Muslim tourists, immigrants and refugees Trump wants to temporarily bar from coming to the US. "You don't know if they like us. You don't know if they hate us," said Hooker, 47, of Greer, South Carolina. "You don't know why they're here."

'We are at war'

The widespread condemnation of the billionaire's plan is simply baffling to Hooker and the dozens of Trump supporters interviewed in the past week by The Associated Press in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina, the states that kick off the presidential nominating contests.

"When you're in war, you have to take steps that are not American to protect yourself and defend the country," said Margaret Shontz, of Iowa, as she arrived at a Trump campaign stop in Des Moines on Friday.

Iowa's Dale Witmer, 90, a registered Republican and World War II veteran who likes Trump and conservative Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, embraced the Muslim ban as a "great idea." He said he was taken aback by the backlash: "I don't know how to comprehend that."

Trump made the proposal a week ago, releasing a statement on Dec. 7 that called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on."

An NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll released last week found that at 57 percent, a solid majority of Americans, oppose Trump's proposal. A CBS News poll also found nearly six-in-10 Americans opposed the ban, with two-thirds saying it goes against the country's founding principles. But Republicans are far more receptive; 54 percent voiced support for the



SOUTH CAROLINA: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks at a town hall meeting in the Convocation Center on the University of South Carolina Aiken campus. — AP

ban in the CBS poll.

Trump's campaign said the proposed ban would apply to "everyone," including individuals seeking to immigrate to the US as well as those looking to visit as tourists. As the week progressed, Trump began to fill in additional details. He said American citizens, including Muslim members of the military, would be exempt, as would certain world leaders and athletes coming to the US to compete.

'It's temporary'

"By the way, it's not total and complete. And it's temporary," Trump said Sunday in an interview with CNN. "You're going to have exceptions. You're going to have people coming in and you are going to get people in."

New Hampshire state Rep. Stephen Stepanek, Trump's campaign co-chairman in the state, said the reaction to Trump's proposal fit the pattern of his campaign: First outrage, then a realization Trump hit the nail on the head. "He's always one step ahead of all the other politicians in pointing out a problem. And everybody's outraged. And then all of a sudden

they start analyzing what he said and realize, 'Oh my god, he's right,'" he said.

While Trump has brushed back criticisms, including from some Republicans, that his idea smacks of bigotry, some of his backers take that charge personally. At Cannon's restaurant in Greer, South Carolina, not too far from Rosie's hot dog stand, manager Tammy Holcombe argued "everybody's getting too offended by this." Another Cannon's employee, 50-year-old Wayne Weathers, chimed in: "The drive-by media says everybody's a racist who supports Trump. That's ridiculous."

Among some Trump supporters, even those who agree with his proposal, there are some concerns - usually about how the bombastic former reality TV star is selling his ideas. "I agree with him, mostly," said Greg Spearman, 46, who owns an electrical firm in Greer. "But there's certainly a better way to say it." Still other backers said they simply don't take Trump's plan at face value. And Trump himself has even suggested his proposed ban was intended to stir up reaction. "Without the ban," he said Sunday, "you're not going to make the point." — AP

5 MONTHS AFTER CHATTANOOGA, FEDS QUIET ON ANY TERROR LINKS

TENNESSEE: It took about two days for the FBI to announce it was investigating the Dec 2 attack that killed 14 in San Bernardino, California, as an act of terror. Nearly five months after the killing of five military personnel in Chattanooga, Tennessee, authorities have carefully avoided using the same wording about the attack by a Kuwaiti-born gunman. As a practical matter, labeling Chattanooga a terror attack would make its victims eligible for the Purple Heart, which if awarded would entitle their survivors to additional payments and benefits.

There's also a key difference between Chattanooga and San Bernardino in terms of how publicly authorities have

announced investigative details and drawn conclusions, said former federal prosecutor David S. Weinstein: the ramped-up visibility of extremism after the deadly attacks in Paris blamed on adherents to the Islamic State extremist group.

"What has changed is US and world perception about terrorists and how the US is combating terrorism," he said. "That national pulse about terrorism is high." At a news conference the day of the Chattanooga shooting, then-US Attorney Bill Killian said the shooting was being investigated as an act of terrorism. Minutes later, he backtracked, saying the investigation would deter-

mine whether it was terrorism or some other crime.

To terror or not to terror

The closest federal authorities have come since to calling Chattanooga a terror attack was Dec 6, when President Barack Obama addressed the nation from the Oval Office after San Bernardino. The president noted that as the US has improved in preventing large-scale assaults like those on Sept 11, 2001, "terrorists turned to less complicated acts of violence like the mass shootings that are all too common in our society." Obama then cited both Chattanooga and San Bernardino, as well as the 2009 shootings at Fort Hood, Texas, that killed 13 people and wounded 32 more. The Fort Hood attack, initially called an instance of workplace violence by many authorities, resulted in the murder conviction and death sentence of Nidal Hasan, a former US Army major who said during his court-martial he believed he was defending Taliban leaders from American troops.

Joyce McCants, a spokeswoman for the FBI in Knoxville, Tennessee, which oversees Chattanooga, said Thursday that the bureau is likely to provide an updated statement this week about the July 16 killings by Muhammad Youssef Abdulazez. Abdulazez, 24, was fatally shot by police after opening fire at a military recruiting center and then driving to a reserve center, where he killed four Marines and a sailor.

Within hours of the shooting, Attorney General Loretta Lynch issued a statement describing a "national security investigation" - which immediately sug-

gested the possibility of terrorism. No such statement came from the Justice Department on the night of the San Bernardino attacks as investigators worked to determine a motive.

Kuwaiti born citizen

Initially, authorities described Abdulazez, a naturalized US citizen born in Kuwait, as a homegrown violent extremist. Vice President Joe Biden said at a memorial for the Chattanooga dead that Abdulazez was a "perverted jihadist" who may have been inspired to become "a single lone wolf to commit a savage act."

In the days after the San Bernardino massacre, the FBI labeled the married couple behind the attack terrorists who had been "radicalized" with Islamic extremist views. The word "terrorism" is used by civilians and government officials alike to describe many killings that may have political or religious overtones, but terrorism is also a federal criminal charge. In essence, federal code defines terrorism as any one of a list of violent acts that is "calculated to influence or affect the conduct of government by intimidation or coercion, or to retaliate against government conduct."

The Associated Press reported previously that Abdulazez had visited an uncle in Jordan before the Chattanooga shooting, but it's not clear if that visit prompted him to adopt extremist views. Soon after the attack, investigators found writings from Abdulazez that reference Anwar Al-Awlaki, a US-born cleric who encouraged and inspired attacks on the homeland and was killed in a US drone strike in 2011. — AP

MAN FATALLY SHOT BY LA POLICE HELD ON TO GUN

LOS ANGELES: A black man who was fatally shot by Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies kept holding a gun as he lay dying on the ground, authorities said Sunday in response to questions about why they continued to fire on the man after he fell to the pavement. A close-up from security footage showed 28-year-old Nicholas Robertson stretched out on the ground with a gun in his hand. He died at the scene Saturday morning in the south Los Angeles suburb of Lynwood.

Two deputies fired 33 bullets at the man after he refused to drop the gun and walked across a busy street to a filling station where a family member was pumping gas, homicide Capt. Steven Katz said. "When he collapsed, his arms were underneath him, and the gun was still in his hand. There was never a time when the weapon was not in his possession," Katz said.

Asked if the officers were white, Katz said no but would not elaborate. He said one had been working in the field for about a year, the other for about 18 months. Police confronted Robertson as they investigated 911 calls from witnesses who saw a man firing a gun into the air. Witnesses said he was walking down a residential street and then through a busy commercial area holding the weapon and acting strangely.

Caught on camera

Witnesses told authorities that Robertson reportedly fired six to seven rounds and briefly went into a car wash and a pizza parlor before deputies arrived. Deputies spotted the man in front of the gas station, where two women and three children were inside a car, and they ordered him to drop the gun, Katz said. But he refused and at one point pointed the gun in the deputies' direction, Katz added.

The gun was not registered to Robertson and has not been reported stolen. Detectives are trying to track it, Katz said. Robertson may have been in a dispute at home with his spouse before he went out on the street, but authorities have

yet to verify that report, Katz said.

Video, apparently from a cellphone, appeared on several media sites. It appears to show deputies firing about two dozen bullets, including several rounds after Robertson falls and is crawling on the ground. "They shot him in his shoulder, and he was crawling," Pamela Brown, Robertson's mother-in-law, told Los Angeles television station KCAL. "He left three kids behind, two daughters and a son. What, they could have Tasered him or anything?"

Robertson's wife declined to speak with the Associated Press, providing only a photo of their children. Earlier, she told the Los Angeles Times that her husband was a stay-at-home father who didn't engage in crime. "Anytime you see him, you see him with the kids," Nekesha Robertson said. "He'd take them to and from school. Help them with homework. He's a daddy - that's his job. He didn't do nothing else." Nekesha Robertson said her mother-in-law had called her shortly before the shooting to say her husband was under the influence of alcohol. She said she was on her way to get him and had stopped at the same gas station to buy milk before the shooting happened. Other relatives said the shooting was unjustified and that Robertson may not have heard the deputies' call to drop the gun.

'Point-blank murder'

"This man never turned at you and looked at you or pointed the gun at you. Nothing," said Nekesha Robertson's cousin, Monica Reddix. "What they did yesterday was ... point-blank murder." Robertson's death comes at a time of increasing criticism of police use of force after several killings of black men by officers have been caught on video in California and throughout the nation. On Dec 2, five San Francisco officers shot and killed Mario Woods, 26, in the city's gritty Bayview neighborhood after they say he refused commands to drop an 8-inch knife he was carrying. Police were responding to a stabbing report when they encountered Woods. — AP



CHATTANOOGA: In this Friday, July 17, 2015 file photo, an FBI investigator investigates the scene of a shooting outside a military recruiting center. — AP



KARLSRUHE: German Chancellor and Christian Democratic Union (CDU) leader Angela Merkel addresses the CDU annual federal congress. — AFP

MERKEL DRAWS CHEERS FOR CENTRIST LINE ON REFUGEES

PLEDGE TO REDUCE THE INFLUX OF MIGRANTS

KARLSRUHE: German Chancellor Angela Merkel pledged yesterday to reduce a massive refugee influx but insisted on keeping the door open to the world's neediest, drawing a rousing standing ovation from her party.

After weeks of infighting over the expected arrival of around one million asylum seekers to Germany this year, Merkel appeared to unite her conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) behind a centrist line of generosity with clear limits.

She drew loud applause as she repeated her rallying cry "We can do it" during an impassioned hour-long speech, capped by nine minutes in which the 1,000 delegates took to their feet to cheer their chancellor, who beamed and waved to the crowd.

'Reduce the number'

Merkel appealed to the venerable party's sense of history, saying that the same strength that allowed it "to rebuild from the rubble of the war to create the economic miracle, and to go from division to a reunified country" would get Germany through the refugee crisis. Even in the face of demands from the right wing of the party for an upper limit on newcomers, Merkel insisted Germany would never seal its border.

"We want to tangibly reduce the number of refugees arriving," Merkel said. "With an approach focused on the German, European and global level, we will succeed in regulating and limiting migration."

But she said Germany had a "moral and political" duty as Europe's top economic power to continue to help the world's desperate people, particularly those from war-ravaged Syria. "We will live up to our humanitarian responsibility," she said.

The gathering of around 1,000 delegates in the southwestern city of Karlsruhe was seen as one of the most important of Merkel's 15-year tenure at the helm of the party. After weeks of internal debate, the CDU was at pains to stage a show of unity ahead of three key state elections in March and a decision next year whether Merkel will stand for a fourth term in the 2017 general election.

'Big heart, no strategy'

Ahead of an EU summit this week, Merkel said she was banking on a multi-pronged approach to cut refugee numbers, urging bolstered protection for the bloc's external borders, support for Turkey to host refugees long-term, and a long-shot bid for a distribution scheme among EU member states.

She also touted a range of measures already undertaken in Germany including extending a list of safe countries of origin, expediting repatriation of rejected asylum seekers and beefing up staffing to process applicants.

Merkel is widely seen as Europe's most influential leader and bagged the "Person of the Year" award from TIME magazine last week and the Financial Times yesterday. But her open-door stance has drawn

fire at home and in many corners of Europe, with critics accusing her of having a big heart but no clear strategy.

The chancellor won a battle with the right-wing of the CDU in the run-up to the gathering by torpedoing its bid to set a cap on the number of asylum seekers Germany would take in a proposal she has denounced as immoral and unconstitutional. The compromise text, due to be passed later yesterday, instead calls for a "tangible reduction of asylum seekers and refugees".

Germany is divided roughly down the middle by the refugee issue, with a poll on Friday showing 49 percent opposed Merkel's stance while 47 percent supported it. The CDU has grown jittery as the disaffection has given a boost to the right-wing populist AfD party, which has soared to 10 percent in some polls. "Many traditional voters feel homeless," news weekly Der Spiegel wrote in its current cover story headlined "The Anxious Nation".

Nevertheless, the CDU has recovered its footing in the polls after a steep drop in the autumn and is now tallying about 39 percent, just 2.5 points off its 2013 showing in the general election. The SPD, which has been riven between centrists and leftists since Merkel booted then Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder out of office in 2005, trails far behind at about 24 percent. Merkel also has no clear challenger within her party, as even CDU critics acknowledge that she is their strongest asset at the polls. — AFP

FRENCH FAR-RIGHT FAILS TO WIN A SINGLE REGION IN ELECTIONS

PARIS: France's far-right National Front (FN) failed to win a single region in elections Sunday despite record results, as voters flocked to traditional parties to keep them out of power. With presidential elections due in 2017, the anti-immigration FN had hoped the regional polls would act as a springboard for leader Marine Le Pen.

But despite a best-ever national vote tally for the FN, she was trounced by the right-wing opposition in the northern Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie region after the ruling Socialists pulled out of the race before the second round. Her 26-year-old niece Marion Marechal-Le Pen was also clearly defeated by the right-wing grouping in the southern region that includes the glitzy resorts of the Cote d'Azur, despite dominating the first round last week.

The party had topped the vote in six of 13 regions on December 6, with a 28 percent national share, propelled by anger over the struggling economy and fears created by last month's jihadist attacks in Paris that left 130 dead. But exactly a month on from those attacks, voters turned out in force—some 58 percent took part, up from 50 percent in the first round—and once again trounced the FN when it came down to the wire. The ruling Socialists of President Francois Hollande won in five regions, while the centre-right alliance of his predecessor Nicolas Sarkozy took seven. Nationalists won in Corsica.

One of the biggest upsets on Sunday came in the Paris region, which shifted from left to right for the first time in 17 years. Socialist Prime Minister Manuel Valls warned that despite the result "the danger of the far-right has not been removed, far from it". Sarkozy, leader of the Republicans party, praised the voters who

turned out on Sunday but said "the warnings" of the first round must not be forgotten.

'Everybody loses'

The front page of conservative daily Le Figaro announced "The right wins, the left holds up, the FN falls", but the Catholic newspaper Le Croix was more succinct, saying only "Everybody loses". In an editorial titled "Not a victory but the absence of defeat", left-wing Liberation said it was fear of the far-right which had mobilised the left, rather than any renewed enthusiasm for the Socialist Party. Final results showed Le Pen scored around 42 percent to nearly 58 percent for her right-wing rival Xavier Bertrand in the economically depressed north.

Her niece took around 45 percent of the vote to nearly 55 percent for her right-wing rival in the FN's traditional stronghold in Provence-Alpes-Cote-d'Azur. Both women had easily won the first round. In a combative speech to supporters after polls closed, Le Pen said "nothing can stop us now".

"In its northern and southern bastions we've eradicated the evil-doing Socialist Party," she said. "By tripling our number of councilors, we will be the main opposition force in most of the regions of France," she added.

'De-demonized' party

The FN has topped European and local polls over the past two years, bolstering Le Pen's claim that it is now "the first party of France". The party also recorded its best-ever score Sunday with 6.8 million votes nationally, up from just over six million in the first round and 6.4 million for Marine Le Pen in her 2012 presidential bid, when overall turnout was considerably higher. — AFP



PARIS: French opposition right-wing Les Republicains (LR) party top candidate for the regional elections in the Ile-de-France region Valerie Pécresse waves at press conference after the announcement of the second round of French regional elections. — AFP

DUTCH SCHOOL KIDS GET TASTE OF REFUGEE LIFE

THE HAGUE: A hastily abandoned suitcase, an overturned wine glass and a radio blaring a warning "to leave now". A unique museum is giving Dutch school kids a scarily real glimpse of life as a refugee. In a school outing with a difference, teenagers Amy and Sona visited the museum in The Hague, opened in 2010 by the Dutch Red Cross to raise awareness of the work of organizations helping those fleeing war and poverty.

Only moments into their tour of Humanity House, the girls, both 16, were issued with "a visa" allowing them to start their journey towards the security of zone B. And even though this was a staged trip, both had a few heart-stopping moments as they symbolically traced the steps of hundreds of thousands of people who leave their lives behind to make the perilous journey to Europe's shores. After setting off, "the trip becomes a journey into the unknown, where they have to confront several dangers and uncertainties," said Lisette Mattaar, the museum's director. "They have to make difficult choices to reach a safe country." The museum, dubbed the only one of its kind in the world, welcomed some 30,000 visitors in 2014 compared with 14,000 at the beginning. But with migrants now arriving daily in Europe interest in the refugee issue and demand for tours has grown. But careful-the experience is said to be so realistic, parents are warned it is not suitable for children under 10.

"Schoolkids are bombarded with images and information about refugees, migration and asylum policies without often having all the right context," said Audrey Mussoni, who speaks to the children after the tour. "They

hear a lot of figures, but don't know how to put them into perspective, and none of this information is given a human face," she added. "With this trip, we hope to instill some empathy so they learn to think about these issues for themselves."

Running out of the first area set up as a house, the two girls found themselves in a labyrinth of dark corridors echoing with the sounds of barking dogs and the strident shouts of policemen. A sign hanging on a door asked: "Choose! Your possessions or your life?" Images of the horrors and woes of the refugees' long march to Europe played across the walls, filmed by researchers among real people. It's the little things that strike home the most, said Mattaar.

'Anguish, sadness and hope'

After filling out piles of paperwork in the hope that they may be one day reunited with their families, Amy and Sona arrived at the border area to be greeted by brusque guards. "Where's your visa for zone B? What is the address, first name and family name of your friends? What are you going to do in zone B?"

The pre-taped voice snapped a series of relentless questions at the teenagers, who became visibly more ill-at-ease with each passing minute. "We hear a lot of stories about what it means to be a refugee and how difficult it is," said Sona. "Even if it's just a little bit, we get an idea of what they are going through." The experience was even more personal for Sona, as her parents fled Armenia before she was born. But the painful memories of their flight to the Netherlands are never really discussed among her family. — AFP

KOSOVO OPPN RELEASES TEAR GAS IN PARLIAMENT

PRISTINA: Opposition lawmakers released tear gas yesterday in Kosovo's parliament as they once again tried to pressure the government into renouncing deals with Serbia and Montenegro. Clouds of smoke from two tear gas canisters forced lawmakers out of the debating chamber. The parliamentary session restarted later in another room without the presence of

opposition lawmakers. An opposition political party, the Alliance for Kosovo's Future, said one of its lawmakers, Pal Lekaj, was arrested, allegedly for using tear gas.

Meanwhile, police dispersed dozens of opposition supporters throwing stones and paint outside the building. There were no reports of any injuries. Over the past three months, the opposi-

tion has blocked Kosovo's parliament with tear gas, pepper spray, whistles and water bottles to protest the deals and their supporters have held violent protests in Pristina.

One of the deals gives more powers to ethnic Serbs in Kosovo while the other demarcates the border with Montenegro. Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, an act that Serbia still rejects. The two countries have been holding European Union-mediated talks to overcome their differences. Glauk Konjufca of the Self-Determination Movement told reporters the opposition would continue different forms of pressure on the government "to make it understand that the Aug 25 deals ... cannot pass in Kosovo and that the opposition is determined to use all the methods so these two deals damaging Kosovo's statehood are not applied."

US Ambassador Greg Delawie, who was at parliament, criticized yesterday's incident. He repeated the warning from US Secretary of State John Kerry, who visited two weeks ago, that parliament is "where meaningful debates on public policy are conducted, where people can listen to each other peacefully."

If the government refuses to halt the deals, the opposition wants a referendum on the issues or a new election. The government, the president and the international community have called for dialogue. The deal on Serb minority rights is suspended until Kosovo's constitutional court rules on its legality. The government, which accuses the opposition of trying to seize power by force, has said it will ask international experts to decide on the border demarcation with Montenegro. — AP



PRISTINA: Members of the Parliament disperse after a tear gas was launched by opposition lawmakers in the Kosovo's parliament. — AFP

LANDMARK SPAIN ELECTION FOR VOTERS TO TEST STATE OF NATION

MADRID: In the main plaza of a wealthy suburban bastion of Spain's ruling Popular Party, volunteers hand out campaign pamphlets trumpeting economic gains ahead of Sunday's national election. Sipping an espresso nearby, toy company executive Miguel Sanchez describes the new Mercedes-Benz company car he'll soon get, thanks to rising sales for his firm following years of tough times.

Downtown in a trash-strewn blue-collar stronghold of the Socialist Party, unemployed lawyer Maria Uribe rails against sky-high joblessness, a seemingly endless string of political corruption cases, tax hikes and public service cutbacks pushed through Parliament in the past four years.

The differing views from Sanchez and Uribe on the state of Spain reflect deep divisions among voters about their country and its economic fortunes as it approaches a crucial ballot that will decide whether the government will stay conservative, head toward

the center or veer sharply left. An economic recovery has been underway since late 2013 in a nation that almost imploded in Europe's financial crisis. But the upswing is coupled with 21 percent unemployment - the second highest jobless rate behind Greece in the 28-nation European Union.

Political landscape

Despite their opposing perspectives, Sanchez and Uribe have something in common: Both plan to help transform the nation's political landscape by casting ballots for upstart parties set to splinter Spain's traditional two-party dominance into a four-party system.

Sanchez thinks the business-friendly, centrist Ciudadanos party will do the best job steering the nation's delicate economy. He sees it "giving stability and fiscal clarity for the government, even if it has to make a coalition deal with another party." Uribe plans to cast her vote for the radical left Podemos party as

a message to the Socialists that they betrayed their roots and are now "made up of middle class bureaucrats who have become accustomed to power." Polls show Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's Popular Party set to win the most votes, but falling far short of the tally needed to retain the majority it holds in Parliament - meaning it would have to ally with another party, most likely Ciudadanos. Another possibility would be a matchup between the Socialists and Podemos.

Disenchantment has driven once-faithful voters away from the country's traditional Popular and Socialist parties that have alternated ruling the nation since 1982, following Spain's return to democracy after decades of dictatorship under Gen. Francisco Franco.

Many blame the Socialists for pulling Spain to the brink of an economic precipice following a lengthy period of robust economic growth. And they fault the Popular Party for delivering a recovery that has included meager job gains, as well as unpop-

ular austerity cuts seen by many as seriously damaging the Spanish welfare state.

"What you are seeing right now is the consequence of the fact that Spain is going through an unprecedented transition of political change," said Antonio Barroso, a London-based analyst with the Teneo Intelligence political risk consultancy. "It's because of the combination of the economic crisis and the rejection of the political establishment, and it's ushering in an era of new and old politicians."

Chief among them are the pony-tailed Pablo Iglesias of Podemos and Albert Rivera of Ciudadanos. Both say Spain shouldn't be content with its nine consecutive quarters of economic growth following back-to-back recessions during the 2008-2013 period and unemployment that reached a peak of 26.9 percent in the first quarter of 2014.

Bright spots

There are certainly bright spots in the

economy, chiefly a lack of the prevailing fear just a few years ago that Spain's economy would crash-and-burn - and take the eurozone, comprised of 19 EU nations that share a common currency, down with it. Instead, Spanish exports are up due to ruthless cost cutting by companies and a drop in the value of the euro against the dollar. Businesses and families have benefited from lower oil prices, car sales are up and the important tourism sector benefited from the Arab Spring uprisings, which kept visitors away from North African destinations on the Mediterranean Sea. But even though Rajoy is claiming credit for creating 1 million new jobs, economists say most are for Spaniards hired on short-term contracts with low pay usually lasting a few months. These jobs also don't carry the same level of benefits guaranteed under the law for the country's long-term labor contracts. Entry level salaries for young workers who used to make about 1,000 euros per month in 2008 are down about 30 percent. — AP

ICON TO POLITICIAN: AS MYANMAR CHANGES, SO DOES SAN SUU KYI

NAYPYITAW: When Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi spoke warmly on a recent radio show about a critical meeting that followed her landslide election victory, she was referring to talks with the very man who had detained her for 15 years.

Listeners might have been surprised by the Nobel peace laureate's gentle tone towards Than Shwe, former head of the junta that ruled Myanmar for nearly half a century. But it was just one of several conciliatory gestures Suu Kyi has made towards her one-time enemies since the Nov 8 poll, underlining her transformation from persecuted democracy icon to pragmatic politician. Her readiness to forge alliances with even those she once reviled could augur well for Myanmar, no longer a global pariah but still a country fraught with political risk as Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) and the military prepare to share power.

'Brighter future'

"We should think of working for the emergence of a brighter future based on the present situation, instead of thinking

why we didn't do it in the past," Suu Kyi said after meeting Than Shwe, whose regime kept her locked up in her lakeside Yangon home and prevented her dying British husband from visiting Myanmar. In the month since her election triumph, the 70-year-old Suu Kyi has also held talks - cordial, according to media reports - with President Thein Sein, a former military commander, and armed forces chief Min Aung Hlaing.

In other mollifying moves, she has called on her supporters to restrain their victory celebrations and warned NLD lawmakers not to call themselves "winners" in media interviews. "It's about smoothening the way," said analyst Richard Horsey, a former senior United Nations official in Myanmar. "It's about building relationships and political positioning, which is very important."

The events suggest that Suu Kyi, who often comes across as stern and uncompromising, is settling into realpolitik. The army's powers have not substantially diminished since a shift to semi-civilian rule in 2011: Under the constitution, it is guaranteed 25 percent of the seats in parliament, and controls three big-budget

and powerful ministries. Than Shwe resigned as head of state and army chief in 2011 and stepped away from active politics, but diplomats and observers say he retains enough clout to make the closed-door appointment with Suu Kyi a major step in easing her party's formation of government. "It is the truth that she will become the future leader of the country. I will support her with all of my efforts," the former dictator was quoted as saying by his grandson Nay Shwe Thway Aung after the meeting.

Mastering realpolitik

Suu Kyi's journey from the barricades to the corridors of power began over three years ago when she won a parliament seat. She cultivated ties with assembly speaker Shwe Mann, another former general who had been part of Than Shwe's inner circle.

Shwe Mann was sacked from the leadership of the then-ruling party by President Thein Sein in August, partly because of his closeness to Suu Kyi. The military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party was trounced in last month's election.



NATMAUK: Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi greets supporters as she leaves a ceremony to mark the 100th birthday of independence hero Aung San, in the remote central Myanmar town. — AFP

"Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and I meet quite often," Shwe Mann told Reuters last week, referring to her with an honorific. "We got to

understand each other during these meetings," he added, calling her "straightforward, courageous and very frank". — Reuters



DARIEN: In this photo taken Sept 15, 2015, Inderjit Singh Mukker, left at podium, speaks at a news conference saying because of his brown skin, turban and beard, he was the victim of a beating. — AP photos

SIKHS FEEL IN DANGER, JOIN WITH MUSLIMS TO COMBAT BACKLASH BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND VANDALISM AGAINST SIKHS

CHICAGO: Pardeep Kaleka spent several days after 9/11 at his father's South Milwaukee gas station, fearing that his family would be targeted by people who assumed they were Muslim. No, Kaleka explained on behalf of his father, who wore a turban and beard and spoke only in broken English, the family was Sikh, a Southeast Asian religion based on equality and unrelated to Islam. But amid a new wave of anti-Islamic sentiment since the terror attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, Kaleka is vowing to take an entirely different approach.

"For us it does not matter who they're targeting," said Kaleka, a former Milwaukee police officer and teacher whose father was one of six people killed in 2012 when a white supremacist opened fire at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. "This time we cannot differentiate ourselves; when hate rhetoric is being spewed we cannot be on the sidelines."

Across the US, Sikhs and Muslims are banding together to defend their respective religions. Someone bent on harming Muslims wouldn't understand - or care about - the distinction between the two faiths, they say, and both also deserve to live in peace.

So they plan educational sessions and rallies. They successfully pushed the FBI to track hate crimes against Sikhs. They speak to lawmakers and



CHICAGO: This undated photo provided by Kanwar Singh, shows his father, Inderjit Mukker, after he was beaten in a September 2015 road rage incident with a Chicago-area teenager in which the teen called the 53-year-old Sikh taxi driver "Bin Laden" and repeatedly hit him in the face.

support each other's legal action, including a lawsuit filed over a New York City police surveillance program targeting New Jersey Muslims. "We are in this fight together," said Gurjot Kaur, a senior staff attorney at The Sikh Coalition, founded the night of Sept 11.

A monotheistic faith

Sikhism, a monotheistic faith, was founded more than 500 years ago in Southeast Asia and has roughly 27 mil-

lion followers worldwide, most of them in India. There are more than 500,000 Sikhs in the US Male followers often cover their heads with turbans, which are considered sacred, and refrain from shaving their beards. Reports of bullying, harassment and vandalism against Sikhs have risen in recent weeks.

Last week, a Sikh temple in Orange County, California, was vandalized, as was a truck in the parking lot by someone who misspelled the word "Islam"

and made an obscene reference to ISIS. A Sikh woman said she recently was forced to show her breast pump before taking her seat on an airplane in Minneapolis because another passenger thought she might be an extremist. Several Sikh football fans said they initially were not allowed into Qualcomm Stadium to watch the San Diego Chargers game against the Denver Broncos last Sunday because some of them were wearing turbans. Schoolchildren say they've been bullied.

For most Sikhs, much of the backlash has been frequent stares or comments and occasional online insults. Former NCAA basketball player Darsh Singh said he has heard insults throughout his life, including when someone recently yelled "Osama!" at him as he was crossing a street in Phoenix. Then last week, a photo making the rounds on Facebook showed the former Trinity University basketball player - the first turbaned Sikh to play in the NCAA - with the caption: "Nobody wants to guard Muhammad, he's too explosive." A friend came to his defense with a lengthy post - saying, "do the world a favor and educate yourself" - which got tens of thousands of likes. "A lot of people act out of fear or ignorance," said Singh. "I don't know who started it, but whoever they are, I forgive them." — AP

POLICE JAIL SHOPKEEPER FOR BANNING AHMADI MINORITY

LAHORE: Pakistani police charged a shopkeeper with blasphemy yesterday after he banned members of the Ahmadi minority from entering his shop, a rare bid by authorities to protect an ethnic group that usually suffers state-sanctioned persecution.

The shopkeeper in the eastern city of Lahore was charged with spreading religious hatred, officials said, citing the National Action Plan, a grand scheme to combat extremism put in place in the wake of a Taliban massacre at a school last year that left more than 150 people dead. The move comes just two days before the first anniversary of the assault on the army-run school in Peshawar, which shocked and outraged Pakistanis already scarred by nearly a decade of attacks.

According to police, Aabid Hashmi, the owner of a computer shop in the city's upmarket commercial region, had displayed a poster outside his shop banning Ahmadi customers from entering. "The arrest was made under National Action Plan (NAP) for spreading religious hatred,"

Haider Ashraf, a senior police official, told AFP.

A spokesman for the Ahmadi community, Amir Mehmood, welcomed the move as the "first drop of rain". Senior columnist and former lawmaker Ayaz Amir said the move was "significant" and could help reduce persecution of the Ahmadis.

The group were legally declared non-Muslims in Pakistan for their belief in a prophet after Mohammad, and have long been persecuted in the deeply conservative country. In November Ahmadi families were forced to flee the eastern city of Jhelum after an angry mob torched a factory there, accusing the minority of burning Korans. Hardline Islamic scholars denounce the Ahmadis as heretics, describing their belief in a prophet after Mohammad as blasphemy - a hugely sensitive issue in Pakistan, where even unproven allegations stir mob lynching and violence. But authorities have previously defended state-sanctioned discrimination against the group, insisting they are "constitutionally protected". — AFP

PROBE INTO MISSING LAOS ACTIVIST DEEMED A 'FARCE'

BANGKOK: An investigation into the disappearance of Laotian activist Sombath Somphone three years ago is "a farce" and has had a chilling effect on civil society, rights groups said yesterday. Sombath, an award-winning campaigner for sustainable development, vanished from the streets of Vientiane after he was pulled over at a police checkpoint on the evening of December 15, 2012.

CCTV cameras in the Laos capital captured the moment his battered jeep stopped at the checkpoint before he is later seen getting into an unknown vehicle. His case has cast a dark cloud over civil society in Laos, an impoverished tightly-controlled communist country. It has also raised the issue of impunity for powerful state and business interests held responsible for routinely killing or "disappearing" activists across the region.

Rights groups accuse local authorities of failing to carry out even the most cursory of investigations and withholding information. "The official investigation so far has been a farce. It is a bad joke," Phil Robertson, deputy director of Human Rights Watch Asia, told reporters in Thailand. The apathy has had a chilling effect on activist groups and civil society, he added, speaking at a press briefing to mark the anniversary of Sombath's disappearance.

"The message to the Laos people from their government is: we can take anyone at anytime so shut up, sit down and do as

we tell you," Robertson said. New CCTV footage obtained by Sombath's family shows his jeep - which has never been found - being driven in the opposite direction than had been previously assumed. Activists said this pointed to holes in the investigation.

"This case is eminently solvable," said Sam Zarifi, from the International Commission of Jurists. He said a lack of political will - not a lack of evidence - has stymied the probe. Laos is the current chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and is set to host next year's summit for the ten-member block.

But breaking a 10-year tradition, there will be no ASEAN Peoples' Forum in 2016 and HRW said it was a deliberate move by the Laos government which it said was reluctant to allow discussion of Sombath's disappearance and other sensitive issues. "Not content to just censor the Laos people, the leaders of Vientiane now want to censor the regional dialogue in ASEAN," Robertson said.

Enforced disappearances are ugly realities across the region, where powerful business interests and murky state actors stand accused of routinely making opponents vanish. While data is scarce, rights campaigners say likely hundreds of people have vanished across Southeast Asia in the past two decades, often after coming up against local business, criminal or political interests. — AFP



DHAKA: A Bangladeshi girl holds a national flag as people gather to pay homage at the Intellectual Martyrs Memorial yesterday. Thousands of Bangladeshis paid tribute to the memory of dozens of intellectuals who were systematic killed during the 1971 war that won the South Asian country its independence from Pakistan. — AFP

PAKISTAN GOVERNOR KILLER LOSES BID TO REVIEW DEATH SENTENCE

ISLAMABAD: A former police bodyguard on death row in Pakistan for assassinating a politician inched closer to execution yesterday as the Supreme Court rejected his petition for a sentence review. Mumtaz Qadri was feted as a hero by Islamist supporters after he shot the liberal governor of Punjab province, Salman Taseer, 28 times in broad daylight in an upscale Islamabad market in 2011.

He later admitted the killing, saying he objected to the politician's calls to reform Pakistan's controversial blasphemy laws. Rights groups say these are frequently used to pursue vendettas, particularly against religious minorities. Taseer had also been vocal in his support of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman who has been on death row since 2010 after being found guilty of insulting the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

"The review petition has been dismissed" by a three-judge panel headed by Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, Qadri's lawyer Khwaja Muhammad Sharif told AFP. Sharif said his client's last option was to file a mercy petition to the Pakistani president. In previous hearings Qadri's lawyers drew on Islamic texts to argue that he was justified in killing Taseer, saying that by criticizing the law the politician was himself guilty of blasphemy - an argument rejected by the lead judge.

Blasphemy is a hugely sensitive issue in Pakistan, an Islamic republic of some 200 million, and Qadri has been hailed as a hero by many conservatives eager to drown out any calls to

soften the legislation. Critics including European governments say Pakistan's blasphemy laws are largely misused, with hundreds of people languishing in jails under false charges. — AFP



KARACHI: Pakistani supporters of former police bodyguard Mumtaz Qadri carry placards with his portrait as they shout slogans during a protest yesterday. — AFP

ACTIVISTS URGE RELEASE OF MAN DETAINED OVER FACEBOOK POST

BANGKOK: Thai activists yesterday demanded the release of a man arrested for sharing an infographic on Facebook detailing alleged graft in an army-built park, saying plainclothes security officers took him by force. Since taking power in a military coup in May 2014, Thailand's ruling junta has issued directives that have largely stifled dissent, including barring political discussions and debate.

On Sunday, a 25-year-old student, Thanet Anantawong, was taken from a hospital while he awaited an operation, said

prominent anti-junta activist, Siriwat Serithiwat. "Plain clothes security officers went to a hospital where Thanet was staying," Siriwat told reporters outside a criminal court in the capital. "I would like the court to release Thanet. He needs medical attention. We are afraid for his life."

A junta spokesman declined to comment on the arrest of Thanet, who is being held at Bangkok's 11th Army Circle military base. Thanet was among a group of activists who tried to visit the park, at the centre of a corruption scandal that threat-

ens to embroil the military government. Soldiers and police intercepted them at a train station, and detained some for several hours before their release.

The Rajabakti Park, built in the seaside resort town of Hua Hin south of Bangkok, and dedicated to the monarchy, has been at the centre of allegations of corruption and misspent funds. A military probe into its finances found no corruption, but graft accusations persist among opposition groups and the media.

Thanet faces charges under Article 116

of Thailand's criminal code - the equivalent of sedition - as well as under the wide-ranging Computer Crimes Act for allegedly reposting a diagram on Facebook linking junta leader Prayuth Chan-ocha and other officials to alleged corruption involving the park.

A second man, Thanakorn Siripaiboon, 27, was arrested on Dec. 8 for sharing posts about government corruption and hitting the "like" button on a post with an image deemed insulting to Thailand's king, Human Rights Watch said on Saturday. He is being

held at Bangkok's high-security Klong Prem Central prison, police said.

The junta has made a top priority of protecting the monarchy through the use of Thailand's royal defamation laws, which are among the world's harshest. Those accused of lese-majeste are tried in military courts, which have handed down record sentences. A military court refused Thanakorn bail, said his lawyer, Anon Nampa. "They said his crimes are punishable by many years in prison and they are afraid he will offend again if released," he added. — Reuters

VIETNAMESE JAILED FOR WEARING ARMY ATTIRE

HANOI: A Vietnamese court jailed a man for 15 months yesterday, a court clerk said, for wearing the army uniform of the former South Vietnam regime, which fought a bitter war against the communist north. Nguyen Viet Dung, 29, from central Nghe An province, was charged with "disturbing public disorder" and found guilty after a half-day trial at a district court in Hanoi, a court clerk told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Dung wore the uniform during a demonstration in Hanoi in April over a plan by city authorities-later shelved after a strong public backlash-to cut down hundreds of trees across the capital. Dung was the only one of hundreds of demonstrators, who mobilized using Facebook and attracted widespread support from Vietnam's emerging urban middle class, to be put on trial.

"It was only because he wore the uniform of the Republican Army, and he was behind the establishment of a group in support of that

army," Dung's lawyer Vo An Don said. The Republican Army was the army of the US-backed Saigon regime defeated by communist troops in April 1975. "This case is politically sensitive. I do not agree with this sentence... Dung is innocent," Don said, adding that Dung, who is in poor health, did not say a word in court. Dung was arrested in April and has been in detention since then. Police and other security officials blocked streets around the court yesterday and kept protesters and onlookers away from the building. But several dozen demonstrators waving signs proclaiming Dung's innocence gathered near the court, urging his release. Vietnam's communist one-party state is regularly denounced by rights groups and Western governments for its hardline stance on human rights. Authorities are notorious for using several vaguely worded provisions of the penal code to jail activists and regime critics. — AFP

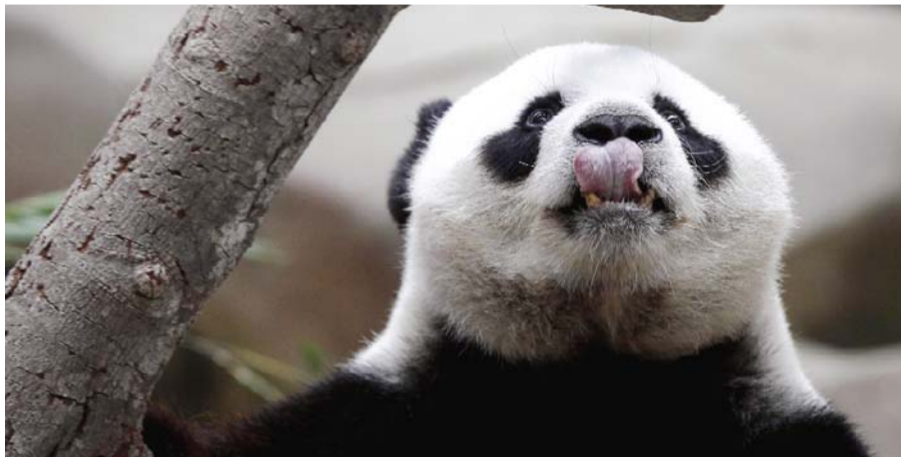
AUSTRALIAN TEENAGER PLEADS GUILTY TO 'TERRORISM' CHARGE

SYDNEY: A Melbourne teen arrested after police found explosives at his home pleaded guilty yesterday to a terrorism-related charge, highlighting concerns about youth radicalization following last week's arrest of a 15-year-old Sydney boy in police raids. The 17-year-old was planning an attack using improvised explosive devices, police said in May when they raided his home in Greenvale, 20 kilometers north of Australia's second city, Melbourne. The boy, who could not be identified because of his age, pleaded guilty to a single charge of "engaging in an act in preparation for, or planning, a terrorist act," the Australian Associated Press reported from the courtroom. Prosecutors dropped two other charges following the guilty plea, the AAP reported. Victoria state County Court officials could not be reached immediately for comment.

Australia, a staunch ally of the United States and its battle against Islamist militants in Iraq and Syria, has been on heightened alert for attacks by home-grown radicals since last year. Last Thursday, police said they had charged a 20-year-old man and a 15-year-old boy with conspiracy to attack government

buildings after they were arrested during early-morning raids by counter-terrorism police in Sydney. Three other men, all of them already in custody on terrorism-related offences, were also charged as part of the same operation. Police have described as "disturbing" the high number of young Australians charged with or involved in violent actions. The matter has raised concerns about how well the government is dealing with at-risk youth in the Muslim population.

Just weeks before the 17-year-old boy was arrested, five other Melbourne teenagers were arrested over the planning of an unrelated Islamic State-inspired terrorist attack against police on the national ANZAC day holiday. In September 2014, police shot dead a teenager in the southern city of Melbourne after he stabbed two counter-terrorism officers. Three months later, two hostages were killed when police stormed a central Sydney cafe to end a 17-hour siege by a lone gunman, who was also killed. A 15-year-old boy shot and killed an accountant at police headquarters in the Sydney suburb of Parramatta in October and was then killed in a gunfight with police outside the building. — Reuters



KUALA LUMPUR: In this Friday, Dec 11, 2015 file photo, Xing Xing, formerly known as Fu Wa, one of the two giant pandas from China, sniffs for food at the Giant Panda Conservation Center at the National Zoo in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The two giant pandas have been on loan to Malaysia from China for 10 years since May 21, 2014 to mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two nations. — AP



BEIJING: Chinese police push away journalists and supporters of human rights lawyer Pu Zhiqiang demonstrating near the Beijing Second Intermediate People's Court. — AFP

SCUFFLES AT COURT AS CHINA RIGHTS LAWYER PUT ON TRIAL

QUESTIONED OVER COMMENTS ON COMMUNIST PARTY

BEIJING: Police and men in plainclothes scuffled with supporters of one of China's most celebrated human rights lawyers yesterday as he was tried over online comments critical of the ruling Communist Party.

Dozens of Pu Zhiqiang's supporters travelled from across the country, some for thousands of kilometers, to protest outside the courtroom in Beijing. The crowd was shoved hundreds of meters away. "Pu Zhiqiang! Innocent!" protesters shouted before being broken up by police who said they had obstructed the pavement.

Authorities dragged at least three people away, an AFP reporter at the scene saw, and shoved at least two to the ground. Pu, who has represented labor camp victims and dissident artist Ai Weiwei, was detained a year and a half ago in a nationwide crackdown on critics. He faces a maximum of eight years in jail on charges of "inciting ethnic hatred" and "picking quarrels and provoking trouble," according to his lawyer Mo Shaoping. In a trial that lasted little more than three hours, he said Beijing's Number Two Intermediate People's Court considered the evidence-seven posts Pu made on a microblog between 2011 and 2014. According to Mo, his client told the court he was willing to apologize to anyone who had been harmed by his comments.

'Man of the law'

"I am a man of the law," the lawyer quoted Pu as saying. "I have faith in the law, so I believe and hope that the court can give me a verdict that can stand the test of history."

No ruling was issued yesterday but Mo said he expected it "quite quickly". Supporter Bao Renpu condemned the strong-arm tactics against the crowd.

"On the outside, the government talks about human rights and democracy, but on the inside, it simply doesn't exist," she said. Security personnel-those in civilian dress identifiable by "smiley face" stickers on their clothing-also pushed and shouted at senior US diplomat Dan Biers and journalists. "Lawyers and civil society leaders such as Mr Pu should not be subject to continuing repression but should be allowed to contribute to the building of a prosperous and stable China," Biers said.

A diplomat from the European Union mission was also shoved and shouted down as he delivered a statement criticising the process. Yao Lianshe, a citizen who attends as many trials as he can despite frequent police harassment, told AFP: "China has too few good lawyers-he was one of the few." "Nothing in China will ever change for the better unless the people are unfraid to stand up to authority and bear witness."

'Don't be a conqueror'

In the comments for which he was tried, Pu said China did not need Communist rule, writing: "Other than secrecy, cheating, passing the buck, delay, the hammer and sickle, what kinds of secrets of governance does this party have?" He also condemned government policy in the mainly Muslim far-western region of Xinjiang as "absurd" in the wake of a bloody knife attack blamed on separatists that killed 31 peo-

ple at a train station in Kunming.

"Don't be a conqueror or a plunderer," he wrote. "No matter whether your aggression is a preemptive measure or a responsive measure, it's all aggression. It's all about making the other side your enemy." The 50-year-old is the latest person to be tried in a crackdown on critics of the Communist Party overseen by President Xi Jinping, which has seen hundreds detained and dozens sent to prison. He is virtually certain to be convicted in the Communist-controlled court.

A former client of his, Xie Sunming, told AFP: "Sure, they won't let us into the courtroom, but that's not what's important. I'm here to support Pu Zhiqiang, a good man who helped me immensely." Xie was sentenced to a year in a labor camp in 2009 for posting a single sentence on an online forum accusing a local government official of corrupt business ties.

He drove 20 hours from Chongqing in southwestern China to stand outside the Beijing courthouse, saying he and a friend "had to sneak out and drive all night", unable to travel by air or train for fear of being detained. The US embassy said in a statement it viewed "with great concern" incidents in which diplomats were not given appropriate protection and respect.

China's foreign ministry said authorities functioned "in accordance with the law" and "people should cooperate with them." "When you come to China, you need to respect China's laws," one police officer told foreign journalists as he punched his way through a crowd. — AFP

JAPAN COURT TO DECIDE ON 19TH CENTURY FAMILY LAWS

TOKYO: Japan's top court will rule this week on a pair of 19th century family laws that critics blast as sexist and out of touch. The Supreme Court will weigh in on the legality of a six-month ban on women remarrying after divorce and another law that requires spouses to have the same surname, in a highly anticipated decision set for Wednesday.

The court will decide whether to uphold, amend or strike down the controversial legislation, which dates back to an era of starkly different social mores. The half-year remarriage ban is linked to complex rules over the timing of a child's birth after divorce-designed to determine whether a child belonged to the ex-husband or the new spouse's family in an era before DNA testing.

The surname rule is a throwback to Japan's feudal family system, in which all women and children came under the control of the head of household-traditionally a man. "Even if the feudal family system is long gone, many people still have the image of a woman marrying into the husband's household," said Waseda University law professor Masayuki Tanamura.

Sexual control

That system was abolished in 1948, part of broad reforms pushed by the post-World War II US occupation, but Japan's civil code maintained the two articles-which will go before the court this week. Activists say the laws are a continued reflection of the country's male-dominated society more than a century after they came into effect.

Mother and activist Masae Ido knows firsthand the implications of the half-year ban on remarriage. "These laws mean a woman remains under a

man's sexual control even after divorce," Ido, 50, told AFP. She vividly recalls her frustration after the birth of a child with her second husband. A municipal official said her ex-husband must be registered as the father of her baby-who, under the rules, was born too soon after they divorced-even though he was not biologically related to the child.

A long and difficult split left Ido feeling unable to ask the former husband to publicly acknowledge the child as not his, so she had to sue her new spouse in a judicial tango to fix the paternity puzzle.

"My child was finally registered after this bizarre legal procedure," said Ido, now an activist helping those in similar situations.

Some western countries have also had similar laws. France, for example, in 2004 abolished a requirement that women wait 300 days before remarrying. The situation in Japan has left some people-possibly tens of thousands in a state of legal limbo because they end up unregistered in either family, which can make it tough to get a permanent job or receive social services. — AFP



TOKYO: This picture taken on December 12, 2015 shows a family strolling at a park. — AFP

INDONESIAN MINISTER DISTANCES GOVT FROM FREEPORT EXTORTION

JAKARTA: A senior Indonesian minister yesterday sought to distance the administration from parliament speaker Setya Novanto, who is fighting allegations that he tried to extort shares worth \$1.8 billion in the local unit of Freeport McMoRan Inc.

Novanto is at the center of a major political scandal, with a parliamentary ethics council investigating allegations he used the name of President Joko Widodo to pressure Freeport's officials for the shares, in return for a contract extension. Novanto has denied any wrongdoing.

Analysts say the high-profile case could further erode investor confidence in Southeast Asia's largest economy, with Indonesia routinely ranked as one of the world's most corrupt countries. "We must not politicize this anymore because honestly we're playing with something that can cause financial damage to this nation," Luhut Pandjaitan, chief security minister and key presidential adviser, told the ethics panel.

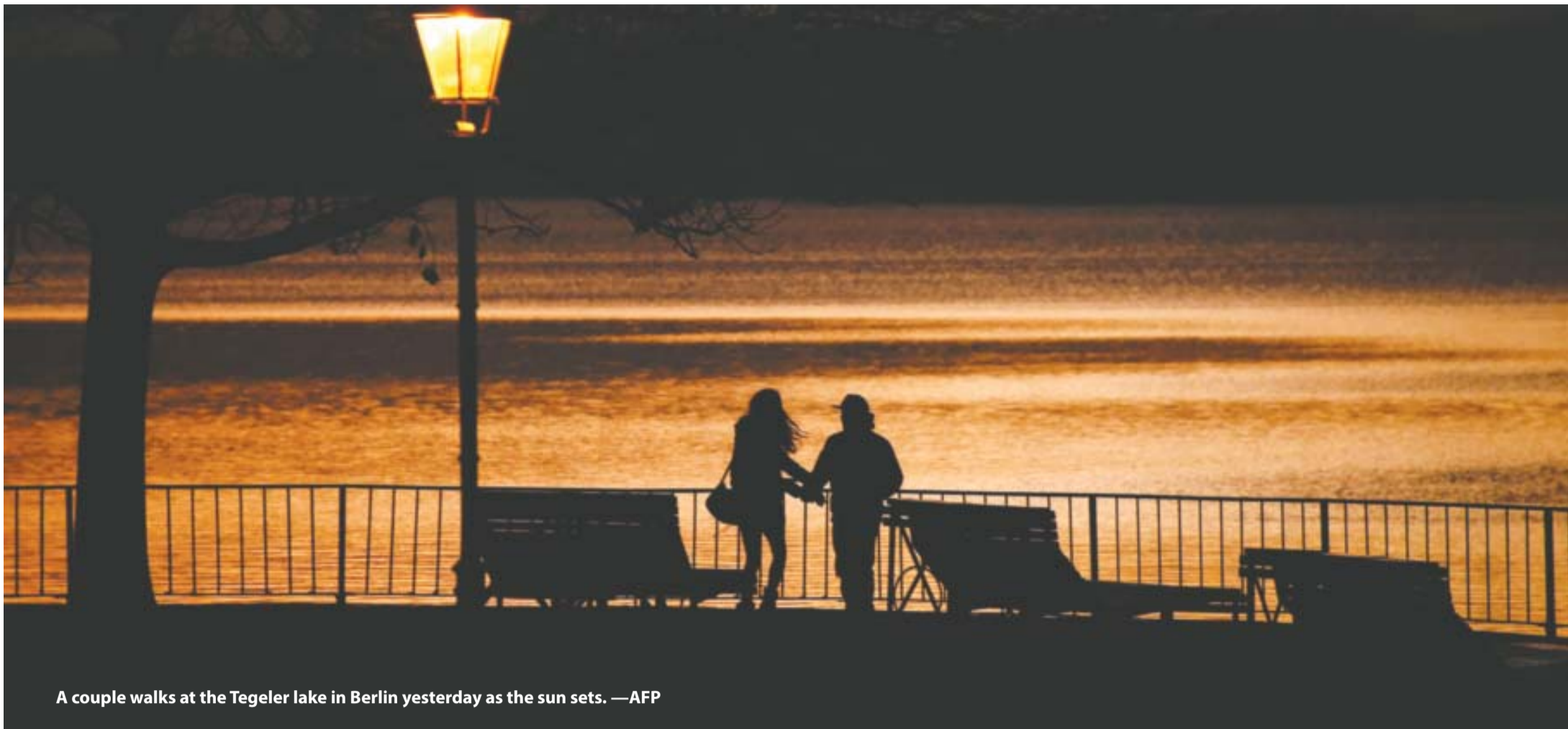
Pandjaitan was called to testify after his name came up repeatedly in a secretly recorded meeting between Novanto and the head of Freeport's Indonesian operations. In the recording, Novanto indicated he had the approval of Pandjaitan, who was then the presidential chief of staff, to negotiate for the 20 percent stake on behalf of Widodo. An ethics panel member said Pandjaitan's name was mentioned 66 times during the two-hour recording.

Stick to the facts

Pandjaitan, who founded coal and palm oil firm Toba Sejahtera Group in 2004, said he never discussed such an issue with Novanto and had no prior knowledge of the meeting. "My friendship with Novanto is limited to his work as House speaker and mine as coordinating minister," Pandjaitan told the ethics hearing broadcast live on television. "Since I have taken public office, I haven't been involved in business."

The minister urged panel members to "stick to the facts" as the case could hurt investor sentiment. Widodo, who has not been called before the ethics panel, has urged authorities to conduct a transparent investigation. The attorney general's office is also looking into the case. Freeport Indonesia must sell the Indonesian government a greater share of its Grasberg copper and gold mine, one of the world's biggest, under regulations passed last year by the previous administration.

The government already has a 9.36 percent stake in Freeport's Indonesian operations, and is due to take another 10.64 percent stake. In return for Freeport's shares, Novanto allegedly told the company executive that he could ensure the miner's contract would be extended from 2021 to 2041. US-based Freeport sought the contract extension to give it legal certainty before investing billions of dollars in the Grasberg mine. — Reuters



A couple walks at the Tegeler lake in Berlin yesterday as the sun sets. —AFP

IN IRAN, SHARING PHOTOS ON MOBILE APPS CAN MEAN JAIL

TEHRAN: The tattooed young Iranian initially sparked wonder and some envy when pictures of him with scantily-clad, heavily made-up women, often more than one at a time, went viral. In a morally conservative country, the obvious breach of a female dress code was one thing. The compromising poses the 14 women were captured in was another. When the people who patrol Iran's heavily filtered Internet found out, the man known only as Vahid landed in jail. Images of the women - pouting at the camera and mostly wearing miniskirts and crop tops - spread via smartphones, triggering both ridicule and outrage in the Islamic republic.

Jokes about Vahid - the authorities have not released his surname - proliferated, yet he remains in custody and could be prosecuted. The scandal has also provoked a wider debate about smartphone use and the technology used to share content. The pictures - and rumors about the main protagonist - spread rapidly on Telegram, the free-to-download instant messaging app. Vahid, a 30-year-old real estate agent, was quickly - and wrongly - said to own a Maserati and expensive villa in northern Tehran. As if the infamy was not bad enough - one media outlet dubbed him Don Juan - matters worsened when he took to Telegram again to say his phone had been stolen, claiming the women were his sisters and arguing that his privacy was invaded.

"Posting that video was the biggest mistake of my life," he was later quoted as saying in an apologetic media appearance after being arrested by Iran's Cyber Police. The force has wide powers to screen the Internet for content deemed un-Islamic. In the past eight months, 609 men and 114 women have been arrested for cybercrimes because of alleged "economic, moral and social" transgressions, official figures show.

No report of Vahid's phone being stolen was ever filed, according to police, and his plight has darkened since he was detained and publicly shamed with pictures of him in handcuffs and head in hands making the front page of several newspapers. The case has become a cause celebre among Telegram's opponents, who say the app and others such as

WhatsApp and Viber, all used by millions, spread "immoral content" from the West into the minds of Iranians.

Telegram is the most popular messaging service in Iran. Children and teenagers use it to chat while youths organize their social and love lives on it. Even grandmothers share recipes on the app, often via its thousands of interest groups. But the problems in controlling shared content could lead to access being restricted. "If Telegram doesn't take proper measures to comply with our laws within a short time, this body will move to filter it," Abdul Samad Khorram Abadi, secretary of Iran's Committee for Specifying Cyber Crimes, said last month. The committee is Iran's highest IT regulator and it decides which websites and services to censor.

Facebook and Twitter remain blocked in Iran but are accessed by millions using easily available software. Telegram's rise poses a deeper dilemma - even the office of the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, runs public service channels on it, which, presumably, would lose their purpose if the app was shut down and no-one in Iran could use it. It also skirts other restrictions - a banned satellite television channel has attracted 800,000 subscribers on its Telegram channel, where comic material is easily shared.

Hassan Rouhani, Iran's moderate president, has spoken regularly about how attempts to block websites do not work. With Internet use rising each year among a population of 78 million, he has said a fresh approach is needed to tackle abuse. State intervention, however, remains prominent. When Telegram was asked in September to stop "harmful" content reaching Iran, the company took appropriate measures, according to Iran's Telecommunications Minister Mahmoud Vaezi.

But when new pornographic content surfaced, the app's owner Pavel Durov accused Iran of blocking the service, only to apologise later when it emerged that bandwidth problems were to blame. The debate over inappropriate content has also triggered conspiracy theories about Telegram and calls for a clampdown. "Telegram's headquarters are in Israel

and their servers are in the UK," Ruhollah Momeninasab, an IT specialist, said in a debate on national television this month. The Berlin-based company rejected the remarks regarding Iran's arch-foe, saying it had "no connection at all" to Israel.

With a high-level of smartphone use and 70 percent of Iran's population having access to the Internet, mobile apps have transformed social lives. Masiha, 47, a housewife, runs two small Telegram groups, one "for the ladies" and one "mixed group for positive thinking and psychology". "I spend most of my spare time here," she said. Fatemeh, 21, a sociology

student, is much the same. "I mostly use Telegram to share content with my classmates and chat with my friends."

Vahid's case, however, has shown how private lives can quickly become public with unintended consequences. As well as facing possible criminal charges, several of the women he was pictured with have launched legal action against him, saying they were duped. "I had no relations with him," said Rojin, 23, noting that when she saw the pictures on social media she telephoned Vahid, and told him: "I either get really famous with this or my life will be destroyed." — AFP

TWO MPS FILE TO GRILL HEALTH MINISTER

Continued from Page 1

It said that based on the Audit Bureau report, the ministry purchased large quantities of medical equipment that it did not use and kept it in storage. It estimated the cost of some of the equipment at KD 5 million. The grilling accuses the health ministry of requesting extra funds of KD 17 million to pay for variation orders to a local company for a contract worth only KD 20 million. The ministry action came although the government's legal department ruled that the company is not entitled to the funds.

The grilling also cites suspected financial violations in a contract with a local company to register expatriates in the medical insurance system. It said that the ministry is still dealing with the company although the contract expired in July 2014. It also said that the Audit Bureau found that the number of medical insurance certificates issued was less than the number of expatriates who entered the country and the ministry allegedly did not investigate the issue.

The grilling accused the minister of planning to sign a "highly-suspicious" project for automated links between the ministry and Kuwaiti health offices abroad with a British company at a cost of around KD 55 million. The two lawmakers also accused the minister of being politically responsible for medical errors that resulted in the death of six Kuwaitis and an expatriate in public hospitals. They claimed the minister did not initiate any investigation into the errors and only issued media statements.

The grilling claims that the ministry has made a number of purchases of drugs and medical equipment at highly-inflated prices, sometimes more than double the actual price. It cited several examples for such purchases. The grilling also spoke of a large number of violations in contracts and projects by the ministry that cost state coffers tens of millions of dinars, and claimed the minister did not take any action. The grilling said that the public health situation in Kuwait has deteriorated and the minister is directly responsible for the chaotic conditions and must be held to account.

SAUDI COMMANDER, UAE OFFICER KILLED...

Continued from Page 1

The coalition has been battling Iran-backed rebels in Yemen since March, and has provided loyalist forces with troops and equipment as well as carrying out air strikes on insurgent positions. Sahyan on Saturday met Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi who awarded him with a medal of courage, according to Yemen's official sabanew.net. He was identified as commander of the Saudi forces in provisional capital Aden, where Hadi is based. The United Arab Emirates, playing a key role in the Saudi-led coalition, confirmed the

death of its officer without specifying his rank.

In early September, a similar rebel missile strike on a coalition base in Yemen's eastern Marib province killed 67 coalition soldiers, most of them Emiratis. So far at least 80 people, mostly soldiers and border guards, have been killed in Saudi Arabia because of the Yemen conflict. The UAE says it has lost almost 70 soldiers so far. Several Bahraini troops and one Qatari soldier have been killed as part of the coalition operations. In Yemen itself, the United Nations says more than 5,800 people have been killed, about half of them civilians, and more than 27,000 wounded since March. — Agencies

EX-GITMO INMATE WANTS 'TRUTH' ON UK..

Continued from Page 1

Dominic Grieve, head of a parliamentary committee charged with overseeing Britain's security services, said he hoped Aamer would take part in an ongoing inquiry into detainee treatment and rendition. "It would be immensely helpful to us if both Shaker Aamer but also the other detainees were to help us," Grieve told BBC Radio 4's Today program. "And I say that fully understanding that in the end they might, after we publish the report, say they still want a full judicial inquiry," he said.

In a series of cases still being considered by Britain's court, campaigners have called for the security services to be put on trial for allegedly working together with the United States on a programme to allow terror detainees to be tortured. In his interviews with British media, Aamer claimed brutal treatment in detention and spoke of his emotional reunion with his four children - one of whom was born when he was already in detention. Aamer said the treatment of detainees at Guantanamo constituted a "war crime", claiming that at different points he was forced to drink sewage water, deprived of sleep and hog-tied by his interrogators. — AFP

Premier Brands

To see your ad here, call:
+965 248 35 616 / 617
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
ads@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Winter Offers

Panasonic
KX-MB1500CX
Laser Printer

3 IN 1

PRINT
COPY
SCAN

28 KD .000

• Print speed 19 PPM
• Resolution 600x600dpi

• سرعة طباعة 19ppm
• دقة طباعة 600x600dpi

Panasonic
KX-MB2168MLB
Mono Laser Multi-Function Printer

4 IN 1

Wi-Fi
PRINT
COPY
SCAN
FAX

69 KD .000

• ADF
• High speed 26ppm/26cpm
• Quick duplexing 34ppm/24cpm
• Super G3 fax full options/Advance options
• Printing/Scan resolution: 600dpi/19200dpi
• High speed USB 2.0 • Secured printing
• Wi-Fi / LAN

Panasonic
KX-FP712CX-W

Original Toner
KX-FA57E

49 KD .000

• 70m ink film length
• 14.4 kbps modem speed
• Multi copy(50-Sheet)
• Automatic document feeder

1809 809

• Kuwait 1 (the New str.) • Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower) • Hawalli 1 (Tunis str.) • Hawalli 2 (Bin Khaldon str.) • Shuwaikh (4th Ring road) • Al-Rai (4th Ring road)
• Salmiya (Salem Al-Mubarak str.) • Farwaniya (Behind police Station) • Fahahesi (Opp. General Parking) • Jahra (Opp. Main Co-op.) • Airport (Departure Hall)

Kuwait Times

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24835619
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Focus

THE CHINA METAL
EXCHANGE AT CENTRE OF
INVESTMENT SCANDAL

By David Stanway

The plain four-storey Fanya exchange building in this southern Chinese city is teeming with investigators trying to understand how an obscure metal trading business turned into one of China's most audacious investment schemes. Tucked behind an upmarket shopping mall, the Fanya Exchange was founded in 2011 with the aim of giving China greater global control over the supply and price of 14 strategic and rare metals. It also offered an investment product promising annual returns as high as 13.68 percent and the flexibility to deposit and withdraw money at will.

It almost seemed too good to be true. And it was. In July, hundreds of citizens gathered outside the exchange building in Kunming, demanding to know what had happened to more than 40 billion yuan (\$6.6 billion) they had invested in a Fanya-backed product known as "Rijinbao" or "Daily Golden Jewel". Five months later, they are still waiting for answers. Government investigators and independent auditors are trying to get to grips with yet another wealth management product (WMP) gone awry in China, one that the government itself had promoted.

Fears are rising about the underlying risks to China's financial system from the \$2.6 trillion WMP industry and the challenges it pose to Chinese regulators. Many of these products are being sold on a plethora of privately run exchanges, which have come under increasing scrutiny from the state securities regulator, who is worried illegal behaviour was putting billions of yuan at risk. The scandal also highlights the political and social risks for the ruling Communist Party as China's growing class of retail investors, with limited investment opportunities, become outraged over the disappearance of their life-savings into schemes they thought the government had endorsed as safe.

"We do see that Chinese regulators tend to be a bit more behind the curve," said Zhou Hao, senior emerging markets economist at Commerzbank in Singapore. "We've seen it with stocks, in forex, and in the futures markets. It's kind of a policeman and thief problem." "It's not that they don't want to do well, but the market develops very quickly and part of the problem is that there are many different regulators and a lot of gaps between them."

As the Fanya scandal unfolded, a group of investors tracked down the chairman of the exchange, Shan Jiuliang, and hustled him off to a police station. Other groups of investors have descended on government bodies in Beijing and Shanghai to stage protests. Security guards blocked Reuters from entering the Fanya exchange building. But in an interview outside, a Fanya manager who identified himself only by his surname Liao said the current investigations were expected to conclude within two months. "We urge investors to show patience," he said.

In a sign that Beijing has finally taken notice, the Kunming city government has said it is investigating illegal behaviour at the exchange and that it had set up a "clean and rectify" team. It has promised to take action if illegal activity is uncovered. A new Communist Party head has been appointed in Kunming and the vice-mayor was dismissed in October on corruption charges. Still, after waiting so many months for action, investors are sceptical they will recover their money. "If the government had taken just 10 percent of the energy it used to stop us and spent it on trying to deal with Shan Jiuliang, then the Fanya situation would have been resolved immediately," said a Shanghai-based investor who gave his name as Wang. The exchange and the Kunming government declined to comment. Investors said the "Rijinbao" scheme was advertised on state television and the Fanya exchange described itself as government-backed and regulated. However, analysts say Chinese investors often assume banks and the government will cover any losses, so they fail to read the small print. Fanya guaranteed the product, which was based on rising metal prices and interest earned on financial deals.

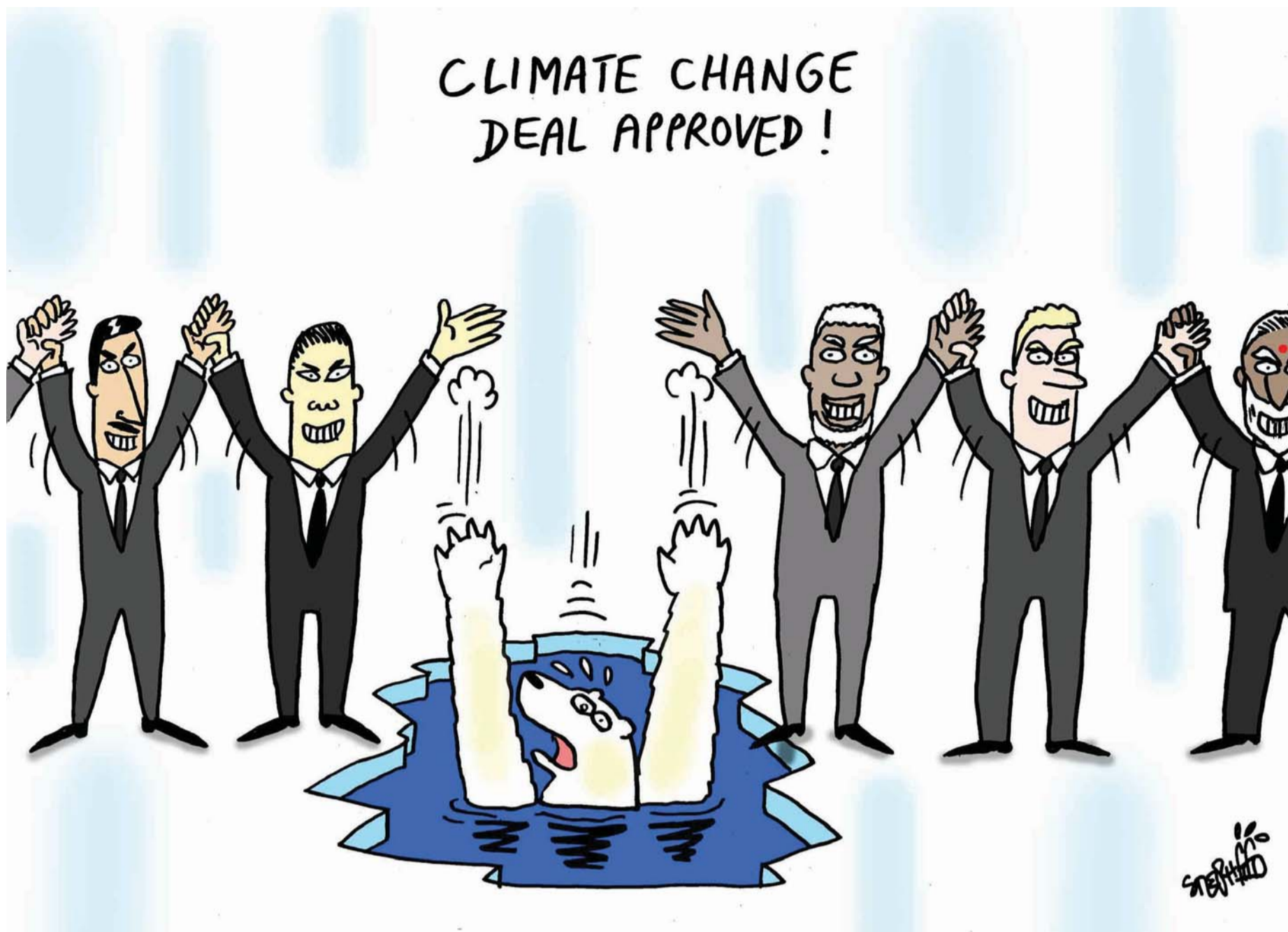
Rare Earths

The Fanya Metals Exchange was launched shortly after China, the world's dominant producer of rare earths, imposed quotas on production and exports in a bid to support prices and attract downstream consumers to China. Fanya was keen to provide a supporting role, saying it wanted to raise the value of the whole minor metals industrial chain. It stockpiled and traded 14 metals, rapidly becoming the biggest minor metals market in the world. These metals are minor because they are a byproduct of extracting other major metals, such as zinc or copper.

"Fanya prices already lead global prices, and have made China's voice on the minor metals' stage growing increasingly strong," it boasted on its website in 2014. Prices for the metals traded on the exchange rose sharply and became increasingly out of sync with world prices. Its most traded metal - indium - more than doubled between 2012 and 2015 to \$1,200 per kg. Prices kept rising from the end of 2014 even as global prices headed into a rapid decline.

The price difference kept traders outside of China wary of using the exchange. Now they are worried about what will happen to the accumulated stock of metals on the exchange. "It's not clear how all this winds down, or what the local government or Beijing will do," said David Abraham, director of the Technology, Rare and Electronic Materials Center. "There are lots of wild cards here." —Reuters

All articles appearing on these pages are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein. Kuwait Times invites readers to voice their opinions. Please send submissions via email to: opinion@kuwaittimes.net or via snail mail to PO Box 1301 Safat, Kuwait. The editor reserves the right to edit any submission as necessary.



SUPERMARKETS SELLING SHRIMP PEELED BY SLAVES

By Margie Mason

Poor migrant workers and children are being sold to factories in Thailand and forced to peel shrimp that ends up in global supply chains, including those of Wal-Mart and Red Lobster, the world's largest retailer and the world's largest seafood restaurant chain, an AP investigation found. At the Gig Peeling Factory, nearly 100 Burmese laborers were trapped, most working for almost nothing. They spent 16 hours a day with their aching hands in ice water, ripping the guts, heads, tails and shells off shrimp. One girl was so tiny she had to stand on a stool to reach the peeling table. Some workers had been there for months, even years. Always, someone was watching.

"They didn't let us rest," said Eae Hpaw, 16, her arms a patchwork of scars from shrimp-related infections and allergies. "We stopped working around 7 in the evening. We would take a shower and sleep. Then we would start again around 3 in the morning."

Pervasive human trafficking has helped turn Thailand into one of the world's biggest shrimp providers. Despite repeated promises by businesses and government to clean up the country's \$7 billion seafood export industry, abuses persist, fueled by corruption and complicity among police and authorities. Arrests and prosecutions are rare. Raids can end up sending migrants without proper paperwork to jail, while owners go unpunished. "I was shocked after working there a while, and I realized there was no way out," said Tin Nyo Win, 22, another former Gig factory worker, who routinely peeled 175 pounds of shrimp with his wife for just \$4 a day.

Hundreds of shrimp-peeling sheds are hidden in plain sight in Samut Sakhon, an hour outside Bangkok, some with slaves locked inside. Last month, AP journalists followed and filmed trucks loaded with freshly

peeled shrimp from the abusive Gig shed to major Thai exporting companies. They also traced similar connections from another factory raided six months earlier, and interviewed more than two dozen workers from both sites. In all, several companies received tainted shrimp, including Thai Union, one of the world's biggest seafood companies, and a subsidiary.

The farmed shrimp can mix with different batches of seafood as it is packaged, branded and shipped, making it impossible to determine where any individual piece was peeled. But because at least some of the Thai exporters' shrimp was processed by forced labor, all of it is considered associated with slavery, according to United Nations and US standards.

US customs records show the shrimp made its way into the supply chains of major US food stores and retailers such as Wal-Mart, Kroger, Whole Foods, Dollar General and Petco, along with restaurants such as Red Lobster and Olive Garden. It also entered supply chains for some of America's best-known seafood brands and pet foods, including Chicken of the Sea and Fancy Feast. AP reporters went to supermarkets in all 50 states and found shrimp products from supply chains tainted with forced labor.

Import and export records from Europe and Asia are confidential, but the Thai companies receiving shrimp tracked by the AP all say they ship to those continents. AP reporters in England, Germany, Italy and Ireland found several brands sourced from Thailand in supermarkets in those countries. The businesses that responded to AP's findings condemned the practices that lead to these conditions. Many asked for details and said they were launching investigations.

"I want to eliminate this," said Dirk Leuenberger, CEO of Aqua Star, a leading seafood supplier. "I think it's disgusting that

it's even remotely part of my business." Wal-Mart, Red Lobster and other companies said they strive to ensure the shrimp they receive is not tainted by slavery. "As the world's largest seafood restaurant, we know the important role we play in setting and ensuring compliance with seafood industry standards, and we're committed to doing our part to make sure the seafood we buy and serve is sourced in a way that is ethical, responsible and sustainable," Red Lobster said in a statement.

Red Lobster, Whole Foods and H-E-B Supermarkets were among the companies that said they were confident - based on assurances from their Thai supplier - that their particular shrimp was not associated with abusive factories. That Thai supplier admits it hadn't known where it was getting all its shrimp and sent a note outlining corrective measures to US businesses demanding answers last week. Responding to US business demands for answers to AP's findings, Thai Union CEO Thiraphong Chansiri acknowledged "that illicitly sourced product may have fraudulently entered its supply chain."

Susan Coppedge, the U.S. State Department's new anti-trafficking ambassador, said problems persist because offenders aren't held accountable - though the US itself hasn't punished Thailand, an important Southeast Asian ally. She said American consumers "can speak through their wallets" by avoiding slave-produced products. Thailand passed laws this year to crack down on fishing-industry abuses and is working to register undocumented migrant workers, who often are lured from home by brokers with promises of good-paying jobs. They are then sold to shrimp sheds such as the Gig factory, where Tin Nyo Win and his wife learned they would have to work off what was considered their combined worth: \$830, an insurmountable debt.

"There have been some flaws in the

laws, and we have been closing those gaps," said M L Puntarik Smiti, the Thai Labor Ministry's permanent secretary. Critics argue, however, that changes have been largely cosmetic. Former slaves repeatedly described how police took them into custody and then sold them to agents who trafficked them again. They say police are paid to look the other way and that officers frequently do not understand labor laws.

Tin Nyo Win escaped the Gig factory and was helped by a labor rights group, which pressured authorities to act. On Nov 9, dozens of officers and military troops burst into the shed. Frightened Burmese workers huddled on the dirty concrete floor. One young mother breast-fed a 5-month-old baby, while children were taken to a corner. But no one at the shed was arrested for human trafficking. Instead, migrants with papers, including seven children, were sent back there to work. Ten undocumented children were taken from their parents and put into a shelter. Twenty-one other illegal workers were detained, including Tin Nyo Win and his wife, but all have since been moved to government shelters for human-trafficking victims.

Local authorities have been ordered to reinvestigate the factory, which is now closed. Police said workers were moved to another shed linked to the same owners. A Gig owner reached by phone declined to comment. Meanwhile, the AP informed labor rights investigators who work closely with police about another shed where workers said they were being held against their will. It is being examined.

NOTE: More than 2,000 trapped fishermen have been freed this year as a result of an ongoing Associated Press investigative series into slavery in the Thai seafood industry. The reports also have led to a dozen arrests, millions of dollars' worth of seizures and proposals for new federal laws. —AP

KANTANKA? 'MADE IN GHANA' CARS GO ON SALE

By Nana Boakyee-Yiadom

Buy Local

Japanese Toyotas, German Mercedes and BMWs, GM cars and trucks from the USA are driven in countries around the world. But in Ghana an inventor and church leader who started out trying to make voice-controlled television sets is telling the auto giants to move over. Kwadwo Safo Kantanka - nicknamed the "Apostle" because he also runs a network of churches - has finally realized his dream of developing and marketing cars "Made in Ghana". "It's been in the pipeline since 1971," Kwado Safo junior, one of the inventor's sons, told AFP. "It started with the old man, so it's been a long time coming."

Kantanka's range of sports utility vehicles and pick-up trucks have got Ghana talking on social media, thanks in part to an advertising campaign using local movie and music stars. The sticker price of the vehicles run from \$18,000 to \$35,000 - out of range for most people in Ghana. But a cheaper saloon car is expected to go on sale next year. The locally made vehicles are entering a tough market, going up against established brands in a country that sees about 12,000 new and 100,000 second-hand cars imported every year.

But the inventor's son, who is chief executive of the Kantanka Group, is confident the demand is there and the firm can hold its own in the competition. "Already we have certain companies in Ghana who have come to make certain outrageous orders for huge numbers that we have to meet. So, we are working," he said, without giving any specifics.

Ghana's President John Dramani Mahama has been pushing his compatriots to buy locally to boost a stuttering economy hit by inflation, a depreciating currency and high public sector debt. In 2014, he showed off a pair of Ghana-made shoes during his annual State of the Nation address and criticized the lack of appreciation of locally made goods and over-reliance on imports. He noted that some \$1.5 billion was spent in foreign currency on items such as rice, sugar, cooking oil,

tomatoes and fish - all money "which could have gone into the pockets of Ghanaian entrepreneurs", he said. "Any import items we buy as Ghanaians constitutes an export of jobs in this country, especially in respect of the items for which we have comparative advantage to produce," he said at the time.

For Kantanka some key components such as glass, tyres and brake callipers are imported, AFP was told on a visit to the company's technology research centre west of Accra last year. But local sourcing is

a key component of Kantanka's vehicles, whose radiator grilles feature Ghana's five-pointed star emblem. Wood from Ghanaian forests is used to make dashboards while the cream-coloured leather seats in the black SUV were made in the country's second biggest commercial city, Kumasi. Akan - a language widely used in Ghana - is written alongside English on the electronics.

'The Next Toyota'?

Kantanka's son was adamant about the uniqueness of the cars, which have all been approved for safety by Ghana's Drivers Vehicle Licensing Authority. The Made in Ghana label means that "if you have any problems with the vehicle, you wouldn't have to import from India or China or America. All the parts are right here and we have a 24-hour service," he said. Six months ago, Ghana's police service received one of the pick-up trucks, potentially paving the way for other government agencies to place orders.

Kantanka junior is upbeat about the way ahead. "The future of Kantanka for the next 10 years is to try as much as possible to increase our lines," he said. To the current three lines, he said, "we intend to increase by next year January, February and add two more lines to it. We intend to go into more lines like buses, mini-vans and all that." For Ghanaians, the cars could put their West African nation on the map. "We must believe in the Ghanaian just like Toyotas and Hyundais," said Murtala Mohammed, who lives in Accra. "They all started from scratch. Who knows? Kantaka could be the next Toyota." —AFP



This file photo taken on Feb 12, 2014 shows a Kantanka car at the Apostle Safo Technology Research Centre in Gomaa Mpota. —AFP

ESPANYOL SACK SERGIO GONZALEZ



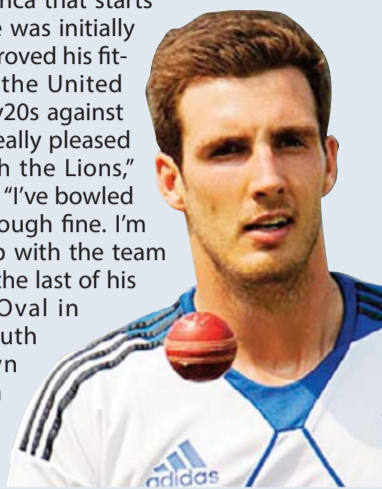
BARCELONA: La Liga side Espanyol sacked coach Sergio Gonzalez yesterday after a run of just one win in their last eight games. "Espanyol have decided in the past few hours to release the Catalan coach from his duties," the club said in a statement on their website. Gonzalez was a former Espanyol player and led them to a respectable 10th-placed finish in his first season in charge last season. However, a 1-0 defeat to Celta Vigo despite playing against 10 men for over 40 minutes on Saturday left them just three points above the relegation zone in 12th. Last month, Chinese model car maker Rastar Group struck a deal to buy an 80 percent stake in the Barcelona-based club with a 45 million euro injection expected to help clear the club's debts.— AFP

KLOPP TAKES BLAME FOR MIGNOLET ERROR

ANFIELD: Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp sought to ease the pressure on goalkeeper Simon Mignolet by blaming himself for the error that allowed West Bromwich Albion to equalise during Sunday's 2-2 draw at Anfield. Captain Jordan Henderson put Liverpool ahead only for Mignolet to flap at a West Brom corner soon after, allowing Craig Dawson to wipe out the home side's advantage. Liverpool conceded again from another West Brom corner in the second half, before substitute Divock Origi salvaged a point with an injury-time equaliser aided by a deflection. Klopp was asked his opinion on Mignolet's performance after the game, but refused to blame the Belgian for the mistake. "I said to Simon at half-time: 'If somebody says it was your fault, you can say it's not true, it's my fault'-because I want a keeper who helps, a keeper who comes out and tries everything," the manager was quoted as saying by the club's website (www.liverpoolfc.com). "In this there were 20 players around him. He tried and didn't get the ball for the first goal. "The next one I have to see again. —Reuters

FINN TO JOIN ENGLAND SQUAD

LONDON: England have added fast bowler Steven Finn to their squad for the four-match series in South Africa that starts with the first test on Boxing Day. He was initially left out because of a foot injury but proved his fitness on the England Lions tour of the United Arab Emirates, playing in two Twenty20s against Pakistan A last weekend. "I've been really pleased with the way things have gone with the Lions," Finn said in a news release yesterday. "I've bowled my overs and my foot has come through fine. I'm excited by the prospect of linking up with the team out in South Africa." Finn, 26, played the last of his 26 tests against Australia at the Oval in August. The second test against South Africa will be played in Cape Town from Jan. 2., with further matches in Johannesburg (Jan. 14-18) and Pretoria (Jan. 22-26). —Reuters



JABER STADIUM READY FOR A GRAND CELEBRATION

KUWAIT: Director General of Sports Public Authority (SPA) Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour said that work is ongoing at Jaber Stadium to bring out the perfect celebration on Friday. He said, everyone is doing their job perfectly to guarantee that the final show on the celebration day will be a historic event with many surprises.

Al-Mansour appreciated the efforts of the chairman of the organizing committee Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdallah Al-Mubarak and Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud, Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs considering their work as huge effort, along with the rest of members such as Deputy Director General of SPA Dr

Humoud Fulaiteh and Khalid Al-Roudhan.

Al-Mansour said that he is available at the stadium everyday and follows the latest development on the celebration organization, adding that everyone is working for the higher interest of Kuwait.

Al-Mansour denied that he is distancing himself from the cel-

ebration due to differences in views, and said this is absolutely untrue.

Commenting on the readiness of Jaber Stadium he said SPA received an authenticated official certificate from the most major consultative office in England, confirming the safety of the stadium.

He spoke about SPA's keen-

ness on making sure about the safety of the stadium and its insistence to postpone the use of Jaber Stadium until all technical observations were addressed where some problems were found earlier.

He said the role of SPA will continue until the last person leaves the stadium on Friday.



Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour

ROME TO STAGE 2022 RYDER CUP

ROME: Rome organisers were celebrating yestrday after the Italian capital won the right to stage the 2022 edition of golf's Ryder Cup for the first time.

"I'm very happy, because these things do not happen at random, there's been an extraordinary amount of work done by our bid team," Rome's bid co-ordinator Marco Durante told AFP in a telephone interview on Monday. "I had the honour of co-ordinating a great team, and now we've got the result."

The cream of world golf will descend on the Marco Simone Golf and Country Club in seven years' time for the biennial contest between Europe and the United States, Ryder Cup organisers confirmed in a statement."The Italian capital city of Rome will host The Ryder Cup for the first time in 2022," it said, adding that the "golf's greatest team event will be staged on the Continent of Europe for the third time."

Four nations - Austria, Germany, Italy and Spain - had been competing for the right to stage the 2022 edition.

Germany's bid chief Marco Kaussler said he was disappointed after failing for the second successive time to persuade Ryder Cup chiefs, having lost the 2018 tournament rights to France.

He told the SID news agency, an AFP subsidiary: "Of course, we're disappointed, we had in all areas put in a reasonable, balanced and sustainable application."

After inspecting all four sites in recent months, organisers finally plumped for Rome, whose venue is only 17km from the centre of the 'Eternal City'. From the 17th tee, players and fans alike can spot the dome of Saint Peter's Basilica on a clear day, although the venue's transport links to the capital and its thousands of hotels were key factors in the final decision, as well as Italy's pledge to use their staging of the tournament to further develop the sport throughout the country.

TICKING NEW BOXES

"I believe it will be a great push for our golf movement, and increase participation in our sport," added Durante.However

Durante, a former golf pro turned lawyer, believes Ryder Cup officials were swung late in the day by the Italian golf federation's proposal to boost the existing Italian Open.

From 2017, it will come with prize money totalling 7m euros. "I think our project bid was strong in each part, but our federation's decision to make a bigger and stronger Italian Open has probably given us the last push," he said.

"We proposed an event to be included in the World Series, it will be a 7m euros prize money event, which will start in 2017 because the 2016 schedule is already there.

"Every week we were ticking new boxes... and we even added something at the end that had not been part of the plans. "Overall, the growth of our bid was the most convincing thing." The Ryder Cup statement added: "The Italian bid was consistently strong across all the areas evaluated and in particular in their pledge to undertake a complete reconstruction of the golf course at Marco Simone to the highest standards demanded by Ryder Cup Europe, in addition to a hugely significant commitment to the Italian Open in terms of guaranteeing a EUR7 million prize fund for the championship for 11 years, beginning in 2017."

Founded by and still owned by celebrated fashion designer Laura Biagiotti and her family, the Marco Simone Club hosted the Italian Open in 1994. Rome organisers now have seven years in which to carry out the course changes necessary to fully test the mettle of the world's top golfers Durante added: "It's always been a very good course, but we are ready to answer any request from the Ryder Cup committee."

Next year's tournament will be held in Hazeltine National in Minnesota, while France will host the 2018 event and Whistling Straits in Wisconsin hosts the 2020 Ryder Cup, two years before it returns to the old continent. Europe have won six out of the last seven editions of the Ryder Cup including a 16 1/2 to 11 1/2 win at Gleneagles, Scotland last year. —AFP



Officials seen at the conference.

GULFRUN SEASON KICKS OFF WITH GULFRUN 24HR KARTING ENDURANCE 5

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: GulfRun - powered by Zain - season is back and kicking off with GulfRun 24HR Karting Endurance 5 that will take place from December 17 - 19 at the SIRBB Circuit in Shuwaikh. GulfRun and Pro-Vision Sports Management announced that 20 teams have taken the challenge to participate in the exciting 24 hour long karting endurance race.

This year also international teams will be participating in this event. "There are participants from Saudi Arabia and Bahrain including the champion of Middle East also from Bahrain. The 20 participating teams present about 200 racers, as each team should include between 4 - 12 pacers. Apart of the teams registered there is a waiting list for those who couldn't participate due to the limit of team. So in case a team didn't attend the next in the line may participate instead," Ahmad Al-Mudhaf, CEO GulfRun told Kuwait Times.

Participation was open for interested individuals from age 16 and above. "This year the participation was opened for all nationalities and both genders. The interest in this race was very high so we have a long waiting list of those who couldn't participate. The main goal of this race is to prepare the youth to participate internationally, and to get training in safe place. Due to the high interest, we decided to hold more than one race per year to satisfy the wide audience," he further said.

Ahmed Al-Majed, of Pro-Vision Sports Management said, "We have a record number of teams competing and look forward to an exciting race at Sirbb Circuit. We witnessed a record breaking amount of attendees last year, and have many exciting events planned on and off-track this year." Ahmed Al-Mudhaf of GulfRun added that "We have lots in store this season starting off with GulfRun 24HR Karting Endurance 5 - we have four international racers participating

SAFETY MEASURES

Waleed Al Khashti, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Communications and Relations Director said: "Zain's support to this much anticipated event for the second year running stems from its utmost responsibility of youth's talent development and the sports sector, which comes in line with our Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, especially that this exciting race was established by a group of Kuwaiti youth".

Zain is always sponsoring sports events. "We were keen on taking part in this exciting event yet again after the passion we found from the youth during last year's event. Zain is also high-

lighting its dedication to applying safety measures while driving as GulfRun is considered an ideal and safe alternative to street racing which threatens youth's lives. Zain is the sponsor of Zaid Ashkanani, the ME champion of Formula 2 and Porsche GT Cup, and Salah Bin Eidan the ME champion in rally,"added Al Khashti.

The GulfRun Karting Endurance Race follows international regulations and certified marshals fly in from the UK to regulate the race in accordance to FIA regulations. The GulfRun Karting Endurance Race was first launched in 2011 to create an exciting competition in Kuwait that aligns with GulfRun's objective to promote auto-

mobile racing and training in a safe and secure environment and karting is one of the pillars of motorsports.

GulfRun's and Pro-Vision Sport Management team extend their gratitude to the continuous support by Kuwait's private sector, which acknowledges the important role sport plays amongst Kuwait's youth. GulfRun 24HR Karting Endurance Race is supported by a wide range of sponsors: Title sponsorship by Zain; GR Karting Pace Car: Audi; Platinum Sponsors Algida and American Tax Bureau; Gold sponsorship by Slider Station, The Correspondent, Al-Sawan and Moonlight Studios, Kidsville.

EUROPE-ASIA MERGER IS ONLY WAY FORWARD: BJORN

CHON BURI: European Tour veteran Thomas Bjorn has described a proposed merger with the Asian Tour as "the only way forward", despite concern among some Asian players. Bjorn, who is chairman of the European Tour's tournament committee which represents players' interests, said Asian players shouldn't worry about losing playing opportunities if the mega-tour goes ahead. The proposal to combine the tours' business dealings and memberships could be a game-changer, but some Asian players are concerned about being squeezed out by European stars.

However, Bjorn said the plan provided a great opportunity for Asian pros-and denied that Europe was trying to take over tournaments in the region. "A merger is the only way forward," Bjorn said at the Thailand Golf Championship, which finished on Sunday.

"I appreciate some of the (Asian Tour) players are concerned, but they will actually benefit from it... It will provide a great opportunity for the young Asian players."

The merger talks have coincided with a shake-up at the Asian Tour, where CEO Mike Kerr's resignation was announced without explanation last week. The body's board has also seen a change in personnel, although the Asian Tour has not responded to requests for confirmation when approached by AFP. When asked about the merger situation, Indian veteran Jeev Milkha Singh said in Thailand: "We have a new board and we will wait to see what they recommend."

'LET'S GET IT TOGETHER'

Bjorn said a merged tour would be particu-

larly good for younger players, who will benefit from tougher competition and the chance to play in Europe. Including the four majors and four World Golf Championship events, the European Tour listed 48 tournaments on the 2015 season's schedule, while the Asian Tour had 28.

The two tours have a long history of cooperation, including co-sanctioning five tournaments in Asia this year. "Talented Asian players like Thongchai (Jaidee) and Jeev had to change their style of play when they joined the European Tour," Bjorn said. "They had to learn the hard way, but eventually they adapted because they are talented and they have done very well. A merger would speed up that process."

Bjorn added: "There is so much great talent in Asia with lots of young players coming through. If the young players join a combined tour they will learn a lot quicker. It will be great for them."

European Tour CEO Keith Pelley, who is spearheading the merger, flew to Macau in October to address a meeting of Asian Tour players. He later conceded some players are hostile, although negotiations are continuing. But Bjorn stressed: "The European Tour are not trying to take over tournaments. We have a full schedule as it is. But the combined efforts of the two tours would make it very strong.

"Let's get it together," added the Dane. It will be good for all players concerned, both on the European and Asian Tour." "The Asian Tour players need not worry. It's the only way forward," he said. — AFP



NEWPORT: This is a Monday, Oct. 4, 2010 file photo of Europe's Edoardo Molinari, left, and Francesco Molinari, brothers from Italy, as they hold the trophy after Europe won the 2010 Ryder Cup golf tournament at the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport, Wales. The Ryder Cup is headed to Italy for the first time, with the Marco Simone club in Rome chosen yesterday to host golf's biggest team event in 2022. — AP

EX-FERRARI BOSS TO PUT FOOT DOWN ON ROME’S OLYMPIC BID

ROME: Former Ferrari boss Luca di Montezemelo says bringing the Olympic Games to Rome would mean more to him than all the titles he amassed in Formula One.

Speaking Monday at the launch of the Rome 2024 bid logo - an image of the Colosseum in the red, white and green of the Italian flag - the motorsport legend shrugged off suggestions the Eternal City’s campaign has been sluggish off the starting grid.

“We want these Olympics and we will work night and day to get them,” he told an unveiling ceremony at the Palazzetto dello Sport, built to host basketball and weightlifting for the 1960 Games in Rome and still going strong as a sports and arts venue today.

The choice of logo reflects how Italy

will fight to win the 2024 event under the banner of ancient Rome, capitalising on the city’s unique historic heritage while playing down modern day problems of corruption, strapped finances and crumbling infrastructure.

“The message from today is clear, there is a big enthusiasm in the city, especially from the young people,” di Montezemelo told AFP after the ceremony. “And we have a very clear vision with, behind everything, passion. “I was lucky enough to win 19 world championship titles in Formula One. If I can contribute to bring these games to my country it would be maybe an even more important victory.”

Rome faces competition from Paris, bidding again after a heartbreakingly narrow defeat to London in the race for

2012, Los Angeles and Budapest.

The prospect of being able to stage events with the unrivalled splendours of Rome and the Vatican as the backdrop will inevitably carry sway with some of the IOC members who will decide the 2024 host in Lima, Peru in September 2017.

But with the Olympic movement still trying to cast off the legacy of its own corruption scandals, Rome may be handicapped by recent revelations of organised crime’s infiltration of City Hall.

CLEAN-UP UNDERWAY

A scandal known locally as Mafia Capitale is currently in court with the trial of dozens of local officials, politicians and businessmen set to drag on well into next year.

The revelation that millions of euros destined for public services were being siphoned off by criminals through rigged tenders and other scams has damaged Rome’s international image and left residents fuming over deteriorating public transport, refuse and road maintenance services.

Against that backdrop, some Romans question if a bid for the Olympics should be a priority ahead of investment in infrastructure.

Di Montezemelo’s response is that the Mafia Capitale arrests and trial are a sign that the authorities have cracked the problem and that the Olympics can be a catalyst for a general upgrade of the city, as happened in 1960.

“It is the past,” he said. “The clean-up that is now taking place is very impor-

tant. It will do the world of good for the city, for the citizens, for the country and for the Olympics.

“What we have now is a huge opportunity to use our team spirit to set a goal, take on a challenge.

“A lesson of Rome 1960 was to look ahead, to look at the town of the future. And you can still see today that Rome 1960 left to the town key infrastructural elements.” Di Montezemelo, 68, is currently combining his leadership of the bid with the role of CEO and Chairman at Alitalia but he expects soon to have more time for the Olympic race.

“Thank God, in a couple of months I will leave the CEO role and I will remain only chairman. But I have been used to doing a few jobs together, so I will try my best.” — AFP

KHAWAJA FITNESS DOUBT AFTER BIG BASH PULLOUT

SYDNEY: Australia batsman Usman Khawaja has pulled out of a Twenty20 game this week and faces a fitness check before the Boxing Day Test against the West Indies, Cricket Australia said yesterday. Khawaja, 28, was due to return from a hamstring injury in Thursday’s opening Big Bash League match for the Sydney Thunder after being included in the 13-man Australia Test squad for Melbourne. But Cricket Australia medical staff have ruled him out of the clash against the Sydney Sixers.

Khawaja will need to prove his fitness before Sunday’s Big Bash game with the Melbourne Stars, which would be his only remaining fixture before the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. If he fails that test, selectors will be spared the onerous decision of trying to put him back into the Australian team at the expense of either Joe Burns or Shaun Marsh.

Khawaja has not played since injuring his hamstring in the second Test against

New Zealand in Perth last month, and Australian coach Darren Lehmann said he was not willing to risk him without a warm-up game. “We certainly need him playing and with the hamstring we don’t want him playing Test match cricket if he’s not fully fit,” Lehmann said after Australia’s innings first Test defeat of the West Indies in Hobart. “He will have to be sharp in those Big Bash League T20 games he’s playing and get through those-then we’ll make a decision from there.” Khawaja scored 174 and 121 batting at three against New Zealand before he was injured, while his replacement, Marsh, made a strong case for his retention with his highest Test score of 182 in Hobart.

Australia captain Steve Smith is also have treatment for knee and hip injuries in the lead-up to the Melbourne Test, and has been ruled out of the Sixers’ opening two Big Bash matches.

He said he expected to be fit for the Boxing Day clash. — AFP

SERENA WILLIAMS NAMED SPORTSPERSON OF 2015

NEW YORK: Serena Williams, who owned the tennis world this year even as she battled illness and injury, was named sportsperson of 2015 yesterday by Sports Illustrated.

The magazine said it was honoring the 34-year-old icon both for her positively stunning numbers and her pluck in achieving what it called one of the greatest late-career runs in the history of any sport. Williams won three major titles, triumphed in 53 of the 56 matches she played and ranked number one for every week of the season for the second straight year.

And for six weeks this season, Williams had twice as many ranking points as the world number two player. Sports Illustrated said this was a first in the 40-year history of the WTA rankings.

But those stats mask a year that was “all internal discord and quelled revolts; Williams battled her body like never before,” Sports Illustrated said. To wit: a cough and cold that had her vomiting during a match at the Australian Open, which she won anyway; bone bruises in both knees—“the residue of 20 years of

pounding”—a right elbow strain and nasty flu at the French Open (again, she won).

In a powerful statement against racism, Williams also returned to play a tournament at Indian Wells, California, for the first time since 2001. That year she was greeted with boos and her family says she even endured racial slurs.

Williams called that return her “greatest moment in tennis.” “Serena has made a very strong case as not only the greatest tennis player of her generation but of all time, and after the string of performances she put together in 2015, she is one of the most dominant athletes playing today,” Sports Illustrated Group Editor Paul Fichtenbaum said. “This year was spectacular,” Williams said of her latest accolade. “For Sports Illustrated to recognize my hard work, dedication and sheer determination with this award gives me hope to continue on and do better. As I always say, it takes a village - not just one person. This is not just an accomplishment for me, but for my whole team and all my fans. I am beyond honored,” she said, according to Sports Illustrated. — AFP



NEW YORK: Serena Williams of the US returns the ball to Roberta Vinci of Italy during their 2015 US Open Women’s singles semifinals match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York. Serena Williams, who owned the tennis world this year even as she battled illness and injury, was named sportsperson of 2015 yesterday by Sports Illustrated. — AFP



DUNEDIN: Trent Boult (L) of New Zealand bowls to Dinesh Chandimal of Sri Lanka with Sri Lankan captain Angelo Mathews (Top R) looking on during day five of the first International Test cricket match between New Zealand and Sri Lanka at University Oval in Dunedin yesterday. — AFP

KIWIS ENJOY 122-RUN WIN AS SRI LANKA FOLD

DUNEDIN: A “miracle ball” from the recalled Neil Wagner set New Zealand up for a 122-run win in the first Test yesterday as Sri Lanka folded with the loss of seven wickets on the final day.

New Zealand had set the Sri Lankans a formidable 405-run target but with sufficient time to get there on a non-threatening University Oval wicket. The Sri Lanka batsmen, however, failed to show the necessary patience and were all out for 282 midway through the final day. Resistance crumbled after Wagner, back in the side after a year out of Test cricket, captured the crucial scalp of Angelo Mathews, who had put on 56 with Dinesh Chandimal for the fourth wicket.

After being peppered by short deliveries targeting the rib cage, Mathews, on 25, was taken by surprise by a full-length delivery which rattled into his stumps.

His dismissal upset the rhythm of top-scorer Chandimal (58) who only lasted another 17 balls before he was beaten by Mitchell Santner.

“Neil Wagner really stepped up for us,” captain Brendon McCullum said of the left-arm seamer playing his 18th Test. “Once he got that breakthrough, got Angelo out, then we certainly relaxed the shoulders after that and were able to push home the advantage.

“It was beautifully set up. Wags decided that at some stage he was going to bowl the miracle ball, try and hit the base of leg stump and in the end it split his defence.”

Sri Lankan captain Mathews, who acknowledged being caught in a Wagner “trap”, described the match as a learning experience for his young side.

“Most of the batters were solid in technique. It’s just the mindset that we’ve got to shift around a little bit,” he said. “We’ve got so many inexperienced guys at the moment, it’ll take a bit of time to get going.”

The comprehensive victory gave New Zealand their fourth consecutive win over Sri Lanka in the past three years.

DUCKING FOR COVER

After a second-innings declaration at 267-3 by McCullum, Sri Lanka had more than five sessions to reach 405 or survive for the draw.

When they resumed Monday at 109-3, and with an extra half-hour tacked on to make up for three rain breaks the previous day, Sri Lanka were 296 runs behind. But any hopes of a salvage job were built around the experienced Chandimal and Mathews digging in for a long stay at the crease.

New Zealand tried everything to break the partnership, including Trent Boult changing his grip which saw him lose control of one ball, forcing umpire Richard Kettleborough to duck for cover as it shot towards his head.

Finally it was Wagner who broke the partnership when he fired two short deliveries at Mathews. The Sri Lankan skipper shaped up as if expecting a third similar delivery only for Wagner to bowl full, and the ball speared off the left pad and on to middle stump.

Chandimal was gone soon after for 58 when trapped leg before wicket by Santner. The 26-

year-old batsman, in his 24th Test, decided to push his pad at the spinner and was hit plumb in front without playing a shot.

Kithuruwan Vithanage decided attack was the best policy, batting at a run-a-ball pace to take the target below 200. With six fours and a six to his name he reached 38 before Tim

Southee had him lbw.

At lunch, Sri Lanka were 224-6 with the final four wickets falling for the addition of 58 runs in 11 overs after the interval. For New Zealand, Southee took three for 52 while Trent Boult, Wagner and Santner finished with two wickets each.—AFP



DUNEDIN: New Zealand’s Neil Wagner, left, celebrates with Tom Latham after bowling out Sri Lanka’s Angelo Mathews for 25. — AP

SCOREBOARD

DUNEDIN, New Zealand: Scoreboard at the close of the final day of the first Test between New Zealand and Sri Lanka at University Oval in Dunedin yesterday:

| | |
|--|--|
| New Zealand 1st innings 431 (M. Guptill 156, K. Williamson 88, B. McCullum 75; Pradeep 4-112) | D. Chameera b Santner 14 |
| Sri Lanka 1st innings 294 (D. Karunaratne 84, D. Chandimal 83; Southee 3-71, Wagner 3-87) | S. Lakmal c&b Bracewell 23 |
| New Zealand 2nd innings 267 (T. Latham 109 n.o., K. Williamson 71; Herath 2-62) | N. Pradeep not out 4 |
| Sri Lanka 2nd innings (overnight 109-3) | Extras: (b2, lb4, w1) 7 |
| D. Karunaratne c Watling b Southee 29 | Total (10 wickets, 95.2 overs) 282 |
| K. Mendis c Watling b Southee 46 | Fall of wickets: 1-54 (Karunaratne), 2-64 (Jayasundera), 3-109 (Mendis), 4-165 (Mathews), 5-165 (Chandimal), 6-213 (Vithanage), 7-236 (Herath), 8-249 (Siriwardana), 9-268 (Chameera), 10-282 (Lakmal) |
| U. Jayasundera c Watling b Wagner 3 | Bowling: Boult 15-2-58-2, Southee 21-6-52-3, Bracewell 19.2-5-46-1, Santner 22-6-53-2, Wagner 17-5-56-2, Williamson 1-0-11-0 (w1). |
| D. Chandimal lbw Santner 58 | Result: New Zealand won by 122 runs. |
| A. Mathews b Wagner 25 | |
| K. Vithanage lbw Southee 38 | |
| M. Siriwardana c McCullum b Boult 29 | |
| R. Herath c Guptill b Boult 6 | |



TOYOTAGAZOO RACING BACK ON PODIUM DURING FINAL ROUND WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP IN BAHRAIN

BAHRAIN: ToyotaGAZOO Racing returned to the podium in a thrilling six hours of Bahrain, the final round of the 2015 World Endurance Championship which was held recently at the Bahrain International Circuit.

An emotional result saw Alex Wurz stand on the podium in his last-ever race, claiming third place in the #2 TS040 Hybrid he shared with StÉphane Sarrazin and Mike Conway.

As well as being the team's first podium since the opening round of the season at Silverstone, the result also marked Alex's 12th podium for Toyota in 28 races, including five victories. Another very reliable race for the TS040 Hybrid saw the team profit in the Bahrain heat, whilst some of its rivals encountered problems, and the #1 of Anthony Davidson, Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima finished a strong fourth.

The race began in bright sunshine as Sebastien established the #1 in fifth, while Alex, taking the start in the #2 for his last-ever race, was sixth. Despite a busy track and plenty of incidents, both TS040 Hybrids kept up a strong pace, with the #1 putting increasing pressure on

its sister car for third as all drivers took their turn fighting for a strong result to end the season. The two Toyotas established themselves in a clear third and fourth, closing out the final two hours with consistent lap times and crossing the line together, separated by only 1.177seconds. According to Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, "It was a superb performance by the team to earn a podium finish at Bahrain. I congratulate the team for their performance and their competitive spirit all throughout this season. This deep involvement in motorsports has helped Toyota tremendously and led to new insights in making ever better cars both on the track and off it, while putting the high performance capabilities of Toyota hybrid vehicles in a more positive light. I would like to thank our fans for their encouragement and we look forward to their support during what promises to be an exciting season in 2016."

DIFFICULT SEASON
On this occasion, Toshio Sato, Team

President, said, "It was great to finally fight for a podium again. This was a nice way to finish a difficult season and it gives us added motivation for the winter. We want to be battling at the front every race. That is the expectation for next year and everyone is already working hard to achieve this. This was a special race, as the last one for Alex before his retirement and I am happy he could end his career in a positive way. According to Alex Wurz, "In my last race, I got a bit unfortunate with some technical issues, but otherwise we had a faultless day in our car and that brought us to third. We had a hard battle with the sister car which went down to the wire in the end. It was nerve-wracking to watch. I am very happy for the team, who got their reward for always working very hard."

Toyota finished the year third in the manufacturers' World Championship. Anthony and Sebastien placed fifth on exactly the same points as the #2 crew but ahead courtesy of more fourth places. Kazuki was seventh having missed the Spa race in Belgium due to injury.

Today's race brought the curtain down on the TS040 Hybrid era. It competed in 16 races



over two seasons, winning five times as part of 14 podium finishes, most of which came during its double World Championship-winning season in 2014. It will be succeeded by an all-new car

for 2016 which will start testing early next year prior to its first public appearance during the Prologue test at France's Paul Ricard circuit in March.

NHL Results/Standings

NY Islanders 4, New Jersey 0; Colorado 3, St. Louis 1; Chicago 4, Vancouver 0.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|----|----|---|----|----|----|
| Western Conference | | | | | | | Detroit | 16 | 8 | 6 | 78 | 77 | 38 |
| Central Division | | | | | | | Boston | 16 | 9 | 3 | 91 | 77 | 35 |
| | W | L | OTL | GF | GA | PTS | Ottawa | 15 | 10 | 5 | 92 | 90 | 35 |
| Dallas | 22 | 6 | 2 | 102 | 79 | 46 | Florida | 14 | 12 | 4 | 76 | 74 | 32 |
| Chicago | 17 | 10 | 4 | 85 | 75 | 38 | Tampa Bay | 14 | 13 | 3 | 71 | 68 | 31 |
| St. Louis | 17 | 10 | 4 | 78 | 75 | 38 | Buffalo | 12 | 15 | 3 | 72 | 83 | 27 |
| Minnesota | 15 | 7 | 6 | 73 | 66 | 36 | Toronto | 10 | 13 | 5 | 64 | 76 | 25 |
| Nashville | 15 | 10 | 5 | 80 | 79 | 35 | Metropolitan Division | | | | | | |
| Winnipeg | 14 | 14 | 2 | 82 | 91 | 30 | Washington | 20 | 6 | 2 | 85 | 62 | 42 |
| Colorado | 14 | 16 | 1 | 85 | 88 | 29 | NY Islanders | 18 | 8 | 5 | 89 | 72 | 41 |
| Pacific Division | | | | | | | NY Rangers | 18 | 9 | 4 | 90 | 72 | 40 |
| Los Angeles | 19 | 8 | 2 | 75 | 61 | 40 | New Jersey | 15 | 11 | 4 | 74 | 75 | 34 |
| Arizona | 14 | 14 | 2 | 81 | 95 | 30 | Pittsburgh | 15 | 10 | 3 | 67 | 67 | 33 |
| Vancouver | 11 | 12 | 8 | 79 | 86 | 30 | Philadelphia | 12 | 12 | 6 | 62 | 83 | 30 |
| San Jose | 14 | 14 | 1 | 75 | 78 | 29 | Carolina | 12 | 14 | 4 | 74 | 92 | 28 |
| Calgary | 13 | 14 | 2 | 78 | 103 | 28 | Columbus | 11 | 17 | 3 | 74 | 93 | 25 |
| Edmonton | 13 | 15 | 2 | 82 | 90 | 28 | Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L). | | | | | | |
| Anaheim | 11 | 13 | 5 | 56 | 73 | 27 | | | | | | | |
| Eastern Conference | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Atlantic Division | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Montreal | 20 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 70 | 43 | | | | | | | |

BLACKHAWKS BLANK CANUCKS

CHICAGO: Chicago's Patrick Kane extended his points streak to 26 games as the Blackhawks beat the Vancouver Canucks 4-0 on Sunday to move into a share of second place in the NHL Central Division. Kane, the NHL's leading scorer with 46 points, had the second assist on Duncan Keith's power-play goal midway through the first. He surpassed Sidney Crosby's 25-game streak, set in 2010-11, for the longest in the league since 1992-93. The Blackhawks right wing has 16 goals and 24 assists during his run, and a point in 29 of Chicago's 31 games. Corey Crawford made 30 saves while Dennis Rasmussen, Andrew Shaw and Brandon Mashinter also scored for the Blackhawks, who are level on points with St. Louis, eight points behind Central leader Dallas. Ryan Miller had 26 saves for the Canucks.

ISLANDERS 4, DEVILS 0
Marek Zidlicky scored twice and Thomas Greiss made 27 saves for his first shutout of the season to help the Islanders extend their streak without a regulation loss to 10 games. John Tavares and Matt Martin also scored for the Islanders, who are on an 8-0-2

stretch and moved into second place in the Metropolitan Division - one point ahead of the crosstown-rival Rangers. The Islanders trailed the Rangers by 11 points entering play on Nov. 25. The Islanders also improved to 11-4-2 at home in their first season at Brooklyn's Barclays Center. Cory Schneider gave up three goals on 18 shots before he was replaced by Keith Kincaid after Martin's goals 7 1/2 minutes into the second period. Kincaid finished with 11 saves. The Devils were again without Travis Zajac (upper body injury) and Adam Henrique (lower body).

AVALANCHE 3, BLUES 1
Jack Skille and John Mitchell scored in the first period and Semyon Varlamov made a season-high 42 saves to lead Colorado to victory at St. Louis. Carl Soderberg added an empty-net goal with 22 seconds remaining to seal the victory. Varlamov stopped the first 36 shots until Vladimir Tarasenko spoiled his shutout bid with a power-play goal with 7:05 remaining. It was Tarasenko's team-high 18th of the season. Jake Allen, who had 26 saves in a 3-0 shutout against Dallas on Saturday, stopped 15 saves against Colorado. —AP

WADE LEADS RALLY, HEAT BEAT GRIZZLIES 100-97

MIAMI: Dwyane Wade's jumper with 21.9 seconds left gave Miami its first and only lead of the second half and the Heat rallied from 16 points down to beat the Memphis Grizzlies 100-97 and end a three-game slide on Sunday night. Chris Bosh scored 22 points, Gerald Green added 16 and Luol Deng scored 15 for Miami. Wade's jumper put the Heat up one, and Justise Winslow closed it out with two free throws in the final second. Wade finished with 14 points. Jeff Green scored a season-high 26 points for Memphis, while surprise starter Matt Barnes finished with 13 points and 13 rebounds. Former Heat guard Mario Chalmers had 12 for Memphis, which was outscored 11-0 in the final 2:34.

THUNDER 104, JAZZ 98, OT
Kevin Durant scored 31 points - all but two after half-time - and Oklahoma City rallied from a 16-point deficit for a second win over Utah in a three-day span. Russell Westbrook added 25 points, 11 rebounds and five assists for the Thunder, who have won nine straight home games against Utah dating to the 2010-11 season. Oklahoma City extended its longest winning streak of the season to five games. Rodney Hood had 23 points, Gordon Hayward scored 22 and Alec Burks added 21 for the Jazz, who fell five games behind first-place Oklahoma City in the Northwest Division. Westbrook scored two baskets in the first 36 seconds of overtime to give the Thunder the lead, and Utah missed its first nine field-goal attempts in the extra period. The Jazz avoided an OT shutout on Hayward's basket with 8.6 seconds left.

RAPTORS 96, 76ERS 76
DeMar DeRozan had 25 points, Luis Scola added 22 and Toronto beat Philadelphia for its fourth straight win. DeRozan came into the night averaging 21.7 points per game, and this was his third straight outing with at least 20 points. Scola matched his season-high point total from a game in November. Toronto started slowly, trailing 16-8 at the midpoint of the first quarter. But the Raptors then took charge to hand the 76ers their sixth straight loss. Jahlil Okafor led Philadelphia with 23 points and 14 rebounds while Robert Covington added 15 points and nine rebounds.

SUNS 108, TIMBERWOLVES 101
Brandon Knight rebounded from a one-point outing in his last game to make seven 3-pointers and score 25 points, helping Phoenix beat Minnesota. Knight scored nine of his points in the fourth quarter, all on 3s. The Timberwolves committed 24 turnovers, including nine in the third quarter, which helped the Suns get out in transition and take control of the game for good. Phoenix scored 43 points off turnovers for the game. Zach LaVine led the Wolves with 28 points and Kevin Martin added 19. The Suns didn't score for more than 4 minutes during the fourth quarter as Minnesota cut into a 19-point lead, but P.J. Tucker's 3-pointer at the 7:54 mark followed by Eric Bledsoe's steal and dunk gave Phoenix a 90-75 lead. —AP



MIAMI: Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade (3) looks for an open teammate past Memphis Grizzlies guard Courtney Lee (5) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, in Miami. — AP

| NBA Results/Standings | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|------------|-----------|---------------------------|----|----|------|------|--|
| Phoenix 108, Minnesota 101; Miami 100, Memphis 97; Toronto 96, Philadelphia 76; Oklahoma City 104, Utah 98 (OT). | | | | | | | | | | |
| Eastern Conference | | | | | Western Conference | | | | | |
| Atlantic Division | | | | | Northwest Division | | | | | |
| | W | L | PCT | GB | | | | | | |
| Toronto | 16 | 9 | .640 | - | Oklahoma City | 16 | 8 | .667 | - | |
| Boston | 14 | 10 | .583 | 1.5 | Utah | 10 | 12 | .455 | 5 | |
| NY Knicks | 11 | 14 | .440 | 5 | Portland | 10 | 15 | .400 | 6.5 | |
| Brooklyn | 7 | 16 | .304 | 8 | Denver | 9 | 14 | .391 | 6.5 | |
| Philadelphia | 1 | 24 | .040 | 15 | Minnesota | 9 | 14 | .391 | 6.5 | |
| Central Division | | | | | Pacific Division | | | | | |
| Cleveland | 15 | 7 | .682 | - | Golden State | 24 | 1 | .960 | - | |
| Chicago | 13 | 8 | .619 | 1.5 | LA Clippers | 14 | 10 | .583 | 9.5 | |
| Indiana | 13 | 9 | .591 | 2 | Phoenix | 11 | 14 | .440 | 13 | |
| Detroit | 14 | 11 | .560 | 2.5 | Sacramento | 9 | 15 | .375 | 14.5 | |
| Milwaukee | 10 | 15 | .400 | 6.5 | LA Lakers | 3 | 21 | .125 | 20.5 | |
| Southeast Division | | | | | Southwest Division | | | | | |
| Charlotte | 14 | 9 | .609 | - | San Antonio | 20 | 5 | .800 | - | |
| Miami | 13 | 9 | .591 | 0.5 | Dallas | 13 | 11 | .542 | 6.5 | |
| Atlanta | 14 | 11 | .560 | 1 | Memphis | 13 | 12 | .520 | 7 | |
| Orlando | 12 | 11 | .522 | 2 | Houston | 12 | 12 | .500 | 7.5 | |
| Washington | 10 | 12 | .455 | 3.5 | New Orleans | 6 | 17 | .261 | 13 | |

NFL Results/Standings

Buffalo 20, Philadelphia 23; San Francisco 10, Cleveland 24; Detroit 14, St. Louis 21; New Orleans 24, at Tampa Bay 17; Tennessee 8, New York Jets 30; Pittsburgh 33, Cincinnati 20; Indianapolis 16, Jacksonville 51; San Diego 3, Kansas City 10; Washington 24, Chicago 21; Atlanta 0, Carolina 38; Seattle 35, Baltimore 6; Oakland 15, Denver 12; Dallas 7, Green Bay 28; New England 27, Houston 6.

| American Football Conference | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|----|----|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| AFC East | | | | | | | |
| | W | L | T | OTL | PF | PA | PCT |
| New England | 11 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 402 | 253 | .846 |
| NY Jets | 8 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 325 | 256 | .615 |
| Buffalo | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 316 | 301 | .462 |
| Miami | 5 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 240 | 300 | .417 |
| AFC North | | | | | | | |
| Cincinnati | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 354 | 229 | .769 |
| Pittsburgh | 8 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 344 | 260 | .615 |
| Baltimore | 4 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 278 | 326 | .308 |
| Cleveland | 3 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 240 | 357 | .231 |
| AFC South | | | | | | | |
| Indianapolis | 6 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 275 | 356 | .462 |
| Houston | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 259 | 291 | .462 |
| Jacksonville | 5 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 326 | 357 | .385 |
| Tennessee | 3 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 253 | 326 | .231 |
| AFC West | | | | | | | |
| Denver | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 281 | 225 | .769 |
| Kansas City | 8 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 331 | 24 | .615 |
| Oakland | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 299 | 326 | .462 |
| San Diego | 3 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 250 | 334 | .231 |
| National Football Conference | | | | | | | |
| NFC East | | | | | | | |
| Washington | 6 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 281 | 307 | .462 |
| Philadelphia | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 301 | 322 | .462 |
| NY Giants | 5 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 307 | 296 | .417 |
| Dallas | 4 | 9 | 0 | 2 | 230 | 305 | .308 |
| NFC North | | | | | | | |
| Green Bay | 9 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 317 | 245 | .692 |
| Minnesota | 8 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 258 | 255 | .615 |
| Chicago | 5 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 272 | 314 | .385 |
| Detroit | 4 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 267 | 336 | .308 |
| NFC South | | | | | | | |
| Carolina | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 411 | 243 | 1.000 |
| Tampa Bay | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 288 | 322 | .462 |
| Atlanta | 6 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 279 | 295 | .462 |
| New Orleans | 5 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 323 | 397 | .385 |
| NFC West | | | | | | | |
| Arizona | 11 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 405 | 252 | .846 |
| Seattle | 8 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 340 | 235 | .615 |
| St. Louis | 5 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 210 | 271 | .385 |
| San Francisco | 4 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 188 | 315 | .308 |

OOREDOO TRAINS YOUNG FOOTBALLERS IN COLLABORATION WITH PSG ACADEMY

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, has announced hosting an intensive camp for young football lovers, in collaboration with The Paris Saint-Germain Academy, in Kuwait City between 17 and 19 December 2015.

The camp will be an excellent opportunity for youngsters to learn a lot about football skills including tactical and defensive playing, stamina training and the basic rules of football. Applying for the intensive three day camp can be done through a link announced on Ooredoo's Instagram account @Ooredookuwait.

Mijbil Alayoub, Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait, said: "Glad to partner with a renowned football academy such as The Saint Paris-Germain, I believe with their support Ooredoo will be able to develop the talents and skills of all participants. Football is a very popular sport not only in Kuwait but also in the Middle East therefore we trust that such an initiative will be welcomed and well received by a lot of people".

The Paris Saint-Germain Academy by Ooredoo is open for children aged 6 to 16. All registered participants will receive diplomas on the successful completion of their training, as well as a Paris Saint-Germain football kit, consisting of a football shirt, shorts and socks. Hosting The Paris Saint-Germain Academy intensive camp comes in line with the company's corporate social responsibility which youth forms an important element of.



KUWAIT

QATAR 'SINGLED OUT' FOR CRITICISM, SAYS 2022 HEAD

DOHA: Qatar has been unfairly "singled out" for criticism the 2022 World Cup committee chief said yesterday, adding that no labourer has died during more than 14 million man-hours of work on tournament venues.

In a robust defence of Qatar's position, Hassan Al-Thawadi, also said the Gulf state does not expect to lose the World Cup, regardless of an ongoing investigation into the 2022 bidding process in Switzerland, amid allegations of corruption.

Thawadi, secretary-general of the 2022 Supreme Committee, the body overseeing tournament preparations said there was no evidence of wrongdoing against Qatar and that the country would cooperate with investigators in Switzerland and the US "should there be any request". "We always expected criticism," Thawadi said in an interview posted on the Supreme Committee's website.

"There isn't a single major sporting event in the world that doesn't go through that journey, but I think ours has been particularly intense. "We became the victim of a campaign that singled out Qatar and our successful bid without any shred of evidence."

Asked if he was worried Qatar could lose the 2022 tournament, a defiant Thawadi replied: "Absolutely not." So far, Qatar has not been contacted by investigators in Switzerland or the US, confirmed Thawadi.

Last week, US attorney general Loretta Lynch said she hoped Doha would cooperate with any investigation, if necessary. Late last month, a spokesman for the Swiss Office of the Attorney General (OAG) — which is looking into the 2018 and 2022 World Cups-told AFP that no Qatari officials had been questioned "so far".

At the same time however, the OAG added it would "particularly welcome" evidence from disgraced Qatari football powerbroker Mohamed bin Hammam, a former FIFA vice president and Asian Football Confederation president. The 66-year-old, twice banned for life from FIFA, was seen as a central figure in helping secure Qatar



Hassan Al-Thawadi

the right to host the 2022 World Cup. But asked if he was concerned that evidence could surface to compromise Qatar, Thawadi added: "I think if you examine it closely you can see these investigations focus on individuals, not a young, hard-working bid committee from Qatar."

14 MILLION MAN-HOURS

As well as corruption, critics have consistently rounded on Qatar for its record on migrant workers' rights.

This summer it was claimed in the US media that 1,200 labourers had died on World Cup construction sites, a charge fiercely denied by Doha. "That is simply not true," said Thawadi.

"In more than 14 million man hours worked the Supreme Committee has not experienced one fatality on site."

Work has begun on six of a possible eight venues that will be used in 2022. Rights groups have attacked Qatar over the pace and substance of labour reform.

Amnesty said this month that Doha had done "almost nothing" in the five years since being awarded the World Cup to improve treatment of the country's almost two million foreign workers, many working on tournament projects. Earlier this year, Qatar announced changes to the much-criticised "kafala" system, which limits the rights of movement for workers and has been likened by critics to modern-day slavery. Thawadi said these reforms showed Doha's "determination" to use the World Cup as a "catalyst" for change. —AFP



CHARLOTTE: Carolina Panthers players celebrate late in the second half of an NFL football game in Charlotte, N.C., Sunday. The Panthers won 38-0. — AP

PANTHERS PUNISH FALCONS TO CLINCH PLAYOFF BYE

CHARLOTTE: Cam Newton added to his MVP resume, completing 15 of 21 passes for 265 yards and three touchdowns, and the unbeaten Carolina Panthers defeated the Atlanta Falcons 38-0 on Sunday to clinch a first-round bye in the NFC playoffs. Newton connected on scoring strikes of 74 and 46 yards to Ted Ginn Jr., and Jonathan Stewart ran for a touchdown as the Panthers (13-0) scored on their first three possessions. Newton also threw a 4-yard TD pass to Ed Dickson in the final seconds of the first half before leaving for good at the end of the third quarter with Carolina up 38. He finished with a career-high quarterback rating of 153.3, and the Panthers won their 17th straight regular-season game. Carolina's defense forced four turnovers and had five sacks, while limiting struggling Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan to 224 yards passing. Atlanta is 6-7 and has dropped six in a row.

PATRIOTS 27, TEXANS 6

Tom Brady threw for 226 yards and two touchdowns and the New England Patriots snapped a two-game skid to clinch a playoff spot. Brady threw TD passes to Keshawn Martin and Rob Gronkowski in the first half to help New England build a 17-6 lead. The Patriots (11-2) didn't move the ball as well in the second half, but the defense harassed Brian Hoyer into multiple mistakes. Jabaal Sheard had strip sacks on Hoyer twice after halftime. The Patriots recovered the second one early in the fourth, and James White made it 27-6 with a 2-yard run three plays later. Hoyer was sacked five times and left the game to be evaluated for a concussion with about 9 minutes remaining for the Texans (6-7). The quarterback already missed a game this season after getting a concussion on Nov. 16.

STEELERS 33, BENGALS 20

Andy Dalton broke his right thumb while making a tackle on an interception, and the Steelers roughed up backup AJ McCarron while pulling away to a victory that left the AFC North up for grabs. The Steelers (8-5) rumbled with the Bengals during pregame warmups and then led the whole way, sending Cincinnati (10-3) to its first lopsided loss of the season. William Gay returned one of McCarron's passes 23 yards for a touchdown, and Ben Roethlisberger had another good day as Pittsburgh's resurgent offense kept rolling. Pittsburgh has scored 30 points in five straight games, a franchise record. The game - and potentially Cincinnati's season - turned on one interception. Stephon Tuitt picked off Dalton's shovel pass in the first quarter, and the quarterback broke his right thumb while making the tackle. It's unclear how many weeks he'll miss.

RAIDERS 15, BRONCOS 12

Khalil Mack had five sacks of Brock Osweiler, including one in the end zone for a safety, and Derek Carr bounced back from an awful first half. Carr threw two touchdown passes and the Raiders (6-7) beat the Broncos for the first time since Sept. 12, 2011, despite being held to minus-12 yards in the first half - the worst performance by a team heading into halftime in nearly a quarter-century. The Broncos (10-3) failed to hold onto a 12-0 half-time lead or several on-target throws from Osweiler, including two big drops by Demaryius Thomas, one for a touchdown and another for a late first down. The one that really stung was a drop by a wide-open Vernon Davis at the Oakland 42 on fourth-and-5 from the Denver 37 with 3:45 left. Denver's Brandon McManus, who nailed four field goals in the first half, clanked a 49-yarder that would have tied it off the left upright with 10:22 remaining, however. Sebastian Janikowski then missed a 43-yarder with 5:07 remaining, giving the Broncos good field position at their 33, but Davis had his big drop on fourth down after that.

PACKERS 28, COWBOYS 7

Eddie Lacy ran for 124 yards and a touchdown, while fellow running back James Starks added two scores. The Packers (9-4) have a one-game lead in

the NFC North over Minnesota after their second straight victory. With 435 yards and 29 first downs, Green Bay got better production out of its inconsistent offense with coach Mike McCarthy assuming play-calling duties again. The Packers were still hampered at times by penalties and problems in short-yardage situations. But the defense and running game came up with big plays in the fourth quarter. Dallas' touchdown came on Robert Turbin's 7-yard run midway through the third quarter to make it 14-7. The Cowboys (4-9) suffered a setback to their chances of winning the mediocre NFC East.

SEAHAWKS 35, RAVENS 6

Russell Wilson threw five touchdown passes, three to Doug Baldwin, against the injury-depleted Ravens. Wilson went 23 for 32 for 292 yards. The five TD throws matched a career high - set earlier this season against Pittsburgh - and gave him 16 over his last four games. Baldwin scored on passes of 14, 22 and 16 yards. Tyler Lockett caught TD throws of 8 and 49 yards. Seattle's second-ranked defense backed Wilson by keeping the Ravens (4-9) out of the end zone, forcing two turnovers and allowing only 28 yards rushing. The Seahawks (8-5) have won six of seven to move into position for an NFC wild card. Baltimore's offense sputtered under the direction of Jimmy Clausen, who completed 23 of 40 passes for a career-high 274 yards and an interception.

EAGLES 23, BILLS 20

3:26 left, then Ed Reynolds intercepted Tyrod Taylor's pass in the final minutes. LeSean McCoy had 74 yards rushing and 35 receiving in his return to Philadelphia. He kissed the Eagles logo at midfield before the coin toss, but ran off the field immediately after the game. McCoy never approached Chip Kelly. He said last week he didn't want to shake Kelly's hand or talk to the man who traded him. The Eagles (6-7) and Redskins (6-7) are tied atop the NFC East standings. The New York Giants (5-7) could make it a three-way tie with a win at Miami on Monday night. The Bills (6-7) fell two games behind in the AFC wild-card race. Taylor's streak of 222 passes without a pick ended when his deep pass went right to Reynolds with 1:16 remaining.

REDSKINS 24, BEARS 21

Kirk Cousins threw for 300 yards and a touchdown and the Redskins hung on to beat the Bears after Chicago's Robbie Gould missed yet another late field goal. Washington, which came in tied with Philadelphia and the Giants for the NFC East lead, went ahead early in the fourth quarter on Dustin Hopkins' 47-yard field goal. The Redskins (6-7) broke a nine-game road losing streak dating to last season. The Bears (5-8) were in position to score after Jay Cutler hit Alshon Jeffery with a 50-yard pass that put the ball on the Washington 35. The usually reliable Gould, who missed the potential winner at the end of regulation in last week's overtime loss to San Francisco, got a chance to redeem himself. His 50-yard attempt wasn't even close as it sailed wide right.

JAGUARS 51, COLTS 16

Blake Bortles threw for three touchdowns and ran for a score - all in the second half - and the Jaguars ended the Colts' 16-game winning streak in the AFC South. The Jaguars (5-8) scored on offense, defense and special teams in the same game for the first time since 2011, the franchise's most complete game under third-year coach Gus Bradley. It helped Jacksonville gain ground in the muddled division, at least on the Colts (6-7). Indianapolis' division streak was the longest in NFL history. The Colts' previous loss against the AFC South came on Dec. 16, 2012, at Houston.

CHIEFS 10, CHARGERS 3

The Chiefs kept San Diego out of the end zone twice in the final seconds for their seventh consecutive win. Alex Smith threw for 191 yards and a

touchdown, along with his first interception after a franchise-record 312 attempts. But it was a banded-up defense that held San Diego without a touchdown for the second time this season that allowed the Chiefs (8-5) to escape. The Chargers (3-10) took over at their 11 with 5 minutes left and quickly moved into Kansas City territory, converting fourth down three times. But after San Diego was called for delay of game at the Chiefs 1 with 5 seconds left, Philip Rivers threw incomplete into the end zone. San Diego still had 2 seconds left, and an incomplete pass that would have ended the game was blown dead for a false start. With the ball pushed back to the 11-yard line, Rivers scrambled to his right and threw to the end zone, where his pass fell incomplete. The Chiefs spilled onto the field to celebrate another big win in their playoff chase.

JETS 30, TITANS 8

Ryan Fitzpatrick threw three touchdown passes and New York's stingy defense stifled Marcus Mariota and the Titans' offense for most of the game. Brandon Marshall, Eric Decker and Bilal Powell each caught TD passes for the Jets (8-5), who stayed on track in the AFC playoff race with their first three-game winning streak since 2011. Fitzpatrick, who has set a single-season career high with 25 touchdown throws, finished 21 of 36 for 263 yards. Chris Ivory ran for 101 yards on 22 carries, and Randy Bullock kicked three field goals. Muhammad Wilkerson had three sacks. The lone highlight for the lowly Titans (3-10) came in the third quarter when Antonio Andrews took a direct snap and connected with Mariota for a 41-yard touchdown - the rookie quarterback's first career reception.

SAINTS 24, BUCCANEERS 17

Drew Brees threw a pair of touchdown passes to Marques Colston and the Saints stopped a four-game losing streak. Brees completed 31 of 41 passes for 312 yards without an interception. Colston scored on receptions of 1 and 3 yards in the first half, and Tim Hightower added a 3-yard TD run in the third quarter for the Saints (5-8). The loss was the second in three games for the Bucs (6-7), whose hopes to make a run at a NFC wild card took a hit. Jameis Winston threw a fourth-quarter TD pass to Adam Humphries to trim a 14-point deficit to 24-17. The Bucs got the ball back with just over five minutes remaining, punted four plays later and then watched New Orleans grind out three first downs to end the game.

BROWNS 24, 49ERS 10

Johnny Manziel shook off a first-half interception and sideline meltdown by throwing a touchdown pass in his first start since being benched for off-field antics. The Browns snapped a seven-game losing streak. Manziel passed for 270 yards, delivering a quality performance the Browns (3-10) desperately needed. He tossed a 2-yard TD pass to Gary Barnidge late in the third quarter as the Browns won for the first time since Oct. 11 and took some pressure off coach Mike Pettine. Just before halftime, Manziel threw a pick and followed it with an angry outburst on the bench. Isaiah Crowell rushed for 145 yards and had two short TD runs for Cleveland. The 49ers (4-9) allowed nine sacks and managed just 127 yards on offense before a 94-yard drive in garbage time.

RAMS 21, LIONS 14

Todd Gurley ran for 140 yards and two second-half touchdowns, and the Rams ended a five-game losing streak. Trumaine Johnson's 58-yard interception return for St. Louis (5-8) was the only score in the first half, plus he did most of the work holding Calvin Johnson to a late 16-yard catch. Aaron Donald had three sacks of Matthew Stafford to further boost a defense that had sagged in recent weeks. Golden Tate caught two touchdown passes for Detroit (4-9), which didn't have much to show for extra days off to regroup from a game-ending desperation TD pass by the Packers on Dec. 3. — AP

SPORTS COURT DIMISSES NAKHID APPEAL AGAINST FIFA REJECTION

GENEVA: The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) yesterday dismissed an appeal by former Trinidad and Tobago player David Nakhid against a FIFA decision to disqualify him as a presidential candidate. Nakhid, 51, had challenged his exclusion by FIFA's ad-hoc electoral committee barring him from the February 26 vote to replace Sepp Blatter

as the head of world football's governing body. Nakhid's candidacy was invalidated because he only received four valid nominations out of FIFA's 209-member national association and presidential candidates required five. A CAS statement confirmed previous reports that one of Nakhid's supporting associations also gave backing to another candidate, "in

violation of the applicable FIFA rules." "As a consequence, those letters of support were disregarded, meaning that David Nakhid had not met the qualifying criterion of obtaining declarations of support from at least five member associations, and accordingly, his candidature could not be validated," the statement further said. Five candidates have so far

been approved for the race to succeed Blatter, who is serving a 90-suspension over corruption allegations. They include France's Jerome Champagne, Prince Ali bin Al Hussein of Jordan, South African business tycoon Tokyo Sexwale, Asia's football chief Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa and Gianni Infantino, who is Michel Platini's deputy at the European

confederation (UEFA). Platini is still hoping to enter the race but he has been barred to date while serving his own suspension by FIFA's ethics committee. He may face a stiffer punishment, including a possible lifetime ban, when FIFA's ethics court issues a verdict in Platini's corruption case next week. —AFP

IGNORED IN EUROPE, CLUB WORLD CUP FINDS ADULATION IN S AMERICA

OSAKA: Unloved in Europe, the Club World Cup is still adored in South America where players regard the tournament as the pinnacle of their careers and clubs as the high point in their history.

Thousands of fans of South American champions River Plate have been arriving in Japan over the last week, hoping their team can pull off a major upset and dethrone European champions Barcelona.

In contrast to the indifference among European media and fans, the build-up in South America lasts for weeks and is often comparable to the World Cup itself.

Spanish champions Barcelona, who have squeezed the tournament into their busy schedule, arrived in Japan on Monday, three days before their semi-final against Asian champions Guangzhou Evergrande on Thursday.

River Plate, on the other hand, have coasted through the last few months since winning the Libertadores Cup, clearly with their minds on Japan, and arrived more than one week ahead of Wednesday's semi-final in Osaka against Sanfrecce Hiroshima, champions of the host nation.

For their send-off from Argentina, River held a public training session in their stadium and a carnival-like procession to the airport. An estimated 25,000 flag-waving, drum-banging fans lined the 30-kilometre route, letting off fireworks, and dozens of private car followed the team bus, hooting incessantly, to form a huge and rowdy convoy which blocked the highway. In all, River are expected to receive the backing of around 15,000 fans who have defied a 30-hour flight and enormous expense to make the trip.

River, who won the old Intercontinental Cup in 1986 but lost to Juventus 10 years later, were also given rapturous reception as they arrived by bullet train in Osaka from Tokyo as several hundred supporters crowded onto the platform. "This is a unique moment and I wouldn't change it

for anything," midfielder Carlos Sanchez told reporters after a training session. "I'm not going to have another opportunity like this." Veteran Javier Saviola, who has returned to end his career at River after he was raised at the club, said the Millionaires had always been obsessed with beating Europe's best. "I started playing for the club when I was eight and it (River's obsession) has been there all the time," he said. "The club has always seen it as an opportunity for glory but, if anything, there's more expectation this time than there was in 96 with Juventus."

The tournament, featuring the six continental club champions plus national champions of the host nation, has existed in its current form since 2005, having succeeded the Intercontinental Cup, a one-off played in Tokyo between the European and South American champions.

The 1980s saw South American dominance but the momentum changed with the globalisation of the sport which has turned the region's clubs into feeders for Europe-based teams. The South Americans are now closer to the standard of teams from Asia and Africa and often find the semi-final a real struggle, especially with the tantalizing prospect of a match against a big-name European side at stake. Curiously, as the gap has widened, South American enthusiasm appears to have grown, the appeal now being that a team such as River Plate, made up largely of journeymen players, can have a pop at trying to beat star-studded Barcelona. Former Porto and Olympique Marseille midfielder Luis Gonzalez said he had fond memories of getting up at dawn to watch the fixture during the 1980s.

"Those live broadcasts early in the morning," he told FIFA.com. "I never thought I'd have the chance to play in such an amazing competition. For us, playing in the Club World Cup is like touching the heavens." —Reuters



YOKOHAMA: Spain's FC Barcelona footballers arrive at the Narita international airport in Narita, suburban Tokyo yesterday. FC Barcelona will play against Asian champion Guangzhou Evergrande of China at the semi-final of the Club World Cup in Yokohama on December 17. — AFP



TURIN: Juventus' defender Giorgio Chiellini (C) fights for the ball with Juventus' defender Alex Sandro from Brazil during the Italian Serie A football match Juventus vs Fiorentina on Sunday at the "Juventus Stadium" in Turin. — AFP

JUVE GO FOURTH WITH WIN, ROMA HOLD NAPOLI

MILAN: Juventus surged back into the Serie A title race with a 3-1 home win over Fiorentina on Sunday, while Napoli and AS Roma played out a 0-0 stalemate and 10-man AC Milan were held 1-1 by bottom club Hellas Verona.

Mario Mandzukic and Paulo Dybala struck second-half goals to add further impetus to Juve's title challenge after a poor start to the season.

Second-placed Fiore's Josip Illicic had given the visitors the lead with a penalty during a breathless opening, but Juventus were level minutes later when Juan Cuadrado equalised against his former club.

Juve's sixth successive league win helped them go fourth on 30 points, six behind league leaders Inter Milan, while Fiorentina stay four points off the top.

Roma, who have now gone four league games without a win, had goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny to thank for keeping them in the contest against Napoli but they still dropped to fifth place a point behind Juventus. Napoli are level on 32 points with Fiore.

Valter Birsa scored the only goal of the game as Chievo beat Atalanta, who had Nicolò Cherubin and Jasmin Kurtic sent off, while Empoli beat struggling Carpi 3-0 to go ninth.

JUVE RESPOND

Fiore took the lead in the third minute in

Turin when Illicic converted from the spot after Juve's Giorgio Chiellini was adjudged to have brought down Federico Bernardeschi, although the hosts accused the winger of diving.

Juventus responded almost immediately, equalising in the sixth minute when Cuadrado met Patrice Evra's cross with a looping header, before Mandzukic scored in the 80th after Fiorentina keeper Ciprian Tatarusanu failed to hold Paulo Dybala's effort.

Dybala added a third in the second minute of stoppage time when Cuadrado pressured Davide Astori into an error before playing in the Argentine forward, who slotted home past Tatarusanu.

"As we were so far behind, it is important to close (the gap) even more before the (winter) break," Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri told Sky Sport Italia.

"At this moment, the team are playing relatively well, although we have to improve technically and make fewer mistakes."

Roma were booed off the pitch in midweek after an insipid 0-0 Champions League draw against BATE Borisov despite qualifying for the last 16.

On-loan Chelsea forward Mohamed Salah returned to the starting lineup for the first time since early November against Napoli, and gave them a dynamism that was missing in his absence.

Napoli, however, steadily took control of the contest and had their chances to win, with Marek Hamsik forcing Szczesny into an outstanding double save at the death.

'OBVIOUS SUPREMACY'

"If this was a boxing match, Roma's corner would have thrown in the towel," Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri told Mediaset Premium. "We didn't make the most of our obvious supremacy during the match."

"At this moment Inter are in first place, but they have had luck on their side," Roma playmaker Miralem Pjanic told Sky Sport Italia. "We've got all the time in the world to close the gap."

AC Milan coach Sinisa Mihajlovic was left fuming at the referee as they drew 1-1 at home to bottom club Hellas Verona.

Carlos Bacca opened the scoring in the 52nd minute, but Luca Toni equalised from the spot in the 57th after Nigel de Jong brought down Leandro Greco and was sent off for preventing a clear scoring opportunity.

"The fans are right to complain and I am sorry for them and the club," Mihajlovic said to Mediaset. "You've never seen me talk about referees, but you can't fail to mention some things, because for the last two games we've been seriously hurt." Milan are in seventh on 25 points, while Verona stay rooted to the foot of the table with seven points. — Reuters

MANCHESTER UNITED GO INTO UNKNOWN IN EUROPA LEAGUE

NYON: Triple European champions Manchester United and their under-fire coach Louis van Gaal face a tricky task against little-known Midtjylland in the last 32 of the Europa League following yesterday's draw.

United, knocked out of the Champions League last week, meet the Danish league winners, an unsung club backed by owner Matthew Benham who eliminated Southampton earlier in the competition.

Midtjylland's pony-tailed chairman Rasmus Ankersen, appointed by former financier and professional gambler Benham, who also owns English second-tier club Brentford, issued a warning after the draw.

"We have already beaten one English team so we are not afraid," said Ankersen. "We are a small club with a small budget and we know we can't outspend them so we have to out-think them and, so far, this way has worked for us in the Europa League.

"We know we have a chance and we will take up the challenge. If we can beat Southampton we can beat Manchester United and the players will feel that and believe it."

Midtjylland have adopted the use of mathematical modelling and key performance indicators in their management and style of play, factors Van Gaal will need to study after a probable call to fellow Dutchman and Southampton manager Ronald Koeman.

Van Gaal has received a lot of criticism following his team's Champions League exit and their 2-1 defeat by promoted Bournemouth in the Premier League on Saturday.

In other eye-catching ties Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp returns to Germany to face Augsburg, another club in their maiden European campaign, while Sevilla, bidding for a hat-trick of Europa League titles, meet Norwegian team Molde.

Former Champions League winners Borussia Dortmund and Porto also lock horns while Olympique de Marseille take on Athletic Bilbao, Anderlecht play Olympiakos Piraeus, Shakhtar Donetsk face Schalke 04 and Lazio meet Galatasaray. The first legs will be played on Feb. 18 and the return matches seven days later. — Reuters

| RESULT OF THE DRAW | | | |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|
| VALENCIA CF (ESP) | V | SK RAPID WIEN (AUT) | |
| ACF FIORENTINA (ITA) | V | TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR FC (ENG) | |
| BORUSSIA DORTMUND (GER) | V | FC PORTO (POR) | |
| FENERBAHÇE SK (TUR) | V | FC LOKOMOTIV MOSKVA (RUS) | |
| RSC ANDERLECHT (BEL) | V | OLYMPIACOS FC (GRE) | |
| FC MIDTJYLLAND (DEN) | V | MANCHESTER UNITED FC (ENG) | |
| FC AUGSBURG (GER) | V | LIVERPOOL FC (ENG) | |
| AC SPARTA PRAHA (CZE) | V | FC KRASNODAR (RUS) | |
| GALATASARAY A.S. (TUR) | V | S.S. LAZIO (ITA) | |
| FC SION (SUI) | V | SC BRAGA (POR) | |
| FC SHAKHTAR DONETSK (UKR) | V | FC SCHALKE 04 (GER) | |
| OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE (FRA) | V | ATHLETIC CLUB (ESP) | |
| SEVILLA FC (ESP) | V | MOLDE FK (NOR) | |
| SPORTING CP (POR) | V | BAYER 04 LEVERKUSEN (GER) | |
| VILLARREAL CF (ESP) | V | SSC NAPOLI (ITA) | |
| AS SAINT-ÉTIENNE (FRA) | V | FC BASEL 1893 (SUI) | |

NYON: The result of the draw for the UEFA Europa league round of sixteen is displayed on a screen, yesterday at the UEFA headquarters in Nyon. — AFP

Sports

Serena named
Sportsperson
of 2015



Juve go fourth
with win, Roma
hold Napoli



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015

GULFRUN SEASON KICKS OFF WITH GULFRUN 24HR KARTING ENDURANCE 5 Page 15

RESULTS OF THE DRAW

| | | |
|--|----|---|
|  KAA GENT (BEL) | VS | VfL WOLFSBURG (GER)  |
|  AS ROMA (ITA) | VS | REAL MADRID CF (ESP)  |
|  PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN (FRA) | VS | CHELSEA FC (ENG)  |
|  ARSENAL FC (ENG) | VS | FC BARCELONA (ESP)  |
|  JUVENTUS FOOTBALL CLUB (ITA) | VS | FC BAYERN MÜNCHEN (GER)  |
|  PSV EINDHOVEN (NED) | VS | CLUB ATLÉTICO DE MADRID (ESP)  |
|  SL BENFICA (POR) | VS | FOOTBALL CLUB ZENIT (RUS)  |
|  FC DYNAMO KYIV (UKR) | VS | MANCHESTER CITY FC (ENG)  |

NYON: The results of the draw for the UEFA Champions league round of sixteen is displayed on a screen, yesterday at the European football organization’s headquarters in Nyon. — AFP

BARCELONA FACE ARSENAL, CHELSEA PLAY PSG AGAIN

NYON: Holders and Spanish league leaders Barcelona will play Premier League leaders Arsenal in the last 16 of the Champions League, 10 years after the sides faced each other in the final, following yesterday’s draw for the first knockout stage.

Spanish league leaders Barcelona, chasing a sixth title, prevailed 2-1 in the 2006 final at the Stade de France in Paris and also triumphed in the knockout phase in 2010 and 2011.

Chelsea, who are enduring a torrid time in the Premier League, will face French league leaders Paris St Germain in the knockout stages for the third year in succession after the French champions triumphed at the same stage last season and the London club had the upper hand in the quarter-finals the previous year.

Another clash between big guns will feature former winners Juventus and Bayern Munich, while 10-times champions Real Madrid were drawn against AS Roma. It is the game between the pacesetters in Spain and Arsenal which most catches the eye, however.

“We are certain to see a sporting spectacular,” said Barca director Albert Soler. “Arsenal and Barcelona have a similar style of play. The fans will enjoy themselves, we’re two sides

with a similar understanding of the game. They will be two great matches. We must have maximum respect for Arsenal.”

“Barca are used to playing under pressure in every sense. But we are the reigning champions and that gives you an edge.” Arsenal club secretary David Miles said: “It is not easy and the one to avoid at this stage, but it is up to us and we will give them a game.

“Messi, Neymar, Suarez... you could go on, but we have our own world class players and I am sure they will be fantastic games in London and in Barcelona.”

There is also a familiar feel about the Chelsea v PSG tie. “There is not much we don’t know about Paris,” said Chelsea general secretary David Barnard.

“You only know if it’s a good draw after the tie. We are ambitious, we have two-and-a-half months to prepare,” PSG sports director Olivier Letang said. Real Madrid and Roma have also seen a lot of each other in the competition, though not since 2008 when the Italians won 201 home and away in the last 16.

“You have to be very much on your guard. If we see ourselves as favourites things won’t go well for us,” said Real director Emilio Butragueno.

“We know what can happen if you have 10 poor minutes on a European night.”

Juventus could come to regret having blown their finale in the group stage, leaving Manchester City, who will take on Dynamo Kiev, with the better draw on paper.

“Everybody wanted to avoid Barca and Bayern so we are not so lucky but Bayern will not be glad they drew Juve,” said Juventus ambassador Pavel Nedved.

Manchester City director of football Txiki Begiristain said: “They have a good side (Kiev) and it will be difficult for us. They are growing in the competition and it will be a big challenge but we hope to be ready.

“They are a strong side, but they like to play football and it is just 11 v 11. We are improving and gaining experience in the competition so we hope to do well.”

PSV Eindhoven will take on Atletico Madrid and Benfica will be against Zenit St Petersburg. Gent, in their first participation in the competition, will take on Germany’s VfL Wolfsburg. The first legs of the ties are spread over four days in February, with the returns on March 8, 9 and 15, when there are two matches. — Reuters

Champions League last 16 fixtures

| | |
|---|---|
| PARIS: Fixtures for the last 16 round of the Champions League following the draw made in Nyon yesterday: | SECOND LEGS |
| FIRST LEGS | Tuesday March 8: |
| Tuesday Feb 16: | Wolfsburg (GER) v Gent (BEL) |
| Paris Saint-Germain v Chelsea (ENG) | Real Madrid (ESP) v Rome (ITA) |
| Benfica (POR) v Zenit Saint-Petersburg (RUS) | |
| Wednesday Feb 17: | Wednesday March 9: |
| Gent (BEL) v Wolfsburg (GER) | Chelsea (ENG) v Paris Saint-Germain (FRA) |
| Roma (ITA) v Real Madrid (ESP) | Zenit Saint-Petersburg (RUS) v Benfica (POR) |
| Tuesday Feb 23: | Tuesday March 15: |
| Arsenal (ENG) v Barcelona (ESP) | Atletico Madrid (ESP) v PSV Eindhoven (NED) |
| Juventus (ITA) v Bayern Munich (GER) | Manchester City (ENG) v Dynamo Kiev (UKR) |
| Wednesday Feb 24: | Wednesday March 16: |
| PSV Eindhoven (NED) v Atletico Madrid (ESP) | Barcelona (ESP) v Arsenal (ENG) |
| Dynamo Kiev (UKR) v Manchester City (ENG) | Bayern M,nich (GER) v Juventus Turin (ITA). - AFP |

REAL MADRID BEATEN AGAIN AT VILLARREAL, ATLETICO JOINT TOP

MADRID: Real Madrid’s La Liga title hopes were dealt another huge blow as they suffered a third league defeat in five games to Roberto Soldado’s solitary goal at Villarreal.

Atletico Madrid’s 2-1 win over Athletic Bilbao earlier in the day means Real now trail their city rivals and Barcelona by five points at the top of the table. Real were outplayed in the first-half, but reacted after the break and were left to rue a hat-trick of missed chances by troubled French striker Karim Benzema as defeat piles the pressure on under fire coach Rafael Benitez.

Elsewhere, a late own goal salvaged a point for Valencia in Gary Neville’s first taste of La Liga action as Los Che battled back with 10 men to draw 1-1 at Eibar.

Real had won five consecutive games since being thrashed 4-0 at home by Barca last month, but were forced onto the back foot by a whirlwind start from Villarreal.

Jonathan dos Santos had already smacked the inside of the post before Soldado turned home Cedric Bakambu’s pass against his old club on eight minutes. Bakambu had two great chances to double Villarreal’s advantage before half-time, but the Congolese striker pulled his shot wide when clean through on Keylor Navas before firing over from inside the area.

Having been dominated in the first-half, Madrid came out a different side after the

break and had a series of chances to turn the game on its head. Benzema had scored five times in his last two outings for Madrid despite his off-field problems which saw him indefinitely banned from playing for France in midweek, however his range was off as he volleyed inches wide from Gareth Bale’s through ball.

Another fine Bale cross was blasted over by Benzema moments later before Bale had a great chance himself, but on his weaker right foot didn’t have the power to beat Alphonse Areola in the Villarreal goal.

Benzema had one final chance to rescue a point, but his and Madrid’s night was summed up when he headed wide when unmarked inside the area 17 minutes from time.

Victory takes Villarreal back to within a point of fourth-placed Celta Vigo. At the Vicente Calderon, Atletico were forced to come from behind as they conceded for just the seventh time in 15 La Liga games this season when Aymeric Laporte swept home Benat Etxebarria’s corner at the back post.

Atletico had barely threatened in the first-half but levelled with the last action of the half as Saul Niguez headed in at the near post. Jan Oblak made two great saves at the start of the second period from Eneko Boveda and Aduriz to keep Atletico in the game.

And they proved vital as Antoine Griezmann’s stunning strike from 25 yards

with Atletico’s only serious effort of the second-half delivered a vital three points.

“We always work to be better and it is clear that we continue on our course, looking to improve without looking at the other teams,” said Atletico boss Diego Simeone.

“It is not easy to concede first and come back. We are happy with our work, but we don’t understand any other way than through sheer effort.”

Valencia escaped from Eibar with a point despite another disappointing display after crashing out of the Champions League against Lyon in Neville’s first game in charge in midweek.

Sergi Enrich deservedly opened the scoring for Eibar with the last kick of the first half. However, the turning point came midway through the second period when Valencia goalkeeper Jaume Domenech saved Saul Berjon’s penalty after Lucas Orban had been very harshly sent off for supposedly elbowing Dani Garcia.

And Valencia got the slice of luck they needed when David Junca turned the ball into his own net five minutes from time.

A point leaves Valencia seven points off the top four in eighth. “The last 20 minutes is the minimum that Valencia should show every week,” said Neville. “We wanted to win, a draw is not ideal, but it is positive given the circumstances.” — AFP



VILLARREAL: Real Madrid’s Sergio Ramos, back, duels for the ball with Villarreal’s Jonathan dos Santos during a Spanish La Liga soccer match at the Madrigal stadium in Villarreal, Spain, Sunday. —AP



Al-Mazaya Holding participates in Cityscape Kuwait as gold sponsor

FREE-FALLING OF OIL PRICES CONTINUES TO AFFECT MENA MARKETS



JEDDAH: A man sits in a Nissan car during the opening day of the Saudi International Motor Show yesterday in the Red Sea city of Jeddah. — AFP

FOREIGN BANKS CHARGE BACK INTO GULF

LOCAL GULF LENDERS SQUEEZED AS THEY LOSE MARKET SHARE

DUBAI/TOKYO: Foreign banks are regaining lost ground in the Gulf’s financial sector, stealing a march on local lenders as they grapple with job cuts and a liquidity squeeze caused by the plunging oil price. Japanese, French and US banks are looking to pick up business in the region as the oil price slump pushes domestic players to curb the flow of cheap loans which, until recently, had secured them a dominant position in the market.

The shift marks a change in fortune for Gulf banks, which in the years following the global financial crisis had poached staff and aggressively filled gaps left by international lenders as they retreated to tackle problems at home. “The recent changes in liquidity and pricing have probably levelled the playing field more equally between the local and international banks,” said Simon Eedle, group regional head of the Middle East at Natixis, noting the market was much changed from six months ago.

Leading the charge of foreign lenders are Japan’s mega-banks: Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG), Mizuho Financial Group and Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group (SMFG). Flush with the proceeds of their government’s “Abenomics” quantitative easing program, all three are hiring staff and increasing business lines as they look to deploy funds.

“We believe that current market conditions will create a number of business opportunities for us if we use our strengths effectively,” said Hidefumi Takeuchi, regional head of the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia at Mizuho Financial Group.

Japan’s export credit agencies—Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI) — have helped support the lenders’ in-roads, with Japanese contractors securing big wins in Gulf infrastructure projects and bringing with them cash from their home financial institutions.

That puts Japanese lenders in prime position for advisory roles on these huge deals. The adviser on the \$5.2 billion Liwa plastics project in Oman is SMFG.

Changing fortunes

Local banks dominated Gulf loan markets in recent years due to the low cost of funds from government oil deposits which provide around 10 to 35 percent of banks’ non-equity funding in the six-nation Gulf, according to rating agency Moody’s. While this drove loan interest rates to uneconomical levels for foreign lenders, the oil price fall has severely impacted the amount of liquidity local banks could lend and the rate at which they do.

Highlighting this problem is the United Arab Emirates’ three-month Emirates Interbank Offered Rate (EIBOR), at a record low as recently as February but trading at a 31-month high last week.

The squeeze is already starting to be felt: First Gulf Bank, the UAE’s third-largest bank by assets and one of the most expansive names during the boom, laid off around 100 staff last month.

Local banks are also going from being lenders to borrowers, with unprecedented activity in the financial institutions loan market as the year closes and banks seek to lock in funding before U.S. interest rates increase. The result is only one regional bank—Riyad Bank—has a top-six slot in the year-to-end-November 2015 league table for Gulf syndicated lending, down from four in 2014, according to Thomson Reuters data. Japan’s MUFG and SMFG secured second and third spots in the table respectively, while Samba Financial Group slipped to 23rd from 2nd in 2014. The trend is set to continue in 2016 as oil remains subdued, restricting the revenue Gulf governments can place with local lenders.

New entrants

Last time foreign banks held pole position in Gulf banking, the leading names included many US and European banks,

but many of those cut services or, in the case of Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds Banking Group, withdrew completely after the financial crisis. That’s helped clear the way for the Japanese banks to gain market share so quickly, epitomised by their leading role as three of six arrangers on a \$5.5 billion loan to Qatar.

But some of the old international players remain. In the loan market, French banks are returning strongly and are set to benefit as liquidity dries up at local lenders.

“Whereas some people are now nervous because we’ve seen the price of credit rise very quickly, this is exactly what I want as I can continue lending,” said Natixis’ Eedle. Such price rises, plus a reduction in liquidity as fewer banks offer loans, should push more borrowers to debt capital markets in 2016, which will suit international banks who can give local institutions access to global investor cash.

The environment in which international banks operate has changed much since 2008 though. New regulations make it more capital-intensive to sell the kind of products which have been the staple of the Gulf, such as long-dated loans, meaning local companies will have to adapt to the new banking order. “We live in a return on equity world and that’s what motivates us now,” said Sammy Kayello, chairman of Middle East and North Africa at Morgan Stanley. — Reuters

FED RATE HIKE WRONG MOVE FOR EMERGING ECONOMIES

PARIS: An expected first interest rate in almost a decade by the Federal Reserve tomorrow could squeeze emerging economies’ room for manoeuvre as they try to stave off recession, analysts warn.

The rise would mark “the end of a very big illusion,” says Christine Riffart, economist with French think tank OFCE. Emerging economies have done well out of the Fed’s latter day generous monetary policy but with the cycle seemingly about to turn many of them, already battling pallid growth, face further headwinds.

Many emerging states are large scale producers of raw materials and have ridden the boom of Chinese demand. With that having fallen off, growth has taken a hit. Worse still, rising rates will penalize their debt financing conditions and push down their currencies, hitting export earnings.

So much for the economics-but political crises also comes to bear, not least in Brazil where President Dilma Rousseff is battling to stave off impeachment while the fact South African President Jacob Zuma is on his third finance minister inside a week has caused confidence and the rand to plummet.

Developing nations’ central banks are pinning their hopes on a moderate rise to ensure the Fed does not make their task of keeping their own situation on an even keel insurmountable.

A US rate rise risks increased capital outflow in emerging states who could respond by raising their own, in many cases already high, rates.

“If they want to retain a certain currency stability the emerging countries will have to raise their rates. Yet, as they are caught in an economic slowdown or even recession in some cases, they really ought to do the opposite,” says Olivier Garnier, chief economist with Societe Generale.

Brazil is a notable example with inflation in double figures and rates already sky high at 14.25 percent, leaving little margin for more upward movement. “US monetary policy poses each time a problem in Brazil. Its economy is in recession and it should loosen monetary policy but that only reinforces capi-

tal outflows, a drop in currency value and hence (a stoking of) inflation,” Garnier said.

But Capital Economics research credits emerging nations with more resilience, saying yesterday they are “well placed to withstand Fed tightening” as previous evidence suggested “the onset of higher interest rates in the US does not necessarily trigger a rush to the exits.” The consultancy added that the impending rise comes against a largely favorable economic backdrop and has been priced in by traders.

Rock and hard place

Oil producing nations, hit by the price of crude tumbling to seven-year lows, likewise have to deal with the fallout of a US rates rise and accompanying dollar rise.

“The Gulf states, whose money is linked to the greenback, could find themselves saddled with an over-valued currency. To maintain their stability vis-a-vis the dollar they will in turn have to raise their own rates,” thereby losing a growth-boosting monetary tool, explains Garnier. In the case of oil producer Nigeria “as the Fed tightens and the dollar gets stronger, you will see more pressure on the Nigerian naira,” predicts Fitch ratings agency director Jermaine Leonard.

“If we start to see more pressure on the naira, we will have to ask the question, ‘how long can Central Bank of Nigeria defend the naira at the present level of just below 200 to the dollar?’ China may, in contrast, prove to be a special ‘emerging’ case and fare better after any Fed decision to end the long months of rate rise rumble.

China’s own central bank Friday indicated it believes the yuan’s value ought in future to be less dependent on the dollar and more measured against a basket of trading partner currencies. That could help the Asian giant as it battles its own growth downturn. “Loosening its exchange objective would give it greater scope to manage internal demand better, to cut interest rates and to try to spread credit demand on the banking market,” commented Riffart. “That would give (Beijing) the means to regulate its domestic demand,” she concluded. — AFP

OIL SLUMP DEEPENS SAUDI GLOOM; GULF, EGYPT MIXED

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia’s bourse slid in the last hour of trade yesterday to end lower for a third session as crude prices extended a slump, while markets in Egypt, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates made slight rebounds following sustained declines. Brent prices tumbled to \$36.78 by 1233 GMT, dropping further towards 11-year lows. Saudi Arabia’s index fell 1.2 percent to a three-year low of 6,686 points. Selling intensified as Brent prices fell below \$37, Reuters data showed.

Saudi Basic Industries (SABIC), the Gulf’s largest stock by market value, also fell 1.2 percent. Almarai bucked the trend, jumping 5.6 percent to 80 riyals after it announced a dividend distribution of 1.15 riyals per share for 2015. This is 15 percent higher than 2014’s dividend and will be the dairy company’s biggest payout since 2011. Almarai also said it would raise its capital by 33 percent by issuing 1 bonus share for every 3 held. The capital boost is aimed at supporting the food producer’s five-year 21 billion riyal (\$5.60 billion) spending program. Dubai’s bourse climbed 1.2 percent as 19 of the 21 traded stocks ended higher. The index had hit a two-year low a day earlier. Abu Dhabi’s index rose 0.6 percent, recovering some of Sunday’s losses as Etisalat, the UAE’s largest listed company, added 1 percent.

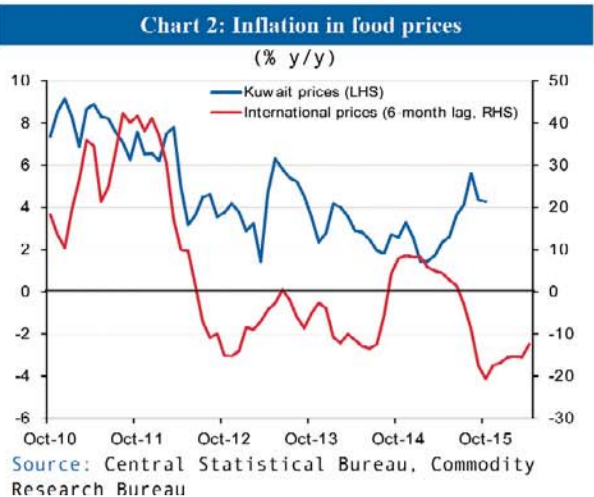
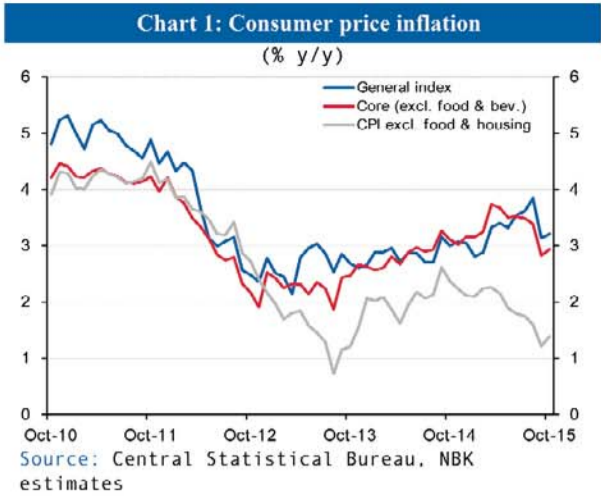
Fellow bluechips First Gulf Bank and Aldar Properties were among the other gainers, each jumping 1.8 percent. Qatar’s bourse rose 1 percent as all but one stock gained, although it remains near a two-year low. Heavyweights Qatar National Bank and Masraf Al-Rayan climbed 0.1 and 0.2 percent respectively. Combined, the banks account for about a third of Qatar’s total market capitalisation.

EGYPT

Egypt’s benchmark rose 0.2 percent to 6,408 points, but remains within 110 points of November’s 2015 low. In a surprise move, Egypt’s central bank on Sunday injected more foreign currency liquidity into the banking system, helping restore confidence among some foreign stock traders who were net buyers on Cairo’s bourse. Local and Arab investors were net sellers, bourse data showed. “We believe this foreign currency injection - our so called Operation Confidence - has a very short life span,” said a note by Cairo-based Pharos Holding. “The buzz around renewed negotiations with Gulf countries and the IMF over sizeable financial assistance reinforces just how short-lived this move will be.”

Oil tumbles

Oil prices tumbled 4 percent yesterday, coming close to their 11-year low, on growing fears that the global oil glut would worsen in the months to come in a pricing war between leading OPEC and non-OPEC producers. Brent crude fell by 4 percent to below \$36.40 a barrel for the first time since December 2008 and US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) sank almost 3 percent below \$34.60 a barrel. Brent traded only 14 cents above the lows last seen during the 2008 financial crisis of \$36.20 a barrel. If Brent falls below that level, that will be its lowest since mid-2004 - a year when oil was beginning its surge from the single digits it hit during the 1998 financial crisis and when talk of a commodity super-cycle was only beginning. WTI’s financial crisis low was \$32.40 in December 2008. “Oil is coming under pressure as the lack of OPEC cuts mean incessant oversupply continues,” said Amrita Sen from Energy Aspects think tank. — Reuters



KUWAIT INFLATION A TICK HIGHER AT 3.2% IN SEPT

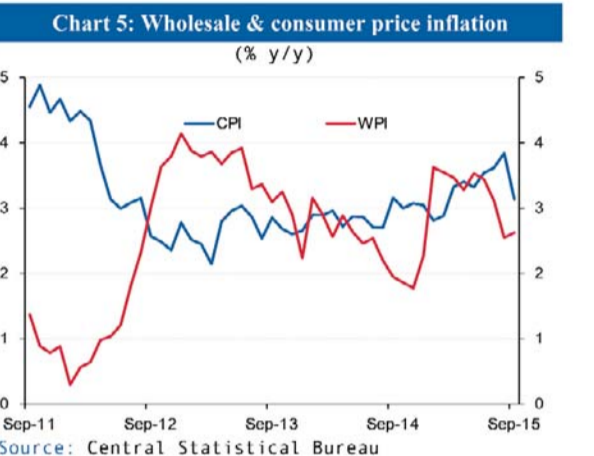
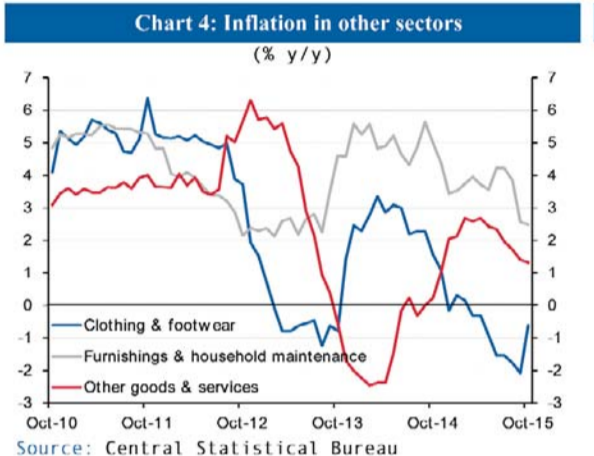
NBK REPORT

KUWAIT: Inflation in consumer prices was just a tick higher in October, rising from 3.1 percent year-on-year (y/y) in September to 3.2 percent y/y. Inflation across most components remained broadly stable; clothing & footwear inflation appears to have gained the most momentum on a month-on-month basis. Core inflation (which excludes food items) also saw a slight uptick, rising from 2.8 percent y/y to 2.9 percent. Food price inflation came in slightly lower against a backdrop of declining global prices. With inflation in most components set to remain in-check until the end of 2015, we expect annual inflation to average close to 3.4 percent in 2015, before easing to 3 percent in 2016.

Inflation in local food prices slowed slightly from 4.4 percent y/y in September to 4.3 percent in October, as global food prices continued to decline. According to the Commodity Research Bureau's global commodity index, international food prices fell by around 13 percent y/y in October. Given the ongoing weakness in international food inflation, we expect upward pressures on local food inflation to be limited in the near-to-medium term.

Inflation in housing services was unchanged from September's 5.7 percent y/y reading. Inflation in this segment (a bulk of which is made up of housing rents) witnessed strong gains over the past year, particularly in 4Q14 and 1Q15. It appears to have peaked in 2Q15 and we may see it continue to recede over the following months.

Inflation in furnishings & household maintenance continued to ease and clothing & footwear prices remained in decline. Inflation in furnishings & household maintenance came in marginally lower in October, at 2.5 percent y/y. Clothing & footwear inflation appears to have bottomed out; nonetheless prices in this segment continued to



decline for the seventh consecutive month. Inflation in clothing & footwear costs is seeing a large correction, following a high base around the same period last year. The stronger dinar has helped keep inflationary pressures in this segment down, especially as most items are imported.

Inflation in the other goods & services segment also maintained its downward trend in October. Inflation in this segment, which includes prices of personal care products and jewelry and certain business charges, continues to see a downward correction. Given that a bulk of the items in this component is imported, the slowdown can also be explained by the stronger dinar.

Wholesale price inflation eased in the third quarter of this year, mainly as upward inflationary pressures from its manufacturing component subsided. Inflation in the wholesale price index (WPI), updated quarterly, fell from 3.4 percent y/y in June (its last update) to 2.6 percent in September, as a slowdown in inflation in manufacturing was offset by inflationary gains in agriculture, livestock & fishing, and mining & quarrying. The agriculture, livestock & fishing component gained some ground in 3Q15 on the back of a hike in fish & seafood prices during the same period. However, inflation in this segment is forecast to subside in 4Q15 after fish & seafood prices were lowered.

Inflation in the WPI is forecast to be moderate in the near-to-medium term. This will help keep inflation in the consumer price index in check and lead to an annual average close to our 3.4 percent forecast in 2015.

NEW S AFRICAN MINISTER VOWS TO TACKLE RAND FALL

PRETORIA: South Africa's new Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan vowed yesterday to stabilize the tottering economy after his predecessor lasted just four days in the job amid a dramatic slump in the rand. "We will stay the course of sound fiscal management," Gordhan told reporters. "Our expenditure ceiling is sacrosanct. We can have extra expenditure only if we raise extra revenue." President Jacob Zuma last week ousted respected finance minister Nkhensiso Nene in favor of the little-known David van Rooyen, triggering a backlash that led to a U-turn on Sunday when Rooyen himself was removed. "The facts about the developments that took place last week and the response of the financial markets are well-known," Gordhan said.

"Our currency fell, the stock market dropped by 2.94 percent and bond yields shot up by over 150 basis points. "Our government is acutely aware of the financial impact this had on those who are invested in this economy," Zuma was accused of sacking Nene partly because the minister had publicly slapped down a move by state-owned South African Airways (SAA) to renegotiate a plane-leasing deal with Airbus. Gordhan yesterday issued a sharp warning against alleged malpractice by those involved in SAA and other state-owned companies. "It's time that individuals or groups of individuals stop playing with state entities as if it's a personal toy from which you can extract money when you feel like," he said. "These are public institutions, their primary responsibility is to either contribute to the economy (or) contribute to providing a service or revenue." Gordhan, who served as finance minister from 2009 to 2014, was re-appointed to the role in a bid to calm markets after the rand fell to an all-time low of 16 to the dollar when Nene was fired. —AFP



MYANMAR: Children play in front of a brick factory on the outskirts of the northern Myanmar city of Mandalay yesterday. —AFP

News

in brief

OPEC oil price edges down to \$33.76 pb

VIENNA: The crude basket price went down by 93 cents Friday and stood at \$33.76 per barrel, compared with \$34.69 pb the previous day, the OPEC said yesterday. It added that the monthly average of the OPEC's basket price in November was \$40.50 per barrel while in October it was \$45.02 per barrel which indicates. The yearly average for the basket last year was \$96.29 per barrel, it said. During their recent meeting in Vienna, OPEC member countries had decided to maintain their production at 30 million barrels per day (bpd) despite a surplus in the market estimated at over a million barrels.

Saudi bonds to sell new 20bn riyal bond issue

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's government contacted local banks yesterday to sell them local currency bonds worth 20 billion riyals (\$5.3 billion), which will be allocated next week, the Maaal financial website reported, citing unnamed sources. The new issues will bring to 115 billion riyals the amount of bonds issued by the government to local banks this year. It resumed issuing bonds to banks in July for the first time since 2007 to cover a budget deficit created by low oil prices. The maturities on the latest bonds will yield slightly less than the previous issue back in November. The new five-year tranche will yield 1.95 percent, a seven-year portion will yield 2.20 percent, and a 10-year tranche 2.85 percent, according to the website.

Almarai moots dividend hike for 2015

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's Almarai is proposing to hike its dividend for 2015 and increase its share capital through the issuance of bonus shares to help support its growth plans. The Gulf's largest dairy firm said yesterday its board had recommended a cash dividend of 1.15 riyals (\$0.31) per share for 2015. That is up from the 1 riyal payout for 2014, according to Thomson Reuters data. The total value of the latest dividend payout would be 690 million riyals, the company said in a statement to the Saudi bourse. Almarai's board also decided to recommend to shareholders to raise its share capital by 33 percent to 8 billion riyals through the issuance of one bonus share for every three shares currently owned, the company said in a separate statement.

UAE, CHINA SET UP \$10BN JOINT STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FUND

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates and China have established a joint strategic investment fund worth \$10 billion, the UAE's state news agency reported, as China pursues its ambition to rebuild Silk Road trade routes.

The agreement was clinched during a three-day visit by Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahayan to China, and follows a cooperation deal between state-owned oil companies in both countries.

"The launch of this strategic fund with commercial goals builds on the next phase in our partnership in our quest to work in a close way to develop the economies of the two countries and take part in the growth of the global economy," Sheikh Mohammed was quoted as saying by the WAM news agency. The fund, which will be financed equally by both countries, will pursue a range of opportunities in various asset classes including greenfield projects, in which operational facilities are built from scratch.

The report quoted Chinese president Xi Jinping as saying that "the fund will play a pivotal role in supporting the strategy of 'One Belt One Road'". Announced two years ago, the plan to rebuild Silk Road trade links with Europe and Asia aims to extend China's global influence through financing infrastructure projects in 65 countries and to win new markets for Chinese companies.

Political analysts will watch the ties forged during Sheikh Mohammed's visit for any signs of shifting political loyalties, after the UAE's traditional ally, the United States, sought rapprochement with Iran, to the dismay of Gulf nations. The new fund will be administered and managed by Abu Dhabi state fund Mubadala on the Emirati side. A subsidiary of China Development Bank and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange will act on Beijing's behalf.

The fund joins others set up by the UAE and Abu Dhabi, the largest emirate in the country, to invest with different countries, including Russia and France. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

| ASIAN COUNTRIES | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Japanese Yen | 2.511 |
| Indian Rupees | 4.544 |
| Pakistani Rupees | 2.920 |
| Sri Lankan Rupees | 2.123 |
| Nepali Rupees | 2.842 |
| Singapore Dollar | 216.100 |
| Hongkong Dollar | 39.232 |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.849 |
| Philippine Peso | 6.424 |
| Thai Baht | 8.451 |
| GCC COUNTRIES | |
| Saudi Riyal | 81.123 |
| Qatari Riyal | 83.565 |
| Omani Riyal | 790.150 |
| Bahraini Dinar | 807.890 |
| UAE Dirham | 82.825 |
| ARAB COUNTRIES | |
| Egyptian Pound - Cash | 37.700 |
| Egyptian Pound - Transfer | 38.897 |
| Yemen Riyal/for 1000 | 1.420 |
| Tunisian Dinar | 151.270 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 428.390 |
| Lebanese Lira/for 1000 | 2.027 |
| Syrian Lira | 2.168 |
| Morocco Dirham | 31.345 |
| EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES | |
| US Dollar Transfer | 304.050 |
| Euro | 334.760 |
| Sterling Pound | 463.370 |
| Canadian dollar | 222.100 |
| Turkish lira | 102.530 |
| Swiss Franc | 309.940 |
| Australian Dollar | 220.130 |
| US Dollar Buying | 302.850 |

| GOLD | |
|---------|---------|
| 20 Gram | 219.040 |
| 10 Gram | 112.210 |
| 5 Gram | 56.79 |

| UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL | | |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------|
| COUNTRY | SELL DRAFT | SELL CASH |
| Australian Dollar | 209.25 | |
| Canadian Dollar | 227.76 | |
| Swiss Franc | 313.06 | |
| Euro | 337.68 | |
| US Dollar | 304.15 | |
| Sterling Pound | 464.05 | |
| Japanese Yen | 2.54 | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.853 | |
| Indian Rupee | 4.555 | |
| Sri Lankan Rupee | 2.128 | |
| Nepali Rupee | 2.846 | |
| Pakistani Rupee | 2.933 | |
| UAE Dirhams | 0.08277 | |
| Bahraini Dinar | 0.8083 | |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.03875 | |
| Jordanian Dinar | 0.4326 | |
| Omani Riyal | 0.7898 | |
| Qatari Riyal | 0.08386 | |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.08107 | |

| DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Rate for Transfer | Selling Rate |
| US Dollar | 304.300 |
| Canadian Dollar | 223.610 |
| Sterling Pound | 462.955 |
| Euro | 334.875 |
| Swiss Frank | 300.725 |

| Bahrain Dinar | 805.040 | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| UAE Dirhams | 83.090 | |
| Qatari Riyals | 84.310 | |
| Saudi Riyals | 81.825 | |
| Jordanian Dinar | 428.910 | |
| Egyptian Pound | 38.751 | |
| Sri Lankan Rupees | 2.126 | |
| Indian Rupees | 4.537 | |
| Pakistani Rupees | 2.920 | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.846 | |
| Philippines Peso | 6.431 | |
| Cyprus pound | 579.600 | |
| Japanese Yen | 3.505 | |
| Syrian Pound | 2.610 | |
| Nepalese Rupees | 3.830 | |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 71.210 | |
| Chinese Yuan Renminbi | 47.600 | |
| Thai Bhat | 9.375 | |
| Turkish Lira | 102.970 | |
| BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY | | |
| COUNTRY | SELL CASH | SELLDRAFT |
| Europe | | |
| British Pound | 0.454940 | 0.463940 |
| Czech Korune | 0.004357 | 0.016357 |
| Danish Krone | 0.040693 | 0.045693 |
| Euro | 0.327623 | 0.335623 |
| Norwegian Krone | 0.031034 | 0.036234 |
| Romanian Leu | 0.087220 | 0.087220 |
| Slovakia | 0.009083 | 0.019083 |
| Swedish Krona | 0.031676 | 0.036676 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.301813 | 0.312013 |
| Turkish Lira | 0.098087 | 0.108387 |
| Australasia | | |
| Australian Dollar | 0.210351 | 0.221851 |
| New Zealand Dollar | 0.197366 | 0.206866 |

| America | | |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Canadian Dollar | 0.215940 | 0.224440 |
| US Dollars | 0.299950 | 0.304450 |
| US Dollars Mint | 0.300450 | 0.304450 |
| Asia | | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 0.003459 | 0.004059 |
| Chinese Yuan | 0.045898 | 0.049398 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 0.037129 | 0.039879 |
| Indian Rupee | 0.004326 | 0.004716 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 0.000017 | 0.000023 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.002433 | 0.002613 |
| Kenyan Shilling | 0.003160 | 0.003160 |
| Korean Won | 0.000246 | 0.000261 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 0.067209 | 0.073209 |
| Nepalese Rupee | 0.002883 | 0.003053 |
| Pakistan Rupee | 0.002697 | 0.002977 |
| Philippine Peso | 0.006428 | 0.006708 |
| Sierra Leone | 0.000067 | 0.000073 |
| Singapore Dollar | 0.212066 | 0.218066 |
| South African Rand | 0.014335 | 0.022835 |
| Sri Lankan Rupee | 0.001764 | 0.002344 |
| Taiwan | 0.009120 | 0.009300 |
| Thai Baht | 0.008117 | 0.008667 |
| Arab | | |
| Bahraini Dinar | 0.799609 | 0.807609 |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.036183 | 0.039309 |
| Iranian Riyal | 0.000084 | 0.000085 |
| Iraqi Dinar | 0.000200 | 0.000260 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 0.424847 | 0.432347 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 1.000000 | 1.000000 |
| Lebanese Pound | 0.000152 | 0.000252 |
| Moroccan Dirhams | 0.022084 | 0.046084 |
| Nigerian Naira | 0.001256 | 0.001891 |
| Omani Riyal | 0.783320 | 0.789000 |
| Qatar Riyal | 0.082804 | 0.084017 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.080443 | 0.081143 |
| Syrian Pound | 0.001289 | 0.001509 |
| Tunisian Dinar | 0.147821 | 0.155821 |
| Turkish Lira | 0.098087 | 0.108387 |
| UAE Dirhams | 0.081800 | 0.082949 |
| Yemeni Riyal | 0.001374 | 0.001454 |

INDIA: PARIS CLIMATE DEAL WON'T AFFECT PLANS TO DOUBLE COAL OUTPUT

NEW DELHI: India still plans to double coal output by 2020 and rely on the resource for decades afterwards, a senior official said yesterday, days after rich and poor countries agreed in Paris to curb carbon emissions blamed for global warming.

India, the world's third-largest carbon emitter, is dependent on coal for about two-thirds of its energy needs and has pledged to mine more of the fuel to power its resource-hungry economy while also promising to increase clean energy

generation. "The environment is non-negotiable and we are extremely careful about it," Anil Swarup, the top bureaucrat in the coal ministry, told Reuters. "(But) our dependence on coal will continue. There are no other alternatives available."

While India has plans to add 30 times more solar-powered generation capacity by 2022, there were limitations to clean energy and coal would remain the most efficient energy source for decades, he said. Minister for Power, Coal and Renewable Energy, Piyush Goyal, said

India's contribution to global greenhouse gases emissions was just 2.5 percent with 17 percent of the world's population, while developed countries contributed a fifth of emissions with just 5 percent of the world's population.

"While contributing to (the) growth of renewable energy, energy conservation & efficiency, we'll make sure our development process (does) not get hampered," Goyal said in a post on Twitter.

Even though many international lenders are turning their backs on financ-

ing new coal projects in favour of gas and renewable energy, India should have few difficulties in financing dozens more new mines. State-owned producer Coal India, for example, has enough internal cash resources to drive more production, Swarup said.

At the global climate summit in Paris, nations forged a landmark agreement on Saturday to set the course for an historic transformation of the world's fossil fuel-driven economy within decades, including eliminating net man-made green-

house gas emissions.

Environmentalists worry that despite India's commitment to renewable energy, its rising use of coal at a time when many Western nations are rejecting the dirty fossil fuel will hamper the world's fight against climate change.

India, which is targeting to more than double coal output to 1.5 billion tons this decade, says coal provides the cheapest energy for rapid industrialization that would lift millions out of poverty. — Reuters



THE HAGUE: Dutch Finance Minister and Eurogroup president Jeroen Dijsselbloem (left) and Dutch State Secretary of Finance Eric Wiebes (right) receive European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs Pierre Moscovici (center) at the Dutch Ministry of Finance in The Hague yesterday. — AFP

HEDGE FUNDS ADD TO RECORD BEARISH POSITIONS IN OIL

POLICY SHIFT AFTER OPEC DECISION TO KEEP OUTPUT

LONDON: Rather than taking profits, hedge funds continued to add to their record bearish positions after the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) failed to reach agreement on a production target at the start of the month.

By Dec. 8, hedge funds and other money managers had accumulated short positions in the main WTI and Brent futures and options contracts equivalent to 364 million barrels.

The combined short position in Brent and WTI was up by almost 5 million barrels compared with the previous week and 161 million barrels since the middle of October.

The combined short position is easily the largest on record, dwarfing the previous records of 325 million barrels set in August and 299 million barrels in March. Hedge funds booked some profits on Brent, reducing short positions by 8 million barrels last week, but added 13 million in WTI, according to data from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission and ICE Futures Europe.

Hedge fund short positions have been

strongly correlated with movements in the price of Brent and WTI throughout 2015, so it comes as no surprise that the extra shorts helped push both markers to new lows.

By the end of the week, both Brent and WTI were trading well below \$40 per barrel, at their lowest levels since the depths of the financial crisis and recession in 2008/2009. There has been no sign of mass short covering among speculators despite the fact that WTI and Brent prices have both fallen almost \$12 in less than two months.

Both the poor supply-demand fundamentals and momentum trading strategies appear to favour the downside for the time being. But the risks associated with such a large short position that will need to be covered at some point are clearly rising.

The cost of buying protection against a sudden price movement up or down through options is becoming progressively more expensive.

Brent crude options are now even more expensive than they were before the OPEC

meeting on Dec. 4 as implied volatility continues to increase.

The implied volatility embedded within one-month at the money Brent options has risen to more than 50 percent, up from a previous high of 47 percent before OPEC's decision was announced.

Implied volatility is now the in 93rd percentile for all trading days since 2006, according to estimates derived from Thomson Reuters Eikon. In the short term, the short positions can be rolled forward profitably because the market remains in contango so the hedge funds are buying back cheap futures positions and selling more expensive ones.

Positive roll yield is adding to the returns from being short in a falling market and ensuring the positions are very profitable. But at some point the short positions will have to be scaled back significantly; the high level of implied volatility shows that option dealers are braced for turbulence when some of the hedge funds try to exit. — Reuters

DELAYS HELP DUBAI RENTS STAY FLAT IN 2015

DUBAI: The delayed handover of about 6,000 homes in Dubai has helped rents remain flat so far in 2015 though residential sales prices have fallen more than 10 percent, industry consultants CBRE said yesterday.

Dubai's real estate sector has stuttered this year following a rebound close to the peak values of the previous decade as a strong local currency made buying property more expensive for foreign investors. Overall, Dubai apartment and house sales prices on average fell 16 and 14 percent respectively in the first 11 months of 2015, CBRE estimated, forecasting further declines in sale prices next year.

Apartment rents were flat over the same period, while house rents dipped 4 percent, CBRE said. "The (rental) market has held up very well but it doesn't tell the full story," said Mat Green, UAE head of research at CBRE Middle East. "We have a very fragmented market."

He said rental values in the city's more expensive districts such as Palm Jumeirah and Dubai Marina had fallen while cheaper, peripheral areas have seen prices rise in 2015. CBRE had forecast 20,000 units would be handed over in 2015, but only about 14,000 will be delivered by the end of the year due to late payments by investors, difficulties in obtaining completion certificates and some developers opt-

ing against releasing units. Sales contracts allow for some delays.

"Those who have some flexibility in their delivery pipelines will stall their delivery until rental or capital values of those units give better returns," said Nicholas Maclean, managing director of CBRE Middle East. "Providing they don't have a commitment to deliver those units, it's a smart way of doing development. A key weakness of some developments in Dubai in the last 10 years or so was the lack of phasing in deliveries."

CBRE estimates Dubai's residential sector can absorb 20,000 new units each year before vacancy rates increase. "You're seeing a more pronounced impact this year, but there's always going to be some slippage," said Green.

He forecast sale prices would decline by about 10 percent in 2016, although performances would differ markedly by district.

"Sales are driven by sentiment, outside influences, the currency situation, so you've a lot of external fundamentals influencing the investment decision, it's not easy to forecast," said Green.

The UAE dirham is pegged to the dollar, which this year is up 9.2 percent versus the euro, 6.6 percent against India's rupee and 2.8 percent higher against the British pound. — Reuters

CHINA TO KEEP 2016 ECONOMIC GROWTH IN 'REASONABLE' RANGE

BEIJING: Chinese leaders, meeting ahead of an agenda-setting conference, pledged yesterday to keep the country's economic growth in a "reasonable range" in 2016 by expanding domestic demand and making supply-side improvements.

The pledge was reported by the official Xinhua news agency, which said the Politburo, a top decision-making body of the ruling Communist Party that President Xi Jinping chairs, convened yesterday. No numbers were reported for what leaders see as "reasonable", but yesterday's meeting signals that the annual Central Economic Conference - at which policymakers are expected map out 2016 economic and reform plans and targets - should open soon. In 2014, there was a Politburo meeting on Dec. 5, and the pivotal economic conference was held Dec. 9-11.

In reporting yesterday's Politburo meeting, Xinhua said without elaborating that macro-economic policies will be kept stable while micro-policies will be flexible. "While appropriately expanding aggregate demand, more

efforts will be made to improve the quality of efficiency of the supply system," Xinhua said.

Premier Li Keqiang recently pledged to step up "supply-side" reforms to generate new growth engines in the economy while tackling factory overcapacity and so-called zombie firms.

Xinhua said that the government will take more steps next year to help companies lower costs, tackle property inventories and ward off financial risks. The government will promote mergers and acquisitions next year, as well as let strong firms survive and weak ones close under the principle of "survival of the fittest", Xinhua said.

Beijing has been struggling to reach its economic growth target of around 7 percent this year, despite a raft of policy easing steps in recent months. President Xi has said that China must achieve annual average growth of no less than 6.5 percent over the next five years to hit the country's goal of doubling gross domestic product and per capita income by 2020 from 2010. — Reuters



AMRITSAR: Indian food vendors prepare poori or puri - fried puffed whole wheat flat bread - and channa or chole masala - chickpeas - at a 56-year-old shop in Amritsar yesterday. One plate of channa with two poori's and accompanying pickles sells for INR 20. — AFP

ARGENTINA AXES TAX ON GRAIN EXPORTS

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's new pro-business president, Mauricio Macri, announced large tax cuts on agricultural exports yesterday, pleasing local farmers but raising fears of a grain and soy glut on world markets. Macri, who took office Thursday, had made it a central campaign pledge to slash the South American farming giant's steep taxes on agricultural exports, which had triggered a major clash between producers and former president Cristina Kirchner's administration.

Export taxes will be eliminated altogether for wheat, corn and sorghum, and for soy the tax will drop from 35 percent to 30 percent, Agriculture Minister Ricardo Buryaile told reporters. All of those taxes had been introduced in 2008 under Kirchner. "I am going to sign the decree today," Macri, whose inauguration ended more than a decade of left-wing rule, said in a speech to farmers. Argentine farmers had accused Kirchner of saddling the agricultural industry with an unfair share of the national tax burden, hurting their international competitiveness.

But outside Argentina, markets have been wary of what Macri's victory would mean for already low global prices for agricultural commodities. Argentine farmers have been stockpiling their crops in hopes of more favorable conditions.

They have an estimated 17 million tons of soy, 20 million tons of corn and 10 million tons of wheat in stock. Argentina is the world's third-largest producer and exporter of soy, after the United States and Brazil, and vies with Ukraine for the title of third-largest corn exporter.

It is also the world's seventh biggest wheat exporter. "We can double Argentina's food production," Macri told farmers, encouraging them to grow more.

The announcement is the first of the economic reforms promised by the conservative president, who has vowed to overhaul Kirchner's legacy of hands-on economic management, including protectionist import controls, heavy export taxes and an official exchange rate. Argentina, Latin America's third-largest economy, is suffering from high inflation and facing a recession next year. Macri has also vowed to let the peso currency float freely, a move that will likely trigger a steep devaluation and also boost Argentine exports by making them cheaper. — Reuters

NEWELL RUBBERMAID TO BUY JARDEN IN \$13.2BN DEAL

NEW YORK: Newell Rubbermaid is buying rival Jarden in a \$13.2 billion cash-and-stock deal that creates a global consumer goods giant, the US companies announced yesterday.

Newell Rubbermaid, maker of Rubbermaid storage containers, Sharpie pens and Calphalon cookware, said the combination of the two companies into the new Newell Brands would create a powerful portfolio of strong global brands with \$16 billion in annual revenues.

Jarden's brands include Coleman tents, Yankee Candle candles, AeroBed inflatable mattresses, Crock-Pot cookers and Mr. Coffee coffeemakers. "The scale of our combined businesses in key categories, channels and geographies creates a much broader

canvas on which to leverage our advantaged set of brand development and commercial capabilities for accelerated growth and margin expansion," said Michael Polk, president and chief executive of Newell Rubbermaid, in a statement.

Newell Rubbermaid estimated the merger will yield about \$500 million in cost synergies over four years, followed by "strong double-digit" earnings per share growth. Under the terms of the deal, Jarden shareholders will receive for each share they own \$21 in cash and 0.862 shares of Newell Rubbermaid. Based on Newell Rubbermaid's closing share price on Friday, the acquisition offer represents a 24 percent premium to Jarden's share price average over 30 days as of Friday. — AFP



LISBON: Men walk past the entrance to the headquarters of Portuguese bank BANIF in Lisbon yesterday. Banif shares collapsed today on the Lisbon Stock Exchange, falling over 35%, with news reports pointing to an imminent government intervention. — PHOTO

TURKEY PM SAYS DEBATE OVER CB INDEPENDENCE 'OVERBLOWN'

ANKARA: The recent debate over the independence of the Turkish central bank is "overblown," Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said yesterday, and added the bank would take "necessary steps" after a rate increase from the US Federal Reserve expected this week.

President Tayyip Erdogan has been a frequent critic of what he says are Turkey's excessively high interest rates, leading to questions about whether the central bank has kept rates on hold since February due to political interference. "I believe the debate over the central bank has been overblown," Davutoglu said in an interview broadcast live on broadcaster AHaber. "The central bank will take the necessary steps in terms of its policy-tool independence ... I don't think the Fed's impact on us will be too long-lasting or unsettling."

Davutoglu's comments did little to relieve pressure on the lira currency, which has lost 1.57 percent of its value against the dollar since late on Friday, weakening with other emerging market assets ahead of a Fed meeting that starts on Tuesday.

Turkey's current deficit account, which stood at around \$130 million, remains fragile but is under control, he said. The government has a wide reform plan to improve Turkey's investment environment and will hold meetings next month and in February with foreign investors, governments and institutions, he said.

Separately, Davutoglu said Turkey could hold separate referenda on a new constitution and an executive presidential system. Erdogan, Davutoglu's predecessor as prime minister, has lobbied for expanded powers for his office. — Reuters

FREE-FALLING OF OIL PRICES CONTINUES TO AFFECT MENA MARKETS

KUWAIT: Financial Centre “Markaz” recently released its Monthly Market Research report that examines and analyzes the performance of equity markets in the MENA region as well as the global equity markets for the month of November.

The report stated that barring Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Morocco, MENA markets ended in red during the month of November 2015, with Egypt (-14.6 percent) declining the most, followed by Qatar (-13.0 percent), Dubai (-8.6 percent) and Oman (-6.4 percent). Decline in oil price by 10 percent during the month and subsequent monetary tightening has led to the regional market response.

Egypt markets were affected badly after concerns regarding the fall in tourism revenues triggered a massive sell-off, while Qatar and the UAE markets suffered due to falling oil prices and the MSCI rebalancing, after addition of overseas listed Chinese companies to the emerging markets index. Saudi Arabia (1.6 percent), Kuwait Wted index (1.2 percent) and Kuwait Price index (0.5 percent) markets gained marginally in November, due to investor expectation of stabilization of oil price in the OPEC meeting. S&P GCC declined 2.3 percent in

MARKAZ MONTHLY RESEARCH REPORT



increase in 2016, as China's economic growth is expected to improve, thereby driving oil demand.

The company is also eyeing overseas acquisition to expand its markets geographically. Emirates Telecom has benefited from its decision to allow foreign and institutional investors to own its shares and has rallied since the announcement made during the previous quarter. Qatari companies, Industries Qatar (-18.3 percent), Ezdan Holdings (-18.0 percent) and Masraf Al-Rayan (-17.4 percent) were the top three losers in November, as they were affected by the rebalancing of the MSCI emerging markets index and the fall in hydrocarbon price. Standard & Poor's cut its ratings for Saudi Arabia's

long-term foreign and local currency sovereign credit to 'A-plus/A-1', citing a "pronounced negative swing" in the government's budget balance. S&P kept its outlook for the ratings negative, saying it could lower them further in the next two years unless the government managed a large and sustained cut in its deficit. Moody's has Pointed out that the fiscal position of Saudi Arabia is weakening, while keeping its rating unchanged. Saudi Arabian corporate earnings declined during Q3 2015 as low oil prices pulled down the wider economy. Cumulative net income at 166 listed companies dropped 14 percent from a year earlier to \$7.4bn.

Saudi Arabia's cabinet recently stated that it was ready to cooperate with OPEC and non-OPEC countries to achieve market stability, before OPEC met on Dec 4 to review its year-long policy of not supporting prices. But the OPEC members were not able to agree on a production ceiling as Iran wanted to scale back its production to levels prior to western sanctions before it considers production curb, which led to further decline in oil price. The market remains over-supplied, with production having risen to a record 97.09mbpd.

SECURITY FEARS BLIGHT EUROPEAN TOURISM

LONDON: Europe's travel industry could lose over \$1 billion in revenues because of the impact of the Paris attacks, analysts say, though low oil prices and a recovering economy will offset security worries for the best-placed companies. Keen to benefit from the positive factors, investors are focusing on groups that offer a wide range of destinations, can avoid places where safety is in doubt, and have robust enough finances to absorb potential shocks.

"Big companies may be better prepared because they have more ... and further destinations that will be tempering the losses," said Ipek Ozkardeskaya, market analyst at London Capital Group.

The full impact of the Nov. 13 attacks that killed 130 people in Paris will become clearer with fourth-quarter results, but there is already evidence of a significant hit to Europe's tourism industry, worth \$500 billion according to the UN's World Tourism Organization.

Hotel revenues in Paris are down 30-40 percent from last year's levels, restaurant revenues have fallen by a similar margin while new flight bookings to Paris fell by 27 percent in the week following the attacks. That cost Air France KLM 50 million euros (\$55 million), while British bus and train operator Stagecoach last week issued a profit warning because of customer fears about trips to big cities.

"I suspect that we're going to see a little bit more of a lingering impact for the travel industry," said Ken Odeluga, market analyst at City Index. Analysts who spoke to Reuters gave estimates of the total revenue hit on Europe's travel and tourism sectors from the Paris attacks rang-

ing from 800 million euros to well over 1 billion euros.

With the political and security situation still volatile in many parts of the Middle East and major Western countries on high alert for further Islamist attacks, safety fears will continue to hang over the sector for the foreseeable future.

"It can get worse when, instead of having one event, you are starting to have a series of events, because people then feel very insecure," said Daniele Patti, senior research analyst at Allianz Global Investors. On the positive side, analysts cited tour operator TUI, cruise operator Carnival, online holiday retailer On The Beach Group, Ryanair and British Airways parent IAG as being able to weather the storm.

TUI, the world's largest tour operator, said on Thursday it was confident of increasing earnings by more than 10 percent this year, as it switched out of Egypt and Tunisia to focus on the Canary Islands and Cyprus instead.

With ships seen as less likely to be targeted in attacks, Carnival was cited as a good bet in the current context, while On The Beach Group could benefit from its focus on destinations like Spain, Portugal and the Canaries.

Airlines are also attractive as they are trading at a discount to the market, with Ryanair and IAG's price-to-earnings ratios at 13 and 11.5 respectively, compared with an average of 16.6 on the STOXX Europe 600 index and 16.4 on the UK FTSE 100 index. Oil is a key factor for airlines, with analysts estimating that a dollar drop in the oil price added between 10 and 15 pence (15 to 23 cents) to their share prices last year. — Reuters



JEDDAH: A man looks at a car displayed during the opening day of the Saudi International Motor Show on Sunday in the Red Sea city of Jeddah. — AFP

SHELL SEES MORE JOB CUTS AS BG DEAL GETS CHINA GREEN LIGHT DEAL TO FACE SHELL, BG SHAREHOLDER VOTES

LONDON: Royal Dutch Shell expects to slash thousands more jobs to save costs if its takeover of BG Group goes through as planned early next year following a final green light from China.

The acquisition, which was announced on April 8 and is biggest in the sector in a decade, has been cleared by China's Ministry of Commerce, Shell said yesterday, after earlier approvals from Australia, Brazil and the European Union. Shell and BG will now send a merger prospectus to their shareholders and hold special general meetings for votes on the deal. If approved, it will face a court hearing 10 days later and could be completed by early February.

Some shareholders, however, have voiced concern over the merits of the acquisition following the sharp slide in oil prices. The fall in Shell's share price since April means the value of the deal has fallen to \$53 billion from \$70 billion.

Shortly after announcing the green light from China, Shell issued a statement saying it expected to cut about 2,800 roles globally from the combined group. That would be nearly 3 percent of the group's combined workforce of about 100,000, or equivalent

to more than half BG's roughly 5,000 employees.

The Anglo-Dutch oil and gas company had already outlined steps to protect dividend payouts and cashflow following the merger, which include cost savings of \$3.5 billion and \$30 billion in asset disposals. The new job cuts are also in addition to previously announced plans to reduce Shell's headcount and contractor positions by 7,500 worldwide.

Shell B shares were down 1.6 percent by 1217 GMT, while BG shares traded 0.3 percent lower. A BG spokesman said the company would remain focused on its business plan until the deal is completed.

INVESTOR CONCERNS

The combination will transform Shell into the world's top liquefied natural gas (LNG) trader and a major offshore oil producer focused on Brazil's rapidly-developing sub-salt oil basin that would rival Exxon Mobil's position as the world's biggest international oil company.

Shell has nevertheless had to battle a sharp slide in oil prices, which have fallen from \$55 a barrel in April to below \$40 a barrel, which some investors said

undermined the deal.

"The deal doesn't make financial sense at the current oil price. You have got to be pretty bullish on the current oil price to make this deal work," David Cumming, Head of Equities at Standard Life Investments, told BBC Radio yesterday. Analysts at Credit Suisse, however, said the deal still made strategic sense. "Yes, it is tough when one looks at spot oil prices ... We are in the camp of 'Yes', not just because of the strategic rationale longer term, but also because of Shell's CEO and Chairman, who we think are the right people at the helm in this environment," the bank said.

Last month, sources told Reuters that the Chinese Ministry of Commerce had pressed Shell to sweeten long-term LNG supply contracts as the world's top energy consumer faces a large surfeit over the next five years.

The integration of the two companies has been planned by a joint committee in recent months but could encounter some difficulties as BG's small and relatively nimble operations are merged with Shell's much larger structure. — Reuters

CUBA REACHES DEBT DEAL WITH ITS CREDITORS

PARIS: Cuba has reached a deal with its creditors under which they will forgive \$8.5 billion of late payment charges and Cuba will pay \$2.6 billion of arrears over an 18-year period, according to the French Finance Ministry and Cuba's Paris Club creditors. French Finance Minister Michel Sapin said that of the \$470 million in principal and original interest payments that Cuba owes to France, \$240 million will be repaid, while the rest will be converted into development projects for Cuba.

"This agreement opens a new era in the relations between Cuba and the international financial community," Sapin said in a statement. France is Cuba's main creditor and will be annulling \$4 billion of the \$8.5 billion total under the deal.

Earlier this month, diplomats said Cuba was nearing a deal with 15 rich creditor nations of the Paris Club to restructure \$16 billion in debt stemming from a 1986 default, with creditors expected to forgive most of the amount owed. One diplomat said that Cuba had agreed to pay the principal of around \$5 billion owed since its 1986 default in exchange for forgiving \$11 billion in service charges, interest and penalties, with talks focused on how long Cuba would take to repay and how much of the money would be reinvested in Cuba.

Most of the creditors are willing to show flexibility due to their increased interest in doing business in Cuba following the Communist-run island's detente with the United States and continuing domestic reforms. — Reuters

JAPAN BUSINESS CONFIDENCE FLAT DESPITE RECOVERY SIGNS

TOKYO: Japan's biggest manufacturers were in a cautious mood during the last quarter of the year, a central bank survey showed yesterday, despite a modest pick-up in the world's number three economy. The Bank of Japan's closely-watched Tankan report showed confidence among major manufacturers was flat at plus 12 in December from the previous quarter.

The survey of more than 10,000 companies nationwide is the most comprehensive indicator of how Japan Inc. is faring, and marks the difference between the percentage of firms that are upbeat and those that see conditions as unfavorable.

The latest result was slightly better than market expectations, and likely to temper hopes that Japanese policymakers will expand their stimulus program.

The BoJ holds its last meeting of 2015 this week. "The upside surprise in today's Tankan survey will support the Bank of Japan's upbeat view on the economy and suggests that policymakers will leave the pace of asset purchases unchanged at least until January," research firm Capital Economics said in a commentary.

The latest report comes after the BoJ's previous survey showed sentiment fell from its highest level in more than a year, as a slowdown in China and weakness at home dented firms' confidence.

Sentiment among non-manufacturers was also unchanged in the latest BoJ report, along with confidence at medium-size and small manufacturers. December's Tankan set a "weak tone" for the mood among Japan's firms, while company forecasts were also lacklustre,

said Junichi Makino, chief economist at SMBC Nikko Securities.

"In the immediate term, exports and production have bottomed out," Makino added. "Among non-manufacturers... (sentiment) remains weak, despite improvement in commercial conditions."

Last month, official economic growth figures showed another contraction in the July-September period, suggesting Japan had fallen into its second recession in as many years.

But later revised figures actually showed modest 0.3 percent growth in the quarter, as capital spending and factory output picked up. The initial data threatened to deal another blow to Prime Minister

Shinzo Abe, who has staked his reputation on kick-starting the economy with a policy blitz of fiscal spending, aggressive monetary policy easing and structural reforms-dubbed Abenomics.

Japan's economy fell into a brief recession in 2014 after consumers tightened their belts as Tokyo hiked the country's consumption tax to help pay down a massive national debt. That downturn spurred the central bank to sharply increase its already massive bond-buying program-a cornerstone of Abenomics-effectively printing money to spur lending. But the moves, and Abe's lurch to overhaul Japan's highly-regulated economy, have been slow going as the conservative premier marks his third year in office this month. Japan, once boasting Asia's biggest economy with internationally known brands, has been overtaken by rival China, as years of deflation weighed on growth. — AFP



TOKYO: People stand in front of an electronic stock board of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. Asian stock markets were mostly lower yesterday Wall Street's losses as investors awaited the US Federal Reserve's decision this week on whether to go ahead with an interest rate hike. —AP

UK MAY NATIONALIZE ROLLS-ROYCE'S NUCLEAR SUBMARINE BUSINESS: FT

LONDON: The UK government is considering nationalizing the nuclear submarine business of Rolls-Royce Holdings Plc, which powers its Trident missile deterrent system, the Financial Times reported.

The government may also decide to merge some or all parts of Rolls-Royce Holdings' businesses with BAE Systems, the FT said on Sunday.

Rolls-Royce Chief Executive Warren East had ruled out any plans to "sell big chunks" of their business in November amid pressure from activist investor ValueAct for the company to divest its marine engine business and focus on its main aero-engine business.

The company shocked investors four months ago when it said profits from its aero-engine business, its biggest unit which last year accounted for about half of profits and which it is counting on for future growth, would shrink in 2016. Officials at Prime Minister David Cameron's office are concerned that Rolls-Royce's management has no substantial experience of defending itself in the event of a hostile takeover bid, the FT reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

The paper quoted a government spokesperson saying that the company is a "major contributor to the UK economy and is an important supplier of defense equipment to the government."

The 131-year-old company that supplies engines to airplanes, ships and for industrial use, issued a fourth profit warning in November as a slowdown in Asia hit demand for servicing older aircraft engines. Representatives of the UK government and BAE Systems could not be reached immediately for comment outside regular business hours. Rolls-Royce declined to comment other than to say yesterday that it was in contact with the UK government as a matter of routine to keep officials updated on performance and progress. — Reuters

AL-MAZAYA HOLDING PARTICIPATES IN CITYSCAPE KUWAIT AS GOLD SPONSOR

KUWAIT: Al-Mazaya Holding Company has concluded its participation as a Gold Sponsor of the proceedings of the 2nd edition of Cityscape Kuwait, which was organized on Kuwait International Fairgrounds, Mishref, between 9 - 11 December 2015. A select number of real estate investment companies from Kuwait and other countries in the region also participated.

Al-Mazaya applauded this participation, which involved a huge marketing campaign. The campaign included the media sponsorship of the exhibition jointly with CNBC Arabiya TV, which is one of the most important Arab economic channels concerned with economic and real estate affairs in the Arab world. A number of different projects of the company in Dubai, the Sultanate of Oman and Turkey were showcased in the exhibition.

Commenting on the participation, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, Assistant Executive Director for Marketing at Al-Mazaya Holding said: "CITYSCAPE Kuwait is the ideal platform 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 opening marketing windows to participants from inside and outside Kuwait, as well as to investors seeking quality investment opportunities."

Al-Sabah added: "The current stage demands real investment companies to increase their participation in specialized exhibitions. They should boost sales through oriented marketing campaigns that study in depth the requirements of both the end user and investor. The world is generally undergoing an economic slowdown associated with a decline in world oil prices, which constitutes a turning point in major investment decisions in our region and the world at large. It can hence be said that despite the decline of oil returns



during this year, GCC countries are still the destination of investors from all over the world." He stressed that the real estate sector is currently witnessing a sound corrective process which attracts many investors, at a time when real estate is considered one of the secure investment sectors.

Advantages

Al-Sabah emphasized: "Our region has many advantages and is going to witness major events. Saudi Arabia has a huge domestic demand and every year it will need thousands of residential and commercial units and infrastructure in light of the population

expansion. Qatar will host the World Cup in 2022, whereas the UAE will host the World Expo 2020, in addition to numerous regional and global events that will attract thousands of visitors. The tourism sector has witnessed enormous changes and is now one of the most important sectors yielding feasible economic returns. As such, investments in the real estate sector will soon be of greater market value."

He continued: "All projects offered by Al-Mazaya target the investor and end user categories. Through its participation, Al-Mazaya has provided solutions for the two groups with rates and benefits, in keeping with the

volume of investment. Moreover, most tendered projects were medium housing projects, which made them secure and stable projects at acceptable prices."

He elaborated: "Al-Mazaya will introduce many of its quality projects executed in the region including Queue Point residential project wherein Al-Mazaya has developed 52 residential buildings through direct and indirect investments tailored to middle-class housing. Queue Point is a leading project of Al-Mazaya ideally located in Dubailand, promising a bright future to the emirate consisting of many central residential and entertainment projects. The future plans of Dubailand more-

over involve constructing one of the largest recreation cities in the Arab world, which further adds to the significance of the location. The Queue Point project consists of 3,131 residential units offering 1, 2 or 3 bedroom apartments starting from KD 45,000. The completion and sale rates of the project both amount to 80 percent, wherein First and Second Phases have been delivered, with the Third Phase to be delivered end of August 2016." Al-Mazaya will also be exhibiting the Ritim Istanbul project, developed in partnership with Dumankaya Real Estate Group - Turkey, consisting of 6 towers, 3 of which are allocated to serve residential purposes, offering 863 residential apartments ranging from 1 to 3 bedrooms starting from KD 35,000, alongside another commercial centre to be constructed over more than 22,000 m². The project is 75 percent complete and 60 percent sold, with residential towers scheduled for completion by end of June 2016.

Another major project the company will be introducing is Mazaya Residence ideally located in the Sultanate of Oman. The project is strategically situated adjacent to a number of significant commercial centres behind Muscat City Centre constructed on a 23,194 m²-span of quality residential and commercial units. Realistically, the project will offer 200 residential units consisting of 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms with rates starting from KD 31,600, as well as many other entertainment facilities available such as swimming pools, parks and playgrounds.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah concluded his statement by stressing that Al-Mazaya Holding is keen to always be present in these local and international events so as to be permanently in touch with its clients and to keep them informed about the key developments being witnessed by the company locally and regionally.

66% OF PROFESSIONALS IN MENA FEEL HR PRACTICES ARE FLOURISHING

bayt.com survey

DUBAI: According to a recent 'The Role of HR in the Middle East and North Africa Workplace' poll conducted by Bayt.com, the region's number one job site, Human Resources (HR) practices in MENA are flourishing.

According to 73.4 percent of polled professionals, in terms of alignment, there is a strong alignment that exist between their company's overall business vision and that of their HR department. However, a large portion of the interviewees (26.5 percent), disagree, stating that, to varying degrees, there is not alignment. 26.6 percent of the poll's respondents rate their company's overall HR performance as 'excellent'; in parallel, 43.4 percent brand their organization's HR function as 'average' or in need of improvements.

When asked which areas their HR department needed to improve the most, 17 percent of MENA's jobholders answered 'recruiting and interviewing', 5.3 percent said 'compensation and promotion', 18.3 percent responded with 'training and development', 11.5 percent specified 'communication with staff', 1.6 percent mentioned 'terminations', and 11 percent cited 'handling complaints and staff problems'. 35.2 percent of respondents admitted that enhancements were needed across all areas.

49.8 percent of polled professionals claim that their company's HR department has a clear HR policy to hire and retain national talent - which, today, is considered a high priority across organizations in the MENA region. Interestingly, 30 percent of employees say the opposite. When it comes to hiring, 33.1 percent of MENA professionals state that their HR department is doing a good job of hiring and retaining talent to a great extent, 33.5 percent to a small extent and 33.5 percent say they are not. In addition, 45.7 percent of interviewees say that their company's HR division is sufficiently breeding and developing leaders. Only 31.7 percent disagree, and another 22.6 percent admit that this is taking place but only to a small extent.

A total of 66 percent of respondents feel that their HR department is effectively promoting employees wellness. The remaining 34 percent, however, disagree. One-third of respondents (33.8 percent) don't think that their

company's HR division shares enough information with them. On a positive note, 66.2 percent share different views and believe that they mostly receive all the data that they need. 50.8 percent of interviewees say that their HR department does not consistently or ever provide new joiners with company policies and procedures (for example, an employee handbook).

To top it all, 46.1 percent of professionals think that their company is a good place to work. "It is no surprise that a company's HR practices greatly impact employees' performance, job satisfaction and engagement levels," said Suhail Masri, VP Sales, Bayt.com. "Today, a jobholder's workplace behavior is strongly dictated by the very policies, procedures, and goals that stem from the HR division. According to the survey results, in this regard, although the HR departments are doing well, there is still room for improvement."

Suhail also added, "At Bayt.com, however, we have long made it our mission to work hand-in-hand with HR departments in the region to provide them with innovative, effective solutions designed to increase employee productivity, improve workplace morale, and streamline HR processes and services. Our ultimate objective is to bridge the gap between employee and employer by not just assisting companies in recruiting and retaining the very best talent - but also helping them build the cornerstones of a successful organizational and corporate culture. Our HR-services portfolio has evolved over the years to include the full repertoire of employer offerings including basic, assisted and verified recruitment at all career levels; nationalization and diversification advisory; company profiles; specialized research including salaries benchmarking; Talentera, an A-to-Z applicant tracking solution; virtual career fairs and more. Our HR services are tailored to specific company needs across the recruitment cycle continuum."

Data for the Bayt.com 'The Role of HR in the Middle East and North Africa Workplace' poll was collected online from October 14 - November 4 2015, with 5,270 respondents covering more than 19 countries in the MENA region.



BURGAN BANK WINS 'BEST CO-BRANDED CREDIT CARD' AWARD

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced that it has won the coveted 'Best Co-Branded Credit Card' award from The Banker Middle East Kuwait Product Awards 2015, for the Burgan Bank Qatar Airways co-branded MasterCard. The Banker Middle East Kuwait Product Awards 2015 are designed to identify and reward quality and excellence in financial products and services.

Robin Amlot - Chief Executive Officer of CPI financials along with Omer Hussain - Sales Director at CPI FINANCIALS visited Burgan Bank and presented the award to Venkat Menon - Burgan Bank's Chief Retail Banking Officer.

Commenting on the bank's latest win, Venkat Menon, Burgan Bank's Chief Retail Banking Officer said: "It is a great honor for us to receive the award from a leading institution like The Banker Middle East. This award is a reflection of our commitment to growth and to building

an innovative and solid range of products that facilitates customers' banking processes and in turn rewards them. On behalf of Burgan Bank, I would like to thank the CPI panel of judges at The Banker Middle East for endorsing the bank's co-branded credit card. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to our staff who work tirelessly to achieve similar accolades year after year."

Burgan Bank constantly strives to be innovative, and to benchmark against banking excellence in the region. Most recently, Burgan Bank's Qatar Airways co-branded MasterCard was awarded the "Best Credit Card Initiative of the Year in Kuwait" from the Asian Banking and Finance Magazine 2015 Awards, reflecting the success of Burgan Bank's Qatar Airways co-branded MasterCard, the fastest air mile earner in Kuwait, providing the best in class banking experiences accompanied with various benefits to cardholders in Kuwait.



ROYAL ENFIELD CROSSING SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Royal Enfield, the world's oldest motorcycling company, along with Kuwait Automotive Imports Co WLL (Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar) - KAICO, a leading automotive and auto products distributor in Kuwait, introduced the retro street - Classic 500 and the definitive cruiser - Rumbler 500 motorcycles towards the end of 2014. This iconic motorcycle brand with British origin is a part of the India based Eicher Motors Ltd. The motorcycles are manufactured from two of its facilities based in Chennai (Madras).

The design of the Royal Enfield Classic 500 is a tribute to the retro look of British motorcycles in the post-World War II era. The motorcycle is powered by fuel injected 500cc, 4 stroke, spark ignition, air cooled, OHV unit construction engine. The front & rear mudguards, the headlight casing, the fuel tank, the oval tool box, the exhaust fins, the speedometer dials, the single-seat spring saddle, tail light assembly and the headlamp cap, all these conform to the timeless imagery of British motorcycles from post war era. The Classic 500 is available in Kuwait in the Tan, Black, Silver, Chrome Black and Chrome Maroon colors.

Built to the need of the long distance rider, the Royal Enfield Rumbler 500 gives a new definition to highway cruising. The motorcycle is set to provide comfort, style and enhance the pleasure of leisure motorcycling

amongst the touring enthusiasts. Combining distinctive "black" styling with a 500cc Unit Construction Engine delivering 27.2 bhp being fed through an electronic fuel injection system and 41.3 Nm torque, the Rumbler 500 is set to make a distinct statement in Kuwait. The Rumbler 500 is extremely suitable for long distance riding with its range, ergonomics, looks, excellent braking, night riding visibility and luggage carriage capability. The Rumbler 500 is available in shades of Stone (matte black), Marine (metallic blue), Lightning (metallic silver grey).

The Royal Enfield motorcycles have captured the attention of the citizens of Kuwait in a very short span of time and have crossed important milestones in its journey since launch. With the weather becoming pleasant and winter approaching soon, motor cycles are burning rubbers in the roads of Kuwait. Further to make this season even more interesting and exciting for all those who would want to hit the road with a Royal Enfield Motorcycle, KAICO has tied up Kuwait Motorcycling Company to provide free training & coordination for two wheeler license to all its customers. This would be a very attractive option to all the motorcycling enthusiasts in Kuwait.

Another important milestone in Royal Enfield's journey in Kuwait, Bahrain Exchange Company for its "BEC Motorcycle Bonanza" has placed an order for 20 units of Royal Enfield Motorcycles. This is a first of its kind campaign in Kuwait with two motorcycles given away each week over 10 weeks for its lucky draw winners.

Royal Enfield is now heading towards the completion of its first year in Kuwait. With the overwhelming response and support, KAICO & Royal Enfield is geared up to go the extra mile to establish significant milestones during its journey in Kuwait.



CANON SPARKS ENTHUSIASM FOR PHOTOGRAPHY AT WORKSHOP IN KENYA

DUBAI: Canon, a world leader in imaging solutions hosted its fourth professional photography workshop in Nairobi from 1st December - 7th December, 2015, as part of its commitment to the communities in which it operates. The week-long session, held in partnership with the Kenyatta University, sparked the minds of 10 young, aspiring photographers who jointly explored the art of storytelling their home country of Kenya, during the course of the program.

In keeping with Canon's 'Kyosei' philosophy of living and working together for the common good, Canon has undertaken an array of youth-based initiatives across the Middle East and Africa. The workshop, hosted by the world renowned photojournalist Gary Knight, a Canon Master, was organized to provide the participants with the opportunity to gain new and greater understanding of the technicalities of editing, along with the subtleties and nuances of capturing beautiful images whilst having access to Canon equipment.

A number of workshop lectures were conducted by Gary Knight, with the support of Canon employees, in addition, to a series of guest lectures, aimed at inspiring the participants.

On 1st December, Joan Pereruan, Group Photo Editor at the Nation Media Group, Treasurer & Founder of the Photojournalists Association of Kenya, gave a lecture on her experiences and knowledge about the industry, and what makes a strong image. She also spoke about the ethics and code of conduct which you should practice as a photographer. Thereafter, Victor Peace, Professional Fashion & Travel photographer, spoke on his career and experience to



date, and how one can make a living from photography, while Georgina Goodwin, Professional Photojournalist & Kenyan News Photographer of the Year 2013, spoke on her experiences and knowledge about the industry and why it's important to share and tell your stories in society.

Quality instruction

Gathoni Kinyanjui was the student guest lecturer from the previous workshop and discussed her experiences on the workshop and her career, thereafter.

Anurag Agrawal, Managing Director, Canon

Middle East said: "Canon is keen to nurture the youth in the Middle East and Africa. Our equipment is known all over the world by amateur and professional photographers, alike. With these workshops, participants have access to high quality instruction that could lead them to lifelong careers in photography. We know Africa is brimming with creative talent, it's just a question of drawing it out."

Professor Thairu, coordinator at the School of Creative Arts, Film and Media Studies, Kenyatta University, said: "The Canon Workshop held at Kenyatta University is a great opportunity which demonstrates that Kenyatta University, through its Department of Film and Theatre Arts, is without reasonable doubt, a progressive and proactive university. Simultaneously, it allows Canon to continue popularizing and entrenching itself as the preferred makers of photography equipment in East Africa."

Commenting on the workshop initiative, Gary Knight said: "This is the fourth Canon workshop I have led in Africa. I love coming to this part of the world as young photographers are full of hope and commitment for a better future in the Arts. Introducing these young men and women to the best quality camera equipment, shooting and editing techniques is a real joy."

Canon Middle East serves as an active partner in the communities it operates in, by working with governments, scientific, academic, humanitarian, and arts and culture organisations, to integrate corporate social responsibility across all elements of the business.



BAIKONUR: Members of the main crew of the 46/47 expedition to the International Space Station (ISS), (from L) Britain's astronaut Tim Peake, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko and US astronaut Tim Kopra take part in a press conference at the Russian-leased Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan yesterday. — AFP

3 SPACE STATION ASTRONAUTS
SAFELY RETURN TO EARTH

MOSCOW: A three-person crew from the International Space Station landed safely Friday in the snowy steppes of Kazakhstan. The US space agency's Kjell Lindgren, Russia's Oleg Kononenko and Kimiya Yui of Japan returned to Earth in their Soyuz TMA-17M capsule after 141 days in space. They touched down on schedule at 7:12 pm local time (1312 GMT) about 120 kilometers (75 kilometers) northeast of Dzhzhkzagan, Kazakhstan.

Kononenko reported to the Russian Mission Control that the crew was feeling fine as the capsule was descending by parachute in thick clouds before landing softly in darkness on the wind-swept steppes. Russian rescue teams in four helicopters arrived quickly at the landing site

to help the crew get out of the capsule, which rested on its side in the snow.

Because of the cold temperatures and strong winds, the crew was quickly flown to Dzhzhkzagan after a brief inspection by doctors. In good weather, the crew undergoes a post-flight medical check-up in a tent at the landing site.

Expedition 46 Commander Scott Kelly of NASA and crewmates Mikhail Kornienko and Sergey Volkov of Russia remain on the station. They will be joined by three new crew members next Tuesday: NASA's Tim Kopra, Russia's Yuri Malenchenko and the European Space Agency's Tim Peake. Kelly and Kornienko are on the first joint US-Russian one-year mission at the space station. — AP

RENEWABLE ENERGY STOCKS
RALLY AFTER PARIS CLIMATE DEAL

LONDON/COPENHAGEN: European renewable energy stocks rallied on Monday following an agreement over the weekend at the Paris global climate summit to find ways to stop global warming.

Goldman Sachs' analysts described the deal in Paris as the most important climate agreement since the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, adding it would boost the world's low carbon-emissions economy, which it estimated as a fast-growing \$600 billion-plus market.

Norway's REC Silicon, which makes the key raw material for solar panels, surged 10 percent. Shares in wind turbine makers Vestas Wind, Nordex and Gamesa also rose by between 2-5 percent, outperforming a 0.7 percent rise on the benchmark pan-European FTSEurofirst 300 index.

Novozymes, a maker of biofuel technology, climbed 1.2 percent, solar power generator Scatec Solar advanced 2.5 percent, Enel Green Power rose 0.7 percent and Greencoat UK Wind progressed 1.7 percent. The iShares Global Clean Energy Exchange Traded Fund , which allows investors to trade a basket of stocks involved in the renewable energy space, also rose 2 percent.

Andrea Williams, European equities fund manager at Royal London Asset Management, said that while her portfolio did not currently hold such stocks, the Paris climate deal might lead her to start considering buying up those companies.

"The Paris climate change agreement will definitely help the renewables industry, as it should lead to continued investment in the area by major world economies," she said. The agreement commits both rich and poor nations to reining in rising emissions blamed for warming the planet, and sets out a sweeping, long-term goal of eliminating net manmade greenhouse gas output

this century. Nearly 200 countries took part in the negotiations to strike the first climate deal to commit all countries to cut emissions, with an initial target being set for 2020.

Along with the wind turbine makers, Goldman Sachs' other top picks for stocks that would benefit from the Paris climate deal included electric car company Tesla Motors, solar panel group SolarEdge and Albemarle, a chemicals company that supplies lithium - a key component for batteries.

However, others cautioned against rushing in to buy such stocks, noting that the Paris agreement was not a legally binding treaty. Some critics added that the United States, the world's biggest economy, might back away from the targets set in the Paris climate agreement if the Republican Party won next year's US presidential election, given general skepticism within the Republican camp over such matters. "I would not just rush in to buy these stocks on the back of the weekend's agreement. You need to give time to wait for the dust to settle, and 2020 is still a long way out," said Francois Savary, chief investment officer at investment management firm Prime Partners.

Nevertheless, many brokers said that - for now - the Paris climate agreement would enhance the prospects for companies involved in the renewable energy industry.

"In short, we think the Paris agreement represents a strong outcome and will therefore help boost the long-term fundamentals of the capital-goods and low-carbon power-generation sectors while weakening the long-term fundamentals of fossil-fuel industries," Barclays' analysts wrote in a note. — Reuters

BT BOOSTS 'CLOUD OF CLOUDS'
WITH HOSTED RIVERBED SERVICE
CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

KUWAIT: BT announced yesterday that as part of its Cloud of Clouds vision it will deploy virtual Riverbed SteelHead application acceleration technology in the core of its global network, providing superior application performance for customers accessing BT's own cloud services as well as other leading Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) offerings. It is the first time Riverbed technology has been deployed into the core of a global telecoms network.

BT and Riverbed are embedding their services at global business hubs in Europe, North America and Asia in locations where BT has direct links to leading cloud providers and high-capacity internet breakout. The service will be available globally from early 2016 and accessible through BT's IP Connect VPN from 198 countries and territories.

A series of pilots of the new capability showed substantial network performance improvements for SaaS applications such as the Microsoft Office 365 productivity suite. In addition to application acceleration and network bandwidth optimization, customers using the new service also gain increased control over their applications, better end-to-end visibility into performance, and significantly improved reliability and security compared



Keith Langridge

to delivering applications over the internet.

Using Network Function Virtualization (NFV), the new service will help customers take advantage of broader virtualized functions, such as application performance management and the management of high speed access to private and public clouds.

Keith Langridge, vice president, network service

CLASH OF DUELING CLIMATE
REALITIES: SCIENCE AND POLITICS

LE BOURGET, France: Two sets of reality are clashing as climate talks go into overtime: Diplomatic real politics and hard science. Top experts say that while a goal of limiting warming in a new draft climate agreement is laudable, the rest of the proposed pact doesn't provide the tools to achieve it - and in some ways, it even goes backward. "There's an absolutely huge disconnect between the negotiations and the political rhetoric, and what's very clearly coming out of the science," Kevin Anderson, deputy director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Research in Britain, said Friday as the high-stakes climate talks dragged into an extra day.

The latest draft of a proposed international climate agreement lists a goal of "holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels" and urges efforts to limit it even further, to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

This even as Earth has already warmed nearly 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) since the mid-18th century. Dana Fisher, director of the Program for Society and the Environment at the University of Maryland, said she sees "a couple of dueling realities," including one she calls a "kumbaya moment" where everybody talks about the importance of a 1.5-degree cap on global temperature increase but no one does anything to implement it. And because the Paris draft removes discussion of carbon dioxide emissions from shipping and air travel, Anderson said he considers the Paris proposal even weaker than the one that came out of Copenhagen in 2009. "It is not consistent with science, which the Copenhagen accord had directly written into it," Anderson told The Associated Press.

And the current language for poor people in developing nations like Africa and Asia, "is somewhere between dangerous and deadly," Anderson added. The negotiations also don't take into account what emissions cuts are needed to limit warming to 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius, said Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research in Germany. "The politics simply leave it out of the equation."

Andrew Jones, co-director of Climate Interactive who runs computer simulations of what individual nations' emissions promises mean in terms of temperature, said current pledges will amount to another couple degrees Celsius warming from now, blowing right past the goal of keeping warming to less than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

And making the goal a more stringent 1.5 instead of 2 degrees without reducing emissions just doesn't cut it, he said. "It's kind of like this: My friends and I have committed to losing 300 pounds but are failing so far," Jones said. "Instead of eating less and exercising more, I propose

that we lose 350." At a news conference, Anderson and colleagues went through the draft agreement - which still is being modified and negotiated - and said it isn't near to getting close to the goal. They especially criticized vague language that talks of "greenhouse gas emissions neutrality" without really defining it.

"We really need to be keeping around 90 percent of all current reserves (of fossil fuels) in the ground," Anderson said. Burning coal, oil and gas emit heat-trapping gases that cause global warming. "You have to go to zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 in order to have a fair chance" of reaching the 1.5-degree goal, Schellnhuber said. Joeri Rogelj, of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria, went further: "Without zero emissions, 2 degrees is impossible. Without zero emissions, temperature stabilization is impossible."

But John Reilly, co-director of MIT's Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change, said "that's way out there" and doesn't take into account politics, including US conservative opposition, and the needs of African nations to develop. "They can say whatever they want in Paris," said Fisher, but Republicans in the US Congress "are screaming no way and we have this huge fossil fuel industry and infrastructure in place." Still, Fisher and Reilly said the goal of keeping warming to 1.5 degrees is important. It's especially crucial for small islands, said Reilly, adding: "It's hard to accept a target where some of the negotiating states won't exist, and that's what 2 degrees is." In the end, some experts were downright gloomy. "If you ask me if I think we'll succeed," said Anderson. "No, I think we'll fail." — Reuters



BERLIN: German Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks shows an "Adoption of the Paris Agreement" as she arrives for a news conference in Berlin yesterday. Envoys from 195 nations on December 12 adopted to cheers and tears a historic accord to stop global warming, which threatens humanity with rising seas and worsening droughts, floods and storms. — AFP

JAPAN ASTEROID
PROBE ENTERS 'TARGET
ORBIT' IN SPACE QUEST

TOKYO: A Japanese space probe successfully entered "target orbit" and is on its way to rendezvousing with a faraway asteroid, in a quest to study the origin of the solar system, authorities said yesterday. Earlier this month the unmanned explorer, Hayabusa 2, passed by Earth to harness the planet's gravitational pull in a bid to switch its orbital path to continue toward tiny Ryugu asteroid.

"The Hayabusa 2... entered the target orbit to travel to the asteroid," Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) said in a statement. Hayabusa 2 was launched a year ago aboard Japan's main H-IIA rocket from Tanegashima Space Center for its six-year mission to bring back mineral samples from the asteroid. It is expected to reach Ryugu, named after a mythical castle in a Japanese folk tale, in mid-2018 and spend around 18 months in the area.

It will also drop rover robots and a "landing package" that includes equipment for surface observation. If all goes well, soil samples will be returned to Earth in late 2020.

Analysing the extra-terrestrial materials could help shed light on the birth of the solar system 4.6 billion years ago and offer clues about what gave rise to life on Earth, scientists have said. — AFP

APPLE MUSIC WINS
EXCLUSIVE VIDEO DEAL
WITH TAYLOR SWIFT

NEW YORK: Pop star Taylor Swift's "1989 World Tour Live" concert video will be available exclusively on Apple Inc's music streaming service, Apple Music, starting Dec. 20, Apple said on the service's Twitter account on Sunday.

Swift, who celebrated her 26th birthday on Sunday, tweeted a trailer for the concert video and said: "Thank you so much for all the birthday wishes. I have a little surprise for you." The trailer's description listed Jonas Akerlund as the video's director.

The singer also tweeted that an interview discussing the video was broadcast at 9 am PST (1700 GMT) yesterday on Beats 1, Apple's radio station. Apple officials were not immediately available for comment.

Apple introduced Apple Music in June. Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook said in October the music streaming service had netted more than 6.5 million paid users, and that an additional 8.5 million people were participating in a free trial. Swift said in June she would put her hit album "1989" on Apple Music, days after the tech giant bowed to pressure from Swift and some independent music groups and labels and agreed to pay artists during a free trial of its music service.

Swift's decision came after she pulled her entire catalog of music from online streaming platform Spotify in November 2014 and refused to offer "1989" on streaming services, saying the business had shrunk the numbers of paid album sales drastically. — Reuters

DEAD FORGOTTEN AT NEW DELHI'S DECREPIT MORGUES

NEW DELHI: A rusted carving knife and a mallet lie on a steel table, while inside the cold storage rooms, bodies take up every square inch of the blood-stained floors. More than 2,500 autopsies are carried out every year at New Delhi's oldest and busiest morgue, but the air purifiers have long been broken and disinfectant supplies for washing floors ran out two months ago. "The mortuary is compromised at every level," Sabzi Mandi mortuary's chief doctor, L.C Gupta, told AFP of the dearth of resources. The decrepit state of the Indian capital's dozen-odd morgues, mostly state run, recently stunned the High Court which ordered the city's government to take action.

From outdated equipment to poor storage of bodies and sick staff, the results of a court-ordered investigation made disturbing reading and shocked many in this deeply religious country. "It's a clear cut case of negligence," said lawyer Saqid, who uses one name, appointed by the court to conduct the probe. "There are a lot of rights under the constitution and people in India spend a lot of time fighting for them," he told AFP as he poured over photos and documents in his office.

"But the dead cannot protest their rights." The crisis is compounded by the sheer number of unidentified bodies, several thousand a year, that fill Delhi's morgues after being discovered outside train stations, bus terminals and other public places. Many are homeless men who pour into the city of 16 million from villages every year desperately searching for work. They die from disease, malnutrition and the impact of living on the city's harsh streets.

Protocol says they must be kept for up to 72 hours in a morgue to allow families time to collect them. But many remain for much longer, unclaimed by relatives and shunned by the reluctant police who found them, placing a strain on the morgues themselves. The crisis reportedly boiled over earlier this year when bodies were left on the street outside Sabzi Mandi, with frustrated staff refusing to take them back in. Gupta denied the incident, but added that police moved quick-



NEW DELHI: In this photograph an Indian medic walks through a cold storage unit as he inspects a morgue. — AFP photos

ly to come and collect unclaimed bodies after the row was reported in a leading Indian daily.

Sick staff

In the storage rooms, there are no shelves or racks to hold the numerous bodies. Encased in white plastic, most are lying on the floor, with many of the wrappings ripped and open. A single, scuffed boot sits on top of one body and a hand flops over the edge of a rusted trolley holding another. According to the court's report, a key problem is the large number of autopsies performed at the request of overcautious police, creating a backlog and placing pressure on staff.

"Police insist on post mortems as a matter of routine even though their own circular says there is no need if there are no suspicious circumstances," Saqid said. Delhi's health minister Satyendar Jain, who reportedly said he felt ill after touring the morgues in the wake of the report, has promised to improve conditions.

Jain declined AFP requests for comment,

but his officials have said that a review of the situation is under way. The court ordered the probe in 2014 after authorities



NEW DELHI: Indian family members collect the body of a relative from a morgue.



NEW DELHI: Indian medics move a body from a broken stretcher and on to a new one at a morgue.

discovered that the body of a prison inmate whose death was being investigated had been chewed by rats. The report found that

a lack of funds impacts on the living as well as the dead, with staff falling ill from handling bodies infected with tuberculosis and other diseases.

At Sabzi Mandi, staff use only bathroom soap to wash their hands, while a shortage of hospital-grade products means floors are cleaned instead with bleach, a doctor said. "It's an occupational hazard," Dr Komal Singh said of staff falling sick at his mortuary at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital in Delhi's west. The morgue opened in 1995 with four medical officers and with resources for 400 autopsies a year. Now the same number of staff perform up to 1,800 autopsies annually.

With the court finally shining a spotlight on the crisis, Singh said he is hopeful the government will approve his request for more funds to double storage space for bodies and update equipment. "People are interested in the treatment of the living but in our society they don't bother so much about what happens to the dead," he told AFP. "But the court is taking this seriously and we are hopeful." — AFP

CAN THE PARIS AGREEMENT PROTECT POOR FARMERS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE? 'FARMERS NEED TO GET ENOUGH CROPS TO REDUCE POVERTY'

BARCELONA: Purity Gachanga is one small-scale farmer who is beating climate change. On her several acres of land in Embu North district in central Kenya, she keeps cows and goats that produce milk, grows trees for fodder, and collects water to irrigate her food crops in a pond filled with tilapia fish. Since she started out in the 1970s, she has overcome increasingly erratic rainfall by using new technologies and trying out different crops and trees. She even turns her animal manure into biogas, harnessing methane for clean energy.

And she doesn't stay quiet about it. She hosts groups of other Kenyan farmers and international researchers on her farm to show them the effectiveness of a mixed crop, livestock and tree farming system in the face of worsening climate pressures. "We try to help ourselves so that climate change will not affect us," she told a discussion about supporting farmers on the sidelines of the recent climate change talks in Paris.

It is a strategy that has worked well for her - over the years, she has been able to build a stone house for her family of 11 children, connected to power and water supplies. "Farmers need to get enough crops to sustain their family and reduce poverty, and educate their children," she said. But millions of others are struggling to maintain their yields amid crop damage from severe droughts or flash floods, with no assets in reserve to help them bounce back from a crisis.

The International Food Policy Research Institute released a study in Paris showing that climate change is a threat to agricultural growth, affecting productivity, prices and a new global goal to end hunger by 2030. In the Philippines, for instance, climate change is projected to cut per-capita consumption of cereals by 24 percent and fruits and vegetables by 13 percent, increasing the number of people at risk of hunger by 1.4 million in 2030 and 2.5 million by 2050, the institute said.

First for food security

Given that, it is surprising the world "agriculture" does not appear once in the text of the new global agreement to tackle climate change adopted in Paris on Saturday. A key reason for this is that developing nations long resisted including agriculture in the climate negotiations, fearing efforts to feed their people would be compromised by pressure to reduce planet-warming emissions from farms.

A 2015 study from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) found that emissions from agriculture are growing, accounting for around 11 percent of the global total in 2010. The Paris climate agreement refers only indirectly to agriculture, in terms of making sure people have enough to eat. Its non-binding introduction recognizes "the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change".

The binding part of the deal states that boosting the world's ability to adapt to those impacts and foster climate resilience and low-emissions development should be done "in a manner that does not threaten food production". Yet, despite the politics that largely excluded agriculture, the FAO welcomed the agreement, noting that for the first time ever, food security features in a global climate change accord.

"This is a game changer for the 800 million people still suffering from chronic hunger, and for 80 percent of the world's poor who live in rural areas and earn income - and feed their families - from agriculture," FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva said in a statement after the deal was reached. "By including food security, the international community fully acknowledges that urgent attention is needed to preserve the well-being and future of those who are on the frontline of climate

change threats," he added.

Paying for plans

Others in the agricultural research community and agencies working with small farmers highlighted the widespread inclusion of agricultural policies in the nearly 190 national action plans submitted to the United Nations as a basis for the climate deal. Analysis by the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) shows agriculture is discussed in 80 percent of those plans, a signal that addressing agriculture in the context of climate change is a priority.

Kanayo F Nwanze, president of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), said this was a good springboard for approaching top decision makers in developing countries about protecting their farmers from climate change. In a report released in Paris, IFAD said technical interventions - like harder seeds and accurate weather forecasts - are not enough to help small farmers cope, and must be backed up by national strategies, laws and budgets.

One major barrier to helping small-scale farmers adapt to extreme weather and reduce emissions from their activities is insufficient money for research and action on the ground, experts noted. The CCAFS study of national climate plans found the 48 least developed countries alone will need funding of \$5 billion per year - \$3 billion for adaptation and \$2 billion for reducing farm emissions.

That sum is much higher than current commitments to climate funds for agriculture, and at least 10 percent more per year than multilateral climate funds spent on agricultural projects in the last decade, it said. "Climate finance needs to include agriculture as a key sector, and support countries to implement the plans they have laid out," said CCAFS director Bruce Campbell. — Reuters

UK TINDER USERS URGED TO DONATE ORGANS

LONDON: US dating app Tinder is teaming up with Britain's National Health Service (NHS) to raise awareness among the young about organ donation, it said yesterday. Romance-seekers swiping on some profiles will be prompted to sign up to the NHS organ donor register. After swiping, users will receive a message reading: "If only it was that easy for those in need of a life-saving organ to find a match." As part of the campaign, artificial profiles have also been created for Olympic medalist Jade Jones and soap stars Jamie Laing and Gemma Oaten.

"With the help of these bespoke profiles on Tinder, we'll grab people's attention and throw a spotlight on the importance of organ donation," said

Sally Johnson, NHS director of Organ Donation and Transplantation. "Joining the register takes only a couple of minutes-about the same amount of time as a few swipes on Tinder." Around 7,000 people are currently on the transplant waiting list in Britain. "Tinder users regularly make the decision to swipe left or right wondering whether someone may be the person they are looking for," added Hermion Way, Tinder's head of European communications. "While those swiping decisions are important and could be the first step to a successful relationship, we hope that the NHS profiles... will encourage people to make and act upon a different decision too-to sign up as an organ donor." — AFP

ASTRAZENECA SAYS IN TALKS WITH ACERTA PHARMA

LONDON: British pharmaceuticals giant AstraZeneca revealed yesterday that it was in discussions over a deal with cancer drug maker Acerta Pharma. "Further to recent speculation, AstraZeneca confirms that it is exploring potential strategic options with Acerta Pharma," it said in a brief statement issued in response to press speculation. "There can be no certainty that any transaction will ultimately be entered into, or as to the terms of any transaction." The Wall Street had reported on Friday that Astra was in

advanced talks to buy Dutch firm Acerta for more than \$5.0 billion (4.5 billion euros).

AstraZeneca, which rejected a takeover bid from US giant Pfizer last year, is seeking to rebuild its portfolio of exclusive medicines amid intense competition from generic drugmakers. Acerta has offices in the Netherlands and the United States. The biotechnology company develops treatments for several types of cancer and autoimmune diseases. — AFP

CRUNCH TIME AGAIN FOR HEALTH LAW; TODAY SIGN-UP DEADLINE



LINCOLN, Nebraska: Graphic designer Rayna Collins poses for a photo in her home in Lincoln. — AP

WASHINGTON: Rising premiums and shaken faith among insurers have cast a cloud over sign-up season for President Barack Obama's health care law, and now it's crunch time again. Today is the deadline for millions of uninsured procrastinators to sign up in time for coverage to begin on Jan 1. As the health insurance expansion enters its third year, their decisions are critical to its economic viability. A surge of younger, healthier customers could hold down premiums in a market that's struggling to grow.

"Medical costs of total enrollees have been higher than expected and total enrollment remains low," said Caroline Pearson, a vice president at the consulting firm Avalere Health. "If participation is leveling off, then plans may be stuck with a risk pool that is not particularly balanced." More than half of the health law's 23 nonprofit insurance cooperatives have folded, and even some major industry players have recently gone public with doubts. There have been bumps with the health law, says business owner Rayna Collins of Lincoln, Nebraska, but overall she counts on it. She's surprised, however, that many people she knows have remained uninsured.

"It's heartbreaking to think that they could have affordable insurance," said Collins. "They think it's like going on welfare." One friend believed incorrectly that insurers could still turn down customers with pre-existing health conditions, a practice barred under the law. Collins, a graphic designer, has had to make adjustments. She switched insurers for 2016 because the company she was with left the market. Her premium will be about the same, after subsidies the law provides for private coverage. But her deductible will spike from

\$500 to \$2600. "I'm getting less coverage for about the same, and I'm not happy with that," Collins said. "But I don't know what I would do if I weren't getting the government subsidy. I was already being priced out of health insurance before Obamacare." The coverage allows her to get regular preventive care that's important for people like her, in their early 60s.

The Obama administration says it's seeing a vigorous consumer response this sign-up season, with more than 1 million new customers already. "All the evidence for us is that the marketplace is strong, it's vibrant, and it's growing," said Andy Slavitt, head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which runs the government's major insurance programs. Still, the administration's sign-up target for 2016, the president's last full year in office, is modest: 10 million people enrolled and paying premiums at the end of the year, an increase of about 10 percent. Some important things for consumers thinking about signing up for the first time, as well as for those renewing:

Deadlines: Today

is the deadline to sign up for coverage so it can take effect on the first of the year. It's also the deadline to make any changes to existing coverage so they take effect Jan 1. Current customers will be automatically renewed Jan. 1 if they make no changes, but they may save money now by shopping for a plan with lower premiums.

The final deadline for new sign-ups and plan switches is Jan 31, 2016. After that, new enrollments and changes are only allowed under special circumstances. People who remain uninsured after Jan. 31 risk fines

when they file their 2016 taxes. Fines will sting: The fines for people who remain uninsured in 2016 have gone up substantially. A study from the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that the average tax penalty will rise to \$969 per household, or nearly 50 percent. The fines are one of the law's methods for nudging healthy people to get insured. Fines of \$900 would put a serious dent in most income tax refunds, and it's enough money to pay several months' worth of subsidized premiums. This year uninsured people got a second chance to sign up and avoid penalties if they found out about the fines upon filing their tax returns. There's no such reprieve next year.

Website working: The HealthCare.gov website, famously balky a couple of years ago, is working well by most accounts. The site has some consumer-friendly enhancements including a cost calculator, a doctor and hospital look-up feature and a way to see whether your prescription drugs are covered. Consumers are urged to double-check the physician finder results with their plans and doctors. Ahead of sign-up season, it was expected that premiums for health law plans would go up in most places. A wave of closures among the law's nonprofit insurance co-ops led to more worries. But what really seems to have shaken confidence were recent comments by UnitedHealth CEO Stephen Hemsley that the nation's largest insurer had made a bad decision in expanding into more of the law's insurance exchanges. Drew Altman, president of the Kaiser Foundation, says the health law's insurance markets appear to be making progress. But they're not there yet. "It's going to take more people enrolled to be fully successful," Altman said. — AP

YC BETS BIG ON 'SUPPORTIVE HOUSING' TO CURB HOMELESSNESS



BRONX, New York: Robert Blake, 43, a resident of Haven apartments who was formerly homeless, shows his dorm-like apartment. — AP

NEW YORK: The scene of neighbors hanging holiday decorations at their tidy Bronx apartment building was nothing remarkable, except to the people doing it. Like everyone else at Haven Apartments, they had been homeless and mentally ill. And now they have their own apartments, in a building offering on-site help with everything from handling finances to managing medical care to making friends. Facing a stubborn swell in homelessness, New York is embarking on what may be the biggest investment any city has made in places like Haven - a \$2.6 billion plan to create 15,000 "supportive housing" apartments.

Advocates see the nation's fast-growing stock of supportive housing as a potent, cost-effective tool for getting people off the streets and into stable lives. And it has been that for Iris Soto, who moved into Haven from a homeless shelter in 2013. "I feel like this is my family that I got here," says Soto, 59.

Staffers helped her cope with the depression that used to spur thoughts of hurting herself. Neighbors elected her president of a resi-

dents' council. And after years of bouncing between relatives' homes and shelters where she'd bathe at 4 a.m. because so many women jockeyed to wash up, she finally has a place of her own. Yet some communities have shunned supportive housing, and some experts caution that it has limitations. Dating to the 1980s, supportive housing has expanded from under 190,000 residents nationwide in 2007 to over 300,000 in 2014, federal statistics show. It's been credited with reducing chronic homelessness in Utah from 1,900 people to just 178 in a decade. Places from San Francisco to Massachusetts have major programs. "It's more than just getting people out of sight by giving them a home," says Mary Brosnahan, president of the Coalition for the Homeless advocacy group. "Because once they have that ... they can flip that switch from survival to working on thriving."

Housing apartments

New York is betting big on it at a time when homelessness has come front and cen-

ter. About 58,000 people now rely on shelters - 12 percent more than two years ago - possibly thousands more live on the streets, and the city logged 60 percent more complaints about homelessness this year than last. Homelessness has declined nationwide in recent years while rising in some places - Los Angeles and Hawaii recently declared it a state of emergency - as rents climbed ahead of incomes, among other likely factors.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced his plan last month to nearly double the 32,000 existing supportive housing apartments citywide. The earlier ones were partly state-financed. The plan includes building 7,500 new apartments and designating 7,500 others scattered in various buildings, where social workers would visit regularly. While residents generally pay a portion of their disability or other benefits in rent, the city expects to spend about \$30,000 per apartment per year on services. Still, studies have found supportive housing saves thousands of dollars a year in shelter, hospital and jail costs. — AP

KEY POINTS OF THE LANDMARK PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT

LE BOURGET, France: UN climate talks reached a milestone Saturday when more than 190 countries adopted the first accord asking all countries to join the fight against global warming. Here are some of the key elements of the deal:

Long-term goal: The long-term objective of the agreement is to make sure global warming stays "well below" 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and to "pursue efforts" to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). Temperatures have already increased by about 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times. To achieve that goal, governments pledged to stop the rise in heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions "as soon as possible." By some point after 2050, the agreement says, man-made emissions should be reduced to a level that forests and oceans can absorb.

Emissions targets: In order to reach the long-term goal, countries agreed to set national targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions every five years. More than 180 countries have already submitted targets for the first cycle beginning in 2020. Only developed countries are expected to slash their emissions in absolute terms; developing nations are "encouraged" to do so as their capabilities evolve over time. Until then, they are expected only to rein in the growth of emissions as their economies develop.

Reviewing targets: The initial targets won't be enough to put the world on a path to meet the long-term temperature goal. So the agreement asks governments to review their targets in the next four years and see if they can "update" them. That doesn't require governments to deepen their cuts. But the hope is that

it will be possible for them to do so if renewable energy sources become more affordable and effective.

Transparency: There is no penalty for countries that miss their emissions targets. But the agreement has transparency rules to help encourage countries to actually do what they say they will do. That was one of the most difficult pieces to agree on, with China asking for softer requirements for developing countries. The agreement says all countries must report on their emissions and their efforts to reduce them. But it allows for some "flexibility" for developing countries that "need it."

Money: The agreement says wealthy countries should continue to offer financial support to help poor countries reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change. It also encourages other countries to pitch in on a voluntary basis. That paves the way for emerging economies such as China to contribute, even though it doesn't require them to do so. Actual dollar amounts were kept out of the agreement itself, but wealthy nations had previously pledged to provide \$100 billion annually in climate finance by 2020.

Loss and damage: In a victory for small island nations threatened by rising seas, the agreement includes a section recognizing "loss and damage" associated with climate-related disasters. The US long objected to addressing the issue in the agreement, worried that it would lead to claims of compensation for damage caused by extreme weather events. In the end, the issue was included, but a footnote specifically stated that loss and damage does not involve liability or compensation. — AP



PARIS: Activists gather during a demonstration near the Eiffel Tower during the COP21, the United Nations Climate Change Conference. — AP



MEXICO : A dancer applies a mixture of alcohol and marijuana to relieve muscle aches at a clandestine greenhouse in Mexico City. — AFP photos



MEXICO : Marijuana plants which are grown for medicinal purposes are pictured in a clandestine greenhouse.

'GRANDMA'S MAGIC REMEDY: 'MEXICO'S MEDICAL MARIJUANA SECRET

'IT'S AN ANCIENT MEDICINE, PASSED ON FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION'

MEXICO CITY: When her legs ache, this Mexican grandmother rubs them with marijuana-infused alcohol. She is well aware the homemade remedy defies the country's cannabis ban, but her family has used the concoction to treat ailments since she was a child, handing it down the generations. "I really have a lot of faith in it," said the slender 53-year-old, a housewife and amateur dancer who spoke to AFP about her cannabis use on condition of strict anonymity. "When I'm very tired, I spread it on my legs, feet and body. It's really good. I can go without salt but not without marijuana with alcohol. My grandmother used it," she said, holding a plastic bottle filled with the leaves and liquid.

In turn, she used the family remedy to care for her three children, and three grandchildren. For the kids, a piece of cotton soaked in the liquid is placed in the bellybutton to fight fevers. When they're congested, the alcohol is rubbed on the chest and back. A debate on whether to legalize marijuana for recreational or medicinal uses in Mexico is in its infant stages, but Mexicans have used cannabis for therapeutic purposes for centuries.

The national discussion was launched in November when the Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling authorizing four people to grow and smoke marijuana for personal use, opening the door for others to seek similar permits. Weeks earlier, the parents of an eight-year-old girl named Grace, who suffers from a severe form of epilepsy, won a legal battle to import a cannabis-based oil to treat her condition. But for generations Mexicans have been using "grandma's magic remedy" to combat a wide range of pains, fevers or other complaints.

The cannabis-infused oil can be kept for months, and many keep a flask hidden in a closet. The remedy also comes in dry forms or as pastes. Some drink marijuana tea to relieve headaches or help with insomnia while others smoke it to fight nausea or cancer-related pains. "Infused into alcohol is the traditional use for rheumatism as well as muscular and circulation pains," said Humberto Rocca, a doctor specializing in addictions and herbalism. "It's an ancient medicine, passed on from generation to generation. Young people know that their grandmothers or mothers use it," Rocca said.

Home brew

Jorge Hernandez Tinajero, a veteran pot legalization activist, said Spanish conquistadors brought hemp with them, and indigenous populations added it to their ceremonial and medicinal traditions. "Marijuana began to be used in different ways in the 16th century, for rituals guided by shamans, which persist to this day in some villages," said Tinajero, who is part of the Mexican Association of Cannabis Studies. In a Mexico City home, a 33-year-old publicist agreed to show AFP reporters his hydroponic system of some 20 marijuana plants growing under intense spotlights. "This is for personal and medical use," he said from his greenhouse, walking barefoot and smoking a joint during the chat.

"There's no sale or purchases. We only do this to change the system and this war" against drug trafficking, he said, echoing the argument among pro-legalization activists that decriminalizing pot will help combat the violence associated with the illegal trade. He taught himself to make various types of therapeutic marijuana, including the traditional alcohol-based recipe, a thick wax concentrate of

tetrahydrocannabinol-the main psychoactive ingredient in cannabis-which is used to treat nausea, and extracts that are used for vaporizations.

"If your mom has a migraine, you give her a little tea because the pain goes away with a little bit of marijuana," he said. "Typically I make alcohol for the grandmother of a friend who has pains in the hands or feet due to arthritis or sciatica," said the man, who insists he gives away the medicine for free.

National debate

While President Enrique Pena Nieto has voiced opposition to legalizing marijuana, he has convened experts to hold debates between January and March to see if the government should change the law in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling. In its wake, Mexican health authorities this week issued the first permit allowing the individuals concerned to grow their own marijuana for recreational purposes. Though limited to those four people only, the authorization opens a crack in Mexico's prohibitionist policies. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



CHRISTMAS BELLS HAVE RUNG!

The Men's Voice and Choral Society staged their 15th annual Christmas carols at the American International School, Maidan Hawally on Dec 4, 2015 to mark the beginning of the Christmas season. The chief guest for the evening, three-time state award winner for Best Music Director in Malayalam films, Jerry Amaldev, led the group in two age-old Christmas melodies that lifted the audience to cloud nine.

He was also honoured for creating splendid music compositions for the past many years. The Men's Voice and Choral Society were even privileged to have him

release their first audio CD "Abide with me" along with office bearers Vice President Mathew Varghese, Secretary Thomas Varghese and Joint Secretary Kurien George, in the presence of the hundreds gathered.

The evening event opened with prayer by Rev Sunil Joy of St Thomas Marthoma Church, Kuwait. Suresh Thomas, the President of the group, welcomed the guests and the audience to the concert. Under the able guidance of choir masters Ajith Babu and Fredrick Nirmal, the performance of Men's Voice and Choral Society was a real treat to the eyes and ears of those

gathered.

A special mention to Shine Cherian Sam for leading the choir on three songs. Rev Emmanuel Ghareeb, Pastor of the Arabic Language Congregation, felicitated the choir for their wonderful performance during these past 15 years. A thought-provoking and inspiring Christmas message was delivered by Rev Biju Sam, Vicar of the Ahmadi Marthoma Church.

Ninan Joseph, the General Convenor of the program rendered the Vote of Thanks. Bobby Kurien added essence to the evening by compeering for the event.

The remarkable day culminated with the 100 Member Mass Choir singing to 'Bethlehem Puri Veedhiyil' and 'Silent Night' conducted by Amaldev and the popular anthem "Hallelujah Chorus" conducted by Babu followed by the closing prayer and benediction by C C Sabu, Vicar of St Pauls CSI Congregation Ahmadi and Rev Santhosh Philip, Vicar of St Peters Marthoma Church respectively. The organizers of this concert, who left no stone unturned to ensure a memorable day for everyone, were Thomas Thomas, Akash John Thomas and Mathew M. Varghese.



In cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, the Performing Arts Academy LoYAC (Lapa) organized a solo concert of pianist Lulwa Al-Shamlan on Dec 12. Lulwa has won numerous international awards.

KALA (ART) KUWAIT HOLDS 'NIRAM 2015'



Kala (Art) Kuwait "Metro Medical Care - NIRAM 2015" Children's Day painting competition concluded with the prize distribution to all winners at a colorful ceremonial function held at Indian Community School, Khaitan on Dec 11, 2015. The program was witnessed by community leaders, business personalities, school principals, art teachers and media representatives. The painting competition was held on the occasion of the birthday of late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India.

Gargi Sunil, The First Lady, Indian Embassy Kuwait, inaugurated the function and appreciated all winners for their fabulous painting works, which was displayed at the entrance. Shirshad highlighted Panditji's empathy towards children and his vision for India and appreciated the organizers for conducting such programs. The 11th Anniversary souvenir of "NIRAM" was released by Mustafa Hamza, Vice Chairman & CEO, Metro Medical Group by handing over the first copy to K Hassan Koya,

Convener Public Relation, Kala (Art) Kuwait. The marvelous evening started with the national anthem of Kuwait followed by India's.

The judges adjudged unanimously the first place to IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya, second position to Fahaheel Al-Wataniya Indian Private School (DPS), Ahmadi, third position to United Indian School, Abbasiya and fourth position to Carmel School. The panel of judges, artist Sasikrishnan, artist Shummy John, artist M V John, artist Nikesh and artist Sunil Kulanada were honored by Kala (Art) Kuwait by giving mementos in recognition of their laudable services in the field of Arts. Kala (Art) Kuwait presented mementos to Jeeves Erinjery, Divya Kiran and Nisha Dileep for their tremendous contribution in compeering the event.

It is noteworthy to say that a total of 2,215 students from 20 Indian schools in Kuwait had participated in the competition classified into five groups. Five 1st prizes, eight 2nd prizes, nine 3rd prizes, 65 Merit

Prizes and 173 consolation prizes went to each group (total 260 prizes).

The List of main winners as follows:

Group-A: 1st Prize- Pournami Jayaprakash, LKG, Indian Community School, Junior Branch, Salmiya, IInd Prize- Anaika P Shibu, UKG, IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya and Gauri Laiju, LKG, IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya, IInd Prize- Harisankar, Ist Std, Carmel School & Gatha Ajai Nair, Ist Std, IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya.

Group-B: Ist Prize- Saafalya M Sunish, 4th Std, Gulf Indian School, Fahaheel, IInd Prize- Mridula P R, 3rd Std, IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya, IInd Prize- Fida Ancy, 3rd Std, IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya and Ann Sarah Shiju, 4th Std, India International School, Mangaf.

Group-C: Ist Prize- Neha Joseph Alapatt, 8th Std, Carmel School, IInd Prize- Malavika Vidhugopan, 8th Std, Fahaheel Al Watanieh Indian Private School, Ahmadi & Esha Banerjee, 7th Std, Fahaheel Al Watanieh

Indian Private School, Ahmadi, IInd Prize- Anoushka Pillai, 7th Std, United Indian School, Abbasiya & Gayathri Mohandas P, 8th Std, United Indian School and Fedora Carol Menezes, 8th Std, Carmel School.

Group-D: Ist Prize- Safa Sherin, 10th Std, India International School, Mangaf IInd Prize- Ferin Francis, 11th Std, United Indian School, Abbasiya & Veena Varghese, 11th Std, Fahaheel Al Watanieh Indian Private School, Ahmadi, IInd Prize- Keerthiga Nagarajan, 12th Std, IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya.

Clay Sculpture: Ist Prize- Aadithya S Krishnan, 10th Std, United Indian School, Abbasiya, IInd Prize- Abu Amaan, 11th Std, IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya, IInd Prize- Divya Umesh Deshnur, 8th Std, Indian Community School, Khaitan and Anoushka Pillai, 7th Std, United Indian School, Abbasiya.

Open Canvas (for Parents & Guests): Ist Prize- Geetha Ravindran, IInd Prize Rajan K R and Sree Kumar, IInd Prize Najla Jamshed.

TODAY'S EVENTS

ECE EXHIBITION

The Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at The American University of Kuwait has organized the ECE Exhibition 2015. The event will host keynote speakers Bassam Hamady, Senior Resident Engineer at SSH; Haider Al-Mosawi, Sirdab Lab; and Ahmad N Marafi and Hashim K Bahbahani, VIVA Coded Academy. The event will take place today, Dec 15, 2015 from 2:00 pm to 6:30 pm in the auditorium at The American University of Kuwait.

CULTURAL SEMINAR

The Najla Al-Naki Cultural Forum will hold a seminar under the title of 'Culture, Arts & Letters ...Where to?' The seminar is due to be held at 7:30 pm today, December 15, which will be attended by NCCAL's former secretary general Dr Bader Al-Redfae, the theatrical arts institute dean Dr Fahd Al-Hajri, media icon Amal Abdullah, veteran actor Jassim Al-Nabhan and writer Awatif Al-Zain. The forum is headquartered in house number 388, block 2, Salwa.

TIES CENTER LECTURE

The TIES Center cordially invites all those interested to a lecture entitled, "Outbreak: Plagues that Changed History," by Bryn Barnard today, December 15th, 2015 at 7:00 pm. Modern society has been shaped by infectious diseases including bubonic plague, smallpox, yellow fever, influenza, cholera, tuberculosis and toxoplasma. Bryn discusses how disease has changed the way we treat illness, improve sanitation, provide drinking water and invented antibiotics. Bryn Barnard has illustrated 25 children's books and is the author and illustrator of three books published by Random House, New York: Dangerous Planet: Natural Disasters That Changed History, Outbreak: Plagues That Changed History, and The Genius of Islam.



English teacher Mulham Adnan, ELT supervisors Al-Najjar, Amrani and Sallam and teacher Waleed Ja'far.



Checking the rules during the first round.



Consulting the electronic Scrabble Checker on word validity.



Shakir Reshamwala and teacher Abul Soud checking the game in progress.



Scrabble board



The four winners - Ali, Mohammed, Saleh and Abdul Rahman.



Supervisors and teachers in group photo with the winners.

MUBARAK ELT TEAM ORGANIZES FIRST SCRABBLE CONTEST

By Hassan Abdel Al-Bari

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational Zone's ELT supervision team recently organized the first Scrabble contest for public secondary school students. The contest was hosted at Imam Malek Secondary school and supervised by

Mubarak ELT supervisors, Mahmoud Al-Najjar, Jawad Amrani, Mohammed Taha and Mohammed Sallam.

Six students from the area's seven boys' schools competed in the contest that ran for about three hours where players played three rounds. Those with the highest scores qualified for the final game. The jury panel

included English teachers Mulham Adnan from Imam Malek School and Hassan Abdel Bari from Jaber Al-Ali School, who were both supervised by professional Scrabble player and Kuwait Times Front Page Editor Shakir Reshamwala.

Imam Malek School won the first place, Abdullah Mubarak came second, Khaled

Soud Al-Zaid came third and Jaber Al-Ali came fourth. Thus, Imam Malek will represent Mubarak Al-Kabeer in the finals due to be held in April, where one male and one female student will represent each of the six educational zones to win Kuwait's Public Schools' Scrabble Championship.

It is noteworthy to mention that this is the

first year public school students compete in Scrabble as part of the ELT Supervision General's plan to enhance students' vocabulary improve their mastery of English.

Notably, Reshamwala has represented Kuwait in various world championships and tournaments in Australia, US, Poland, Malaysia, India and around the Gulf.

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE AND AUK COOPERATION EXPANDS TO TUCK

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College will engage with the American University of Kuwait by sending Tuck students to Kuwait as part of Tuck's OnSite Global Consulting Program. The team will work for AUK, researching and recommending methods to enhance the current Business and Economics curriculum, and conducting market studies to determine demand for growth and expansion in AUK Business and Economics offerings.

"We are eager to welcome the Tuck MBA students to our university and benefit from the experience and perspective they can offer in our strategic planning process," said Nizar Hamzeh, President of the American University of Kuwait. "AUK has a well-established undergraduate business program and is currently under consideration for accreditation by the AACSB program - we believe the in-depth research and strategic guidance the Tuck team provides will build nicely on our foundation of quality education and drive us even further in that direction." Dean Jin



Wang of AUK's College of Business and Economics added, "We are committed to continuous improvement and to preparing our students to envision and

serve domestic, regional, and international needs. Tuck and AUK can learn from one another." Matthew Slaughter, Dean of the Tuck

School of Business, commented: "As we prepare future global business leaders at Tuck, nothing is more critical than hands-on experience engaging with other cultures. The launch of TuckGO this year ensures that all Tuck students have an immersive global business experience in a country new to them moving forward. We are proud to provide experiences like these in partnership with schools like AUK who are leaders in important global markets."

In addition to sending Tuck MBAs to Kuwait for consulting purposes, TuckGO will welcome two AUK student interns in the summer of 2016. The students will work with the various TuckGO international programs and participate in educational seminars to gain exposure to the operations of an American graduate business school. Dale F. Eickelman, Lazarus Professor of Anthropology and Relationship Coordinator for the Dartmouth AUK Program, added, "The Dartmouth-AUK program has welcomed interns since 2005. The addition of AUK internships for students at Tuck in 2016 is a first for both institutions, and a first step



toward exploring other co-operative possibilities." Beth Hindmarsh, Dartmouth-AUK Program Coordinator, added, "This collaboration with Tuck

adds an exciting dimension to the offerings we have for AUK students who come to Dartmouth in the summer."



GUST SIGNS DEAL WITH KPC

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) marked an important occasion by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to become their academic and training partner in providing training and certification to KPC staff.

GUST will begin offering professional development programs to all KPC bachelor degree holders, with the aspiration of offering the entire organization in the future. GUST will also provide training and certification for KPC staff on a variety of topics. In addition, the University is tasked with offering training and certification

programs, internationally recognized, specifically to the oil sector, including but limited to CFA, CMA, CPA, CIA, PMP, and CISSP.

Dr Donald Bates, GUST President, said, "This partnership shows the trust the highly esteemed organizations, such as KPC, place in our University to provide efficient training benefiting, and adding to their employees' knowledge and skills. As a University, we are privileged to be given such a crucial and formative role in the careers of KPC employees."

Since GUST's establishment, it has set itself as a center for professional development. It currently houses a train-

ing academy for one of Kuwait's more prominent banks, in addition to the brand new Gulf Financial Center (GFC) - an initiative developed and supported by the Amiri Diwan, GUST, and a group of leading companies from the private sector. GFC is home to a virtual trading and dealing room which is among the most technologically advanced in the region. What's more, GUST also operates a subsidiary, PACE (Professional Advancement and Continuing Education), whose sole purpose is to provide training courses in subjects such as GMAT preparation, CFA, CMA, and PMP (Project Management Professional) certification to professional adults. The new deal with

KPC further solidifies its position as a genuine hub of knowledge and career advancement.

Basem Al-Issa, Deputy Managing Director, Training and Development at KPC said, "We believe deeply in empowering our employees with the best opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge and help them perform their jobs better. We are constantly working to find ways to enable our people to reach their highest potential, and our strategy is to provide employees with the tools and support to enable outstanding performance that exceeds our expectations and creates future talent and leaders."



00:20 Shocking Survival Videos
00:45 Cuban Chrome
01:35 Cuban Chrome
02:25 Cuban Chrome
03:15 Cuban Chrome
04:05 Cuban Chrome
05:00 Cuban Chrome
06:00 Ice Lake Rebels
06:50 Desert Car Kings
07:40 Fast N' Loud
08:30 Auction Hunters
08:55 Property Wars
09:20 Storage Hunters UK
09:45 Americana
10:10 How It's Made
10:35 Alaskan Bush People
11:25 Alaska: The Last Frontier
12:15 Flying Wild Alaska
13:05 Auction Hunters
13:55 Storage Hunters UK
14:20 Ice Lake Rebels
15:10 Kindig Customs
16:00 Fast N' Loud
16:50 Americana
17:15 How It's Made
17:40 Misfit Garage
18:30 Wheeler Dealers
19:20 Outback Truckers
20:10 Property Wars
20:35 Storage Wars Canada
21:00 Blood Lions - Bred For The Bullet
21:50 Hell Road Russia
22:40 Wheeler Dealers
23:40 Kindig Customs



00:35 How The Universe Works
01:20 How The Universe Works
02:08 How The Universe Works
02:55 How The Universe Works
03:42 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
04:29 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
05:16 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
06:03 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
06:50 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
07:37 Deadliest Space Weather
08:00 Deadliest Space Weather
08:23 Mythbusters
09:08 Mythbusters
09:53 Mythbusters
10:38 Mythbusters
11:23 Mythbusters
12:08 How It's Made
12:30 How It's Made
12:53 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:38 How It's Made
14:00 How It's Made
14:23 How It's Made
14:46 How It's Made
15:10 How It's Made
15:33 How It's Made
15:57 Home Factory
16:19 Home Factory
16:44 Mighty Ships
17:31 Food Factory
17:54 Food Factory
18:18 Strip The Cosmos
19:05 How The Universe Works
19:50 How The Universe Works
20:40 How The Universe Works
21:25 How The Universe Works
22:15 How The Universe Works
23:00 How The Universe Works
23:45 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?



00:00 Violetta
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:15 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Wolfblood
02:05 Wolfblood
02:30 Violetta
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:45 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Wolfblood
04:35 Wolfblood
05:00 Violetta
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Mouk
06:00 Lolirock
06:25 Hark Zipper
06:50 Girl Meets World
07:15 H2O: Just Add Water
07:40 Wizards Of Waverly Place
08:05 Wizards Of Waverly Place
08:30 Wizards Of Waverly Place
08:55 Wizards Of Waverly Place
09:20 Wizards Of Waverly Place
09:45 Miraculous: Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
10:10 Best Friends Whenever
10:35 Girl Meets World
11:00 Mako Mermaids
11:25 Dog With A Blog
11:50 Gravity Falls
12:20 I Love Violetta

12:30 Frozen Fever
12:45 Mako Mermaids
13:10 Mako Mermaids
13:35 Mako Mermaids
14:00 Mako Mermaids
14:30 I Didn't Do It
14:55 Lolirock
15:20 The Naughty List
16:10 Best Friends Whenever
16:35 Austin & Ally
17:00 Gravity Falls
17:25 Frozen Fever
17:35 Descendants
18:00 Descendants
19:55 Dog With A Blog
20:20 Jessie
20:45 Good Luck Charlie
21:10 Good Luck Charlie
21:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
22:00 Biny 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



00:00 Nina Needs To Go
00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calimero
00:35 Zou
00:50 Loopidoo
01:05 Art Attack
01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
01:45 Calimero
02:00 Zou
02:15 Loopidoo
02:30 Art Attack
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Calimero
03:20 Zou
03:30 Loopidoo
03:45 Art Attack
04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
04:20 Calimero
04:35 Zou
04:45 Loopidoo
05:00 Art Attack
05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 Calimero
05:50 Zou
06:00 Loopidoo
06:15 Art Attack
06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
06:50 Calimero
07:00 Zou
07:20 Loopidoo
07:35 Art Attack
08:00 Calimero
08:10 Zou
08:25 Limon And Oli
08:35 Jake And The Neverland 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
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 Cinderella III: A Twist In Time
23:30 Lilo & Stitch



00:00 New Money
00:30 Fashion Bloggers
00:55 Fashion Bloggers
01:25 Stewarts And Hamiltons
02:20 E! News
03:15 Eric And Jessie: Game On
03:40 Eric And Jessie: Game On
04:10 E! Entertainment Special
05:05 The E! True Hollywood Story
06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
07:50 Style Star
08:20 E! News
09:15 House Of DVF
10:15 House Of DVF
11:10 Fashion Bloggers
11:35 Fashion Bloggers
12:05 E! News
13:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:00 Dash Dolls
16:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
17:00 New Money
17:30 New Money
18:00 E! News
19:00 Fashion Bloggers
19:30 Fashion Bloggers
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
20:30 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
22:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
23:00 Dash Dolls



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

01:00 Chopped
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Finds Food
03:30 Man Finds Food
04:00 Food Court Wars
05:00 Chopped
06:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
06:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
07:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
07:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
08:00 Chopped
09:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
10:00 The Kitchen
11:00 The Kitchen
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 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
16:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
17:00 Chopped
18:00 Siba's Table
18:30 Siba's Table
19:30 Siba's Table
20:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
20:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
21:00 Chopped South Africa
22:00 Follow Donald... To Vietnam
22:30 Follow Donald... To Vietnam
23:00 Girl Eat World
23:30 Girl Eat World



00:15 Coronation Street
00:40 Coronation Street
01:05 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover
02:00 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
02:55 Coronation Street
03:20 Coronation Street
03:45 Coronation Street
04:10 Coronation Street
04:30 Coronation Street
04:50 Come Date With Me Australia
05:15 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
05:45 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
06:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
07:05 Seven Days With A...
08:00 Dancing On The Edge
09:30 Dancing On The Edge
11:30 Dancing On The Edge
13:30 Dancing On The Edge
14:20 Derren Brown - The Great Art Robbery
15:45 The Syndicate
16:45 The Jonathan Ross Show
17:35 Seven Days With A...
18:30 Come Date With Me Australia
19:00 The Syndicate
19:55 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
20:20 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
20:45 The Jonathan Ross Show
21:45 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
22:40 Seven Days With A...
23:40 Derren Brown - The Great Art Robbery



00:10 Man V. Viral
01:00 Breakthrough
02:00 Hubble's Cosmic Journey
02:55 The Border
03:50 Locked Up Abroad
04:45 Breakthrough
05:40 Yukon Gold
06:35 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South
07:30 Ultimate Airport Dubai
08:25 Megastructures
09:20 Man V. Viral
10:15 Breakthrough
11:10 Hubble's Cosmic Journey
12:05 Do Or Die
13:00 Dog Whisperer
14:00 Dog Whisperer
15:00 Yukon Gold
16:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South
17:00 Ultimate Airport Dubai
18:00 Megastructures
19:00 Yukon Gold
20:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South
20:50 Ultimate Airport Dubai
21:40 Megastructures
22:30 Yukon Gold
23:20 Monster Fish



00:10 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
00:35 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
01:00 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
01:25 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
02:15 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia

02:40 Food School
03:05 Food School
03:30 Dream Cruises
04:20 The Food Files
04:45 The Food Files
05:10 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
05:35 David Rocco's Dolce India
06:00 Chefs Run Wild
06:25 The Best Job In The World
06:50 Bangkok Airport
07:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
08:30 Dog Whisperer
09:20 The Peninsula: The Making Of A Gala
10:10 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
10:35 Chasing Time
11:00 Hook It, Cook It
11:25 Street Food Around The World
11:50 Bondi Rescue Outback Adventure
12:40 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
13:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
14:00 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
14:30 This Is Brazil
15:25 Exploring The Vine
15:50 Exploring The Vine
16:20 The Food Files
16:45 The Food Files
17:15 Tales From The Bush Larder
17:40 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
18:10 Chefs Run Wild
18:35 The Best Job In The World
19:05 Food School
19:30 Exploring The Vine
20:00 Exploring The Vine
20:25 The Food Files
20:50 The Food Files
21:15 Tales From The Bush Larder
21:40 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
22:05 Chefs Run Wild
22:30 The Best Job In The World
22:55 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
23:20 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea



00:20 Africa's Blood River
01:10 World's Deadliest Killer Three
02:00 Monster Fish
02:50 Cameramen Who Dare
03:45 World's Wildest Encounters
04:40 Animal Superpowers
05:35 Bearhood
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 The Kill Zone
08:20 Wild Australia
09:15 Wild Case Files
10:10 Freaks & Creeps
11:05 The Lion Whisperer
12:00 Bearhood
12:55 Monster Fish
13:50 Dangerous Encounters
14:45 Outback Wrangler
15:10 Outback Wrangler
15:40 The Living Edens
16:35 Elephant Queen
17:30 Vacations Gone Wild
18:25 Caught In The Act
19:20 Outback Wrangler
19:45 Outback Wrangler
20:10 The Living Edens
21:00 Elephant Queen
21:50 Vacations Gone Wild
22:40 Caught In The Act
23:30 Bearhood



00:30 Hot In Cleveland
01:30 Saturday Night Live
02:30 You're The Worst
03:30 2 Broke Girls
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 Last Man Standing
06:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
07:30 My Name Is Earl
08:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers
09:30 Last Man Standing
10:30 My Name Is Earl
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
13:00 \$!#! My Dad Says
14:00 Last Man Standing
15:00 My Name Is Earl
16:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South
17:00 Ultimate Airport Dubai
18:00 Megastructures
19:00 Yukon Gold
20:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South
20:50 Ultimate Airport Dubai
21:40 Megastructures
22:30 Yukon Gold
23:20 Monster Fish



00:00 Bates Motel
01:00 Heroes Reborn
02:00 The Blacklist
03:00 Minority Report
04:00 The Whispers
05:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
06:00 Unforgettable



LAST PASSENGER ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

07:00 Franklin & Bash
08:00 Graceland
09:00 The Whispers
10:00 Unforgettable
11:00 Franklin & Bash
12:00 Emmerdale
12:30 Coronation Street
13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
14:00 Graceland
15:00 Unforgettable
16:00 Emmerdale
16:30 Coronation Street
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
18:00 Graceland
19:00 Heroes Reborn
20:00 The Blacklist
21:00 Scandal
22:00 How To Get Away With Murder
23:00 The Knick



00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
01:00 Chicago Fire
02:00 Good Morning America
03:00 Tyrant
04:00 Helix
05:00 Chicago Fire
06:00 Good Morning America
07:00 Emmerdale
07:30 Coronation Street
08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 Red Band Society
10:00 Emmerdale
10:30 Coronation Street
11:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:00 Drop Dead Diva
13:00 Once Upon A Time
14:00 Red Band Society
15:00 Chicago Fire
16:00 Live Good Morning America
17:00 Drop Dead Diva
18:00 Once Upon A Time
19:00 Red Band Society
20:00 Drop Dead Diva
21:00 Once Upon A Time
22:00 Tyrant
23:00 Helix



00:00 Tomorrow You're Gone
02:00 Man Of Tai Chi
04:00 I, Frankenstein
06:00 Aeon Flux
08:00 King Arthur
10:15 Special ID
12:00 Aeon Flux
14:00 The River Wild
16:00 Man Of Tai Chi
18:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power
20:00 The Italian Job (2003)
22:00 Last Passenger



00:00 Man Of Tai Chi-PG15
02:00 I, Frankenstein-PG15
04:00 Aeon Flux-PG15
06:00 King Arthur-PG15
08:15 Special ID-PG15
10:00 Aeon Flux-PG15
12:00 The River Wild-PG15
14:00 Man Of Tai Chi-PG15
16:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power-PG15
18:00 The Italian Job (2003)-PG15
20:00 Last Passenger-PG15
22:00 Reign Of Assassins-PG15



00:00 Welcome To The Jungle
02:00 Stand Up Guys
04:00 Shanghai Calling
06:00 A Simple Twist Of Fate
08:00 Big Fat Lie
10:00 Shanghai Calling
12:00 All About Christmas Eve
14:00 Mousehunt
16:00 Big Fat Lie
18:00 When In Rome
20:00 She Wants Me
22:00 Behaving Badly



01:00 I'll Follow You Down-PG15
02:45 Deadfall-PG15
04:30 For Greater Glory-PG15
07:00 Atlas Shrugged Part 2: The Strike-PG15
09:00 My Last Day Without You-PG15
10:30 For Greater Glory-PG15
13:00 Half Of A Yellow Sun-PG15
15:00 Stone Markers-PG15
17:00 My Last Day Without You-PG15
19:00 Blood-PG15
21:00 Two Men In Town-PG15
23:00 August: Osage County-PG15



02:00 Awakenings
04:15 The Butler
06:30 Odeio O Dia Dos Namorados
08:30 I Am Ali
10:30 The Butler
13:00 Se Puder... Dirija!
15:00 Julie And Julia
17:00 I Am Ali
19:00 Collaborator
21:00 McCanick
23:00 Eden



01:15 The Purge: Anarchy-PG15
03:00 Bad Parents-PG15
05:00 Earth To Echo-PG15
07:00 The Theory Of Everything-PG15
09:00 Barefoot-PG15
10:30 The Expendables 3-PG15
12:45 X-Men: Days Of Future Past-PG15
15:00 Romeo & Juliet-PG15
17:15 Barefoot-PG15
19:00 Kill The Messenger-PG15
21:00 Kelly & Cal-PG15
23:00 Fury-PG15



01:00 Marvel's Planet Hulk
02:45 Vampire Dog
04:30 Columbus In The Last Journey
06:00 Delhi Safari
07:45 Memory Loss
09:15 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
11:00 Ernest & Celestine
12:30 Vampire Dog
14:15 The Three Dogateers
16:00 Top Cat: The Movie
18:00 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
20:00 Pororo: The Racing Adventure
22:00 The Three Dogateers
23:45 Marvel's Thor: Tales Of Asgard



00:00 Sin City: A Dame To Kill For-18
02:00 Maleficent-PG

03:45 The Cafe
04:15 The Weakest Link
05:00 Teletubbies
05:25 The Green Balloon Club
05:50 Charlie And Lola
06:00 Teletubbies
06:25 The Green Balloon Club
06:50 Charlie And Lola
07:00 Jollywobblers
07:15 Doctors
07:40 Doctors
08:10 Doctors
08:40 Doctors
09:10 Eastenders
09:40 Eastenders
10:10 Eastenders
10:40 Eastenders
11:10 Breaking Pointe
11:50 Doctor Who
12:35 Doctor Who
13:20 The Mimic
13:45 Breaking Pointe
14:25 The Weakest Link
15:10 Doctor Who
15:55 Doctor Who
16:40 The Vicar Of Dibley
17:20 Tess Of The Durbervilles
18:15 Tess Of The Durbervilles
19:05 The Paradise
20:00 New Tricks
20:55 Sherlock
22:25 Waking The Dead
23:15 Waking The Dead
00:10 The Paradise
01:05 New Tricks
02:00 Waking The Dead
02:50 Waking The Dead



03:14 Grojband
03:35 Johnny Test
05:05 Transformers: Robots In Disguise
05:27 Transformers: Robots In Disguise
05:50 Regular Show
06:00 The Amazing World Of Gumball
07:00 Transformers: Robots In Disguise
07:25 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
07:50 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
08:10 Ben 10: Omniverse
08:35 Ben 10: Omniverse
09:00 Matt Hatter Chronicles
09:20 Teen Titans Go!
09:45 Teen Titans Go!
10:10 We Bare Bears - New
10:35 Johnny Test
10:55 The Amazing World Of Gumball

11:20 Adventure Time
12:05 Regular Show
12:16 Regular Show
12:27 Regular Show
12:38 Regular Show
12:50 Johnny Test
13:40 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
14:00 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
14:25 Teen Titans Go!
15:10 Matt Hatter Chronicles
15:35 Ben 10: Omniverse
16:00 Ben 10: Omniverse
16:20 Regular Show
16:32 Regular Show
16:44 Regular Show
16:56 Regular Show
17:10 We Bare Bears - New
17:30 Adventure Time
17:55 Steven Universe
18:20 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
18:40 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
19:05 Teen Titans Go!
19:50 Transformers: Robots In Disguise
20:15 New The Amazing World Of Gumball
20:40 Clarence
21:00 Regular Show
21:11 Regular Show
21:22 Regular Show
21:33 Regular Show
21:50 We Bare Bears - New
22:15 Uncle Grandpa
22:40 Johnny Test
00:10 Adventure Time
01:40 Transformers: Robots In Disguise
02:02 Transformers: Robots In Disguise
02:25 Grojband
02:51 Grojband



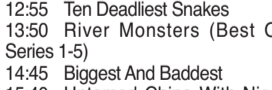
04:35 The Haunting Of...
05:25 The Ghost Inside My Child
06:15 Martina Cole's Lady Killers
07:05 The First 48
08:00 The First 48
09:00 The First 48
10:00 Fatal Vows
11:00 Fatal Vows
12:00 I Didn't Do It
13:00 I Dated A Psycho
14:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
15:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
19:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
20:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
21:00 The Secret Tapes Of The O.J. Case
23:00 Joanna Yeates: Murder At Christmas
23:55 Killer Kids
00:50 The Last Goodbye
01:20 The Last Goodbye
01:45 The Haunting Of...
02:45 Joanna Yeates: Murder At Christmas



03:05 Calimero
03:20 Zou
03:30 Loopidoo
03:45 Art Attack
04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
04:20 Calimero
04:35 Zou
04:45 Loopidoo
04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
05:25 Calimero
05:50 Zou
06:00 Loopidoo
06:15 Art Attack
06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
06:50 Calimero
07:00 Zou
07:20 Loopidoo
07:35 Art Attack
08:00 Calimero
08:10 Zou
08:25 Limon And Oli
08:35 Jake And The Neverland 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
19:00 Sofia The First
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
23:00 Cinderella III: A Twist In Time
23:30 Lilo & Stitch



03:35 Rogue Nature With Dave Salmoni
04:25 Bull Shark: World's Deadliest Shark...
05:15 The Lion Queen
06:02 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
06:49 Biggest And Baddest
07:36 Call Of The Wildman
08:00 Call Of The Wildman
08:25 Treehouse Masters
09:15 Treehouse Masters
10:10 Treehouse Masters
11:05 Treehouse Masters
12:00 Treehouse Masters
12:55 Ten Deadliest Snakes
13:50 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
14:45 Biggest And Baddest
15:40 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
16:35 Almost Human With Jane Goodall
17:30 Deadly Islands
18:25 The Lion Queen
19:20 Rogue Nature With Dave Salmoni
20:15 Rogue Nature With Dave Salmoni
21:10 Bull Shark: World's Deadliest Shark...
22:05 The Lion Queen
23:00 River Monsters
23:55 Biggest And Baddest
00:50 Ten Deadliest Snakes
01:45 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
02:40 Biggest And Baddest



03:00 Doctor Who



THE ITALIAN JOB ON OSN MOVIES ACTION



00:00 Sin City: A Dame To Kill For-18
02:00 Maleficent-PG

CLASSIFIEDS

Kuwait Times

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015



Now you can browse

www.kuwaittimes.net

e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net





KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (10/12/2015 TO 16/12/2015)

SHARQIA-1
V8-2
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 11:30 AM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 11:30 AM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 1:45 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 4:15 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 6:45 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 9:15 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 11:45 PM

SHARQIA-2
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 1:00 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 3:15 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 5:30 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 7:45 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 10:00 PM
CREED 12:15 AM

SHARQIA-3
CLOSE RANGE 12:30 PM
CLOSE RANGE 2:30 PM
CLOSE RANGE 4:30 PM
CLOSE RANGE 6:30 PM
BUS 657 8:30 PM
CLOSE RANGE 10:30 PM
CLOSE RANGE 12:30 AM

MUHALAB-1
BUS 657 11:45 AM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 1:45 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 4:15 PM
CREED 6:45 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 9:30 PM
CREED 12:05 AM

MUHALAB-2
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 1:00 PM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 3:00 PM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 5:00 PM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 7:00 PM
BENGAL TIGER - Telugu 4:00 PM
BENGAL TIGER - Telugu 7:00 PM
TAMASHA - Hindi 7:00 PM
BENGAL TIGER - Telugu 10:00 PM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 1:00 AM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 10:00 PM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 12:05 AM

MUHALAB-3
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 12:15 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 4:45 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 7:00 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 9:15 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 11:30 PM

FANAR-1
STRIKE ONE 12:15 PM
STRIKE ONE 2:45 PM
STRIKE ONE 5:00 PM
STRIKE ONE 7:30 PM
STRIKE ONE 9:45 PM
STRIKE ONE 12:05 AM

FANAR-2
V8-2 11:30 AM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 1:30 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 4:00 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 6:45 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 9:15 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 11:45 PM

FANAR-3
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 12:30 PM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 2:30 PM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 4:30 PM

NO FRI+SAT+MON
V8-2 4:30 PM
FRI+SAT+MON
BUS 657 6:30 PM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 8:30 PM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 10:30 PM
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 12:30 AM

FANAR-4
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 1:00 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 3:15 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 5:30 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 7:45 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 10:00 PM
BUS 657 12:15 AM

FANAR-5
CREED 12:45 PM
TAMASHA - Hindi 3:30 PM
BENGAL TIGER - Telugu 3:30 PM
BENGAL TIGER - Telugu 6:30 PM
BENGAL TIGER - Telugu 9:30 PM
CREED 9:30 PM
CREED 12:30 AM

MARINA-1
HYENA ROAD 12:45 PM
HYENA ROAD 3:00 PM
HYENA ROAD 5:15 PM
HYENA ROAD 7:30 PM
HYENA ROAD 10:00 PM
HYENA ROAD 12:30 AM

MARINA-2
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 12:30 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 2:45 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 5:00 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 7:15 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 9:30 PM
CREED 11:45 PM

MARINA-3
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 11:30 AM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 1:45 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 4:15 PM
BRIDGE OF SPIES 6:45 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 9:45 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 12:15 AM

AVENUES-1
BRIDGE OF SPIES 1:00 PM
BRIDGE OF SPIES 4:00 PM
BRIDGE OF SPIES 7:00 PM
BRIDGE OF SPIES 10:00 PM
BUS 657 2:00 PM
BENGAL TIGER - Telugu 4:00 PM
BENGAL TIGER - Telugu 7:00 PM
BENGAL TIGER - Telugu 10:00 PM
BUS 657 1:15 AM

AVENUES-2
HOWL 11:30 AM
BUS 657 1:30 PM
HOWL 3:45 PM
BUS 657 6:00 PM
HOWL 8:15 PM
HOWL 10:30 PM
HOWL 12:45 AM

AVENUES-3
CLOSE RANGE 1:00 PM
CLOSE RANGE 3:00 PM
CLOSE RANGE 5:00 PM
CLOSE RANGE 7:00 PM
CLOSE RANGE 9:00 PM

CLOSE RANGE 11:00 PM
CLOSE RANGE 1:00 AM

AVENUES-4
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 12:30 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 3:15 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 6:00 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 6:00 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 8:45 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 11:30 PM

AVENUES-5
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 1:00 PM
CLOSE RANGE 1:30 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 3:15 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 5:30 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 7:45 PM
Special Show "HOWL" 7:45 PM
CLOSE RANGE 10:00 PM
CLOSE RANGE 12:05 AM

360°-1
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 1:00 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 3:15 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 5:30 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 7:45 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 10:00 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 12:15 AM

360°-2
BUS 657 1:00 PM
BUS 657 3:00 PM
V8-2 5:00 PM
BUS 657 7:00 PM
BUS 657 9:00 PM
BUS 657 11:00 PM
BUS 657 1:00 AM

360°-3
BRIDGE OF SPIES 11:30 AM
CREED 2:30 PM
BRIDGE OF SPIES 5:30 PM
CREED 8:30 PM
BRIDGE OF SPIES 11:30 PM

AL-KOUT.1
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 1:00 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 3:15 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 5:30 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 7:45 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 10:00 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 12:15 AM

AL-KOUT.2
HYENA ROAD 12:45 PM
HYENA ROAD 3:00 PM
HYENA ROAD 5:15 PM
HYENA ROAD 7:30 PM
HYENA ROAD 9:45 PM
HYENA ROAD 12:05 AM

AL-KOUT.3
STRIKE ONE 11:30 AM
STRIKE ONE 1:30 PM
STRIKE ONE 3:45 PM
STRIKE ONE 6:00 PM
STRIKE ONE 8:15 PM
STRIKE ONE 10:30 PM
STRIKE ONE 12:45 AM

AL-KOUT.4
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 11:30 AM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 2:00 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 4:30 PM
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 7:00 PM

FOR SALE

Toyota Aurion - Grande -
2011, full options, km
85000, white color, KD
2650. Mob: 50994848.
(C 5097)

KIA Mohave jeep - (6 clr)
2013, white color, excellent
conditions, km 87000, KD
3100. Tel: 66729295.
(C 5098)
15-12-2015

CHANGE OF NAME

My daughter, Magishaa
Madhan Kumar, born on
05th June 2014 (native district: Coimbatore), residing
at No. 54, Jothi Theatre
Road, Chinnasamy Kadu,
Ammamet, Salem - 636003.
Shall henceforth be known
as Darsha Madhan Kumar.
(C 5096)

12-12-2015
I, Potturi Harsavardhana
Naidu, holder of Indian
Passport No: M7062597,
R/o Diguvanallaguttapalli
Village, Guttapalli Post,
Sambepalli Mandal, Kadapa
Dist., AP, changed my name
as Muhammad Arshad.
(C 5095)
10-12-2015

EMERGENCY



112

**THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY
FOR CIVIL INFORMATION**
Automated enquiry
about the Civil ID card is
1889988

Prayer timings

Fajr: 05:10
Shorook 06:34
Duhr: 11:43
Asr: 14:33
Maghrib: 16:51
Isha: 18:14



KCPC in Kuwait Looking for qualified, dedicated individuals to join our growing construction Company

1. Transit/ Concrete Mixer Driver
2. Steel Fabricator
3. Heavy Truck Driver
4. Electrical Control Technician
5. Heavy Equipment Mechanic
6. Mechanical Helper

Attractive Salary and benefits can be provided for selected candidates

Eligible & Interested candidates may approach our head office located in Shuwaik Industrial Area 3, Near Sharzad Round About, Magfar Street - Kuwait .

Mobile No: 97867424, email: hr@kcpc.com.kw

REQUIRED IMMEDIATELY

FOR AL MAGWA ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING CO.

1. **Contract Manager – Salary KD 1600 - 2000/-**
(B.E. Mech. with minimum 10 years experience, familiar with KNPC,KOC & JO Project)
2. **HVAC Engineer – Salary KD 900 - 1400/-**
(B.E. Mech. with minimum 8 years experience, familiar with KNPC,KOC & JO Project)
3. **Scaffolding Engineer – Salary KD 800 - 1200/-**
(B.E. Mech. with minimum 8 years experience, familiar with KNPC,KOC & JO Project)
4. **Safety Engineer – Salary KD 800 - 1000/-**
(B.E. Mech. with minimum 8 years experience, familiar with KNPC,KOC & JO Project)
5. **Civil Engineer**
(B.E. Civil with minimum 8 years experience, familiar with KNPC,KOC & JO Project)
6. **Executive Secretary to MD**
(Minimum experience 8 years or above, bilingual - (Eng./Arabic)

CANDIDATES MUST HAVE VALID TRANSFERABLE RESIDENCE
E-mail – CV'S at hrmagwa@almagwa.com or FAX @ - 23988312

Small Apartment for Rent (Egeila)

Bed room, living room, bathroom and kitchen

- New did not live
- 12 Hours Elevators and A/C Maintenance services
- DSL Internet Service (High-Speed)
- 12 Hours Electricity and health maintenance
- Integrated security system with night Watch
- The rent includes (electricity, water, Internet, satellite service, maintenance and security)
- Children not allowed.

We have land lines in the Complex
Tel.: 9969 1983 - 6001 9823

Egeila - Block 2 - Street 104 & 212 on the same street of Gate mall

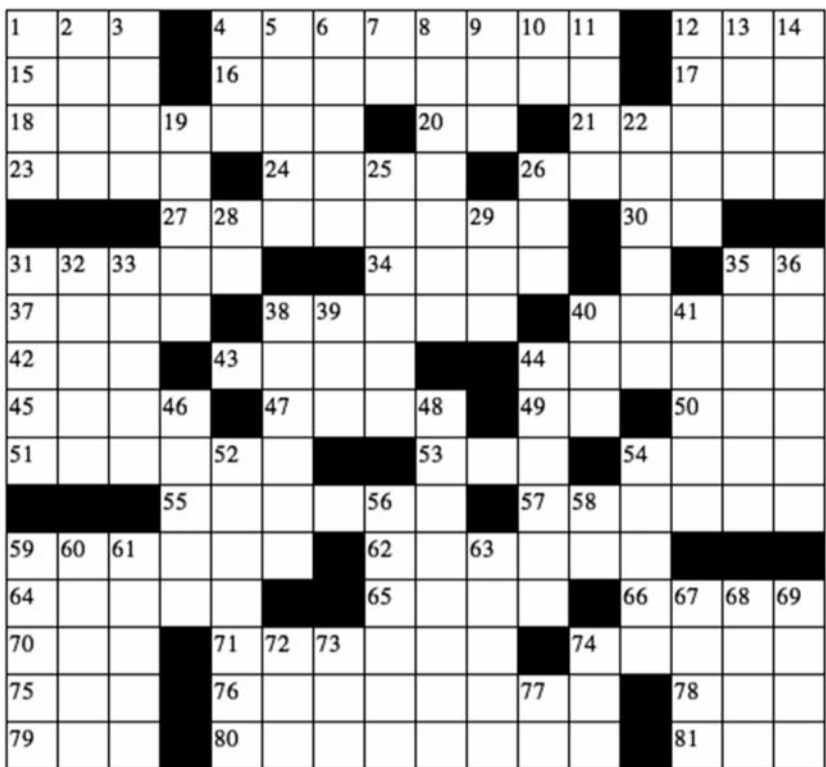
Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers to use seats



| Arrival Flights on Tuesday 15/12/2015 | | | | | | Departure Flights on Tuesday 15/12/2015 | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|----------------------|-------|-----|------|---|------|------------------|-------|------|------|------------------|-------|
| Airlines | Flt | Route | Time | KAC | 284 | Airlines | Flt | Route | Time | MSR | 611 | | |
| BBC | 143 | Dhaka | 00:05 | FBA | 831 | AIC | 976 | Goa/Chennai | 00:05 | UAE | 872 | Cairo | 14:00 |
| MSC | 415 | Sohag | 00:05 | GFA | 221 | JAD | 302 | Amman | 00:15 | JZR | 324 | Dubai | 14:15 |
| KLM | 411 | Amsterdam/Dammam | 00:20 | KNE | 472 | THY | 6377 | Istanbul | 00:25 | KAC | 673 | Al Najaf | 14:25 |
| JZR | 267 | Beirut | 00:30 | OMA | 645 | FDB | 072 | Dubai | 00:40 | FDB | 058 | Dubai | 15:00 |
| JZR | 539 | Cairo | 00:40 | NIA | 251 | MSC | 404 | Asyut | 00:55 | QTR | 1079 | Dubai | 15:10 |
| FDB | 069 | Dubai | 00:55 | KAC | 562 | JAI | 573 | Mumbai | 00:55 | AXB | 394 | Doha | 15:10 |
| THY | 772 | Istanbul | 01:05 | ABY | 127 | MSC | 416 | Sohag | 01:00 | KAC | 617 | Kozhikode | 15:20 |
| DLH | 635 | Doha | 01:35 | UAE | 857 | BBC | 143 | Chittagong/Dhaka | 01:35 | SVA | 501 | Doha | 15:45 |
| ETH | 620 | Addis Ababa | 01:45 | QTR | 1072 | KLM | 411 | Amsterdam | 01:35 | GFA | 222 | Jeddah | 15:45 |
| PGT | 858 | Istanbul | 02:00 | FDB | 051 | KAC | 283 | Dhaka | 02:10 | KAC | 613 | Bahrain | 15:45 |
| UAE | 853 | Dubai | 02:30 | ETD | 303 | THY | 773 | Istanbul | 02:30 | KAC | 773 | Bahrain | 15:50 |
| GFA | 211 | Bahrain | 02:30 | RJA | 640 | DLH | 635 | Frankfurt | 02:35 | KAC | 741 | Riyadh | 15:50 |
| OMA | 643 | Muscat | 02:55 | KAC | 542 | ETH | 621 | Addis Ababa | 02:45 | FBA | 832 | Dammam | 15:55 |
| FDB | 067 | Dubai | 03:05 | SVA | 510 | KAC | 381 | Delhi | 03:30 | KNE | 473 | Al Najaf | 15:55 |
| RJA | 644 | Amman | 03:05 | GFA | 215 | UAE | 854 | Dubai | 03:45 | ABY | 128 | Jeddah | 16:05 |
| MSR | 612 | Cairo | 03:10 | JZR | 325 | PGT | 859 | Istanbul | 03:55 | NIA | 252 | Sharjah | 16:25 |
| QTR | 1076 | Doha | 03:15 | MSR | 614 | OMA | 644 | Muscat | 03:55 | OMA | 646 | Alexandria | 16:30 |
| KKK | 6507 | Istanbul | 03:20 | JZR | 777 | FDB | 068 | Dubai | 04:00 | JZR | 266 | Muscat | 16:30 |
| ETD | 305 | Abu Dhabi | 03:25 | KAC | 502 | MSR | 613 | Cairo | 04:10 | JZR | 238 | Beirut | 17:05 |
| JZR | 503 | Luxor | 04:25 | UAE | 875 | ETD | 306 | Abu Dhabi | 04:15 | ETD | 304 | Amman | 17:30 |
| DHX | 170 | Bahrain | 05:40 | FDB | 063 | KKK | 6508 | Istanbul | 04:20 | FDB | 052 | Abu Dhabi | 17:30 |
| THY | 770 | Istanbul | 05:55 | UAL | 982 | QTR | 1077 | Doha | 05:00 | QTR | 1073 | Dubai | 17:35 |
| FDB | 5061 | Dubai | 06:30 | JZR | 177 | THY | 765 | Istanbul | 05:15 | JZR | 538 | Doha | 17:40 |
| BAW | 157 | London | 06:40 | KAC | 680 | JZR | 560 | Sohag | 06:10 | UAE | 858 | Cairo | 17:45 |
| KAC | 412 | Manila/Bangkok | 07:20 | KAC | 786 | FDB | 070 | Dubai | 06:30 | RJA | 641 | Dubai | 17:45 |
| QTR | 1086 | Doha | 07:40 | ABY | 123 | JZR | 164 | Dubai | 06:55 | SVA | 511 | Amman | 17:55 |
| FDB | 053 | Dubai | 07:45 | QTR | 1080 | RJA | 645 | Amman | 07:05 | GFA | 216 | Riyadh | 18:15 |
| SVA | 512 | Riyadh | 07:50 | KAC | 742 | THY | 771 | Istanbul | 07:05 | JZR | 184 | Bahrain | 18:20 |
| KAC | 302 | Mumbai | 07:50 | KAC | 614 | FDB | 5062 | Dubai | 07:10 | MSR | 615 | Dubai | 18:40 |
| OMA | 641 | Muscat | 08:00 | KAC | 774 | GFA | 212 | Bahrain | 07:15 | FDB | 064 | Cairo | 18:50 |
| KAC | 354 | BLR | 08:15 | KAC | 166 | FDB | 054 | Dubai | 08:30 | ABY | 124 | Dubai | 19:20 |
| KAC | 206 | Islamabad | 08:25 | GFA | 217 | QTR | 1087 | Doha | 08:40 | UAE | 876 | Sharjah | 19:25 |
| KAC | 352 | Kochi | 08:30 | KAC | 618 | BAW | 156 | London | 08:45 | UAL | 982 | Dubai | 19:30 |
| UAE | 855 | Dubai | 08:40 | KAC | 104 | SVA | 513 | Riyadh | 08:50 | GFA | 218 | Bahrain | 19:30 |
| KAC | 362 | Colombo | 08:50 | KAC | 674 | OMA | 642 | Muscat | 08:55 | KAC | 361 | Bahrain | 19:30 |
| KAC | 332 | Trivandrum | 08:50 | MSR | 618 | KAC | 787 | Jeddah | 09:25 | QTR | 1081 | Colombo | 20:45 |
| ABY | 125 | Sharjah | 09:00 | FDB | 061 | ABY | 126 | Sharjah | 09:40 | KAC | 351 | Doha | 20:50 |
| ETD | 301 | Abu Dhabi | 09:20 | OMA | 647 | KAC | 513 | Tehran | 09:45 | KAC | 343 | Kochi | 20:50 |
| QTR | 1070 | Doha | 09:25 | FDB | 5053 | KAC | 101 | London/New York | 09:55 | MSR | 607 | Chennai | 21:00 |
| FDB | 055 | Dubai | 09:40 | DLH | 634 | KAC | 541 | Cairo | 09:55 | KAC | 331 | Luxor | 21:05 |
| KAC | 416 | Jakarta/Kuala Lumpur | 09:50 | JAI | 572 | UAE | 856 | Dubai | 09:55 | OMA | 648 | Trivandrum | 21:10 |
| IRC | 6507 | Shiraz | 10:30 | ETD | 307 | KAC | 561 | Amman | 10:00 | FDB | 062 | Muscat | 21:20 |
| GFA | 213 | Bahrain | 10:40 | MEA | 402 | KAC | 671 | Dubai | 10:05 | DLH | 634 | Dubai | 21:20 |
| IRA | 675 | Lar | 10:40 | ALK | 229 | ETD | 302 | Abu Dhabi | 10:25 | FDB | 5054 | Doha | 21:45 |
| UAE | 873 | Dubai | 11:05 | UAE | 859 | KAC | 501 | Beirut | 10:30 | DHXL | 171 | Dubai | 21:50 |
| RBG | 553 | Alexandria | 11:15 | GFA | 219 | FDB | 056 | Dubai | 10:35 | JAI | 571 | Bahrain | 21:50 |
| JZR | 165 | Dubai | 11:30 | QTR | 1082 | KAC | 165 | Rome/Paris | 11:00 | ETD | 308 | Mumbai | 21:55 |
| MEA | 404 | Beirut | 11:55 | KLM | 415 | QTR | 1071 | Doha | 11:00 | KAC | 301 | Abu Dhabi | 22:10 |
| FDB | 075 | Dubai | 12:25 | AIC | 987 | GFA | 214 | Bahrain | 11:25 | MEA | 403 | Mumbai | 22:10 |
| MSC | 401 | Alexandria | 12:30 | ETD | 309 | IRC | 6508 | Shiraz | 11:30 | ALK | 230 | Beirut | 22:20 |
| JZR | 561 | Sohag | 12:45 | FDB | 059 | IRA | 674 | Lar | 11:40 | GFA | 220 | Colombo | 22:20 |
| UAE | 871 | Dubai | 12:50 | PIA | 239 | RBG | 554 | Alexandria | 11:55 | UAE | 860 | Bahrain | 22:30 |
| MSR | 610 | Cairo | 13:00 | JZR | 239 | JZR | 776 | Jeddah | 12:20 | KAC | 345 | Dubai | 22:30 |
| KAC | 382 | Delhi | 13:50 | JZR | 185 | UAE | 874 | Dubai | 12:30 | QTR | 1083 | Ahmedabad | 23:00 |
| QTR | 1078 | Doha | 14:10 | UAL | 981 | MEA | 405 | Beirut | 12:55 | KLM | 415 | Doha | 23:05 |
| FDB | 057 | Dubai | 14:10 | JAD | 301 | KAC | 785 | Jeddah | 13:00 | KAC | 205 | Dammam/Amsterdam | 23:05 |
| KAC | 514 | Tehran | 14:10 | FDB | 071 | KAC | 679 | Muscat | 13:00 | ETD | 310 | Islamabad | 23:10 |
| AXB | 393 | Kozhikode | 14:20 | THY | 764 | FDB | 076 | Dubai | 13:10 | FDB | 060 | Abu Dhabi | 23:15 |
| SVA | 500 | Jeddah | 14:30 | JAI | 574 | MSC | 402 | Alexandria | 13:30 | PIA | 240 | Dubai | 23:35 |
| KAC | 672 | Dubai | 14:45 | MSC | 403 | JZR | 176 | Dubai | 13:45 | KAC | 411 | Sialkot | 23:35 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Bangkok/Manila | 23:35 |

CROSSWORD 1110



ACROSS

1. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
4. Any of several plants of the genus Hepatica having 3-lobed leaves and white or pinkish flowers in early spring.
12. The unit of frequency.
15. (of roads) Made of logs laid down crosswise.
16. Very generous.
17. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
18. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
20. Small wildcat of the mountains of Siberia Tibet and Mongolia.
22. A Gaelic-speaking Celt in Ireland or Scotland or the Isle of Man.
24. Partially carbonized vegetable matter saturated with water.
25. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
26. A legally binding command or decision entered on the court record (as if issued by a court or judge).
28. Graded markings that indicate light or shaded areas in a drawing or painting.
30. The cardinal number that is the sum of seven and one.
33. The language of the nomadic Lapp people in northern Scandinavia and the Kola Peninsula.
34. In a slim or slender manner.
37. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
41. Wrap us in a cerecloth, as of a corpse.
44. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
47. Water soaked soil.
48. The process of remembering (especially the process of recovering information by mental effort).
51. A unit of current equal to 10 amperes.
54. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
56. Desert shrub of Syria and Arabia having small white flowers.
57. Spread or daub over.
61. A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.
62. A doctor's degree in musical arts.
63. A choice that is made by voting.
66. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
70. Same in identity.
72. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
73. A dissolute man in fashionable society.
77. A master's degree in business.
78. Thickening of tissue in the motor tracts of the lateral columns and anterior horns of the spinal cord.
79. Biennial or perennial herbs of north temperate regions.
80. Annual grass of Europe and North Africa.

DOWN

1. Beat severely with a whip or rod.
2. Amino acid that is formed in the liver and converted into dopamine in the brain.
3. American novelist (1909-1955).
4. A unit of power equal to 746 watts.
5. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
6. (Australian and New Zealand) A disparaging term for English immigrants to Australia

or New Zealand.

7. Make fit for, or change to suit a new purpose.
8. Prong on a fork or pitchfork.
9. A large waterfall on the border between Argentina and Brazil.
10. A genus of Caltha.
11. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
12. (Mexican) Ground beef and chili peppers or chili powder often with tomatoes and kidney beans.
13. Wood of a pecan tree.
14. Informal language consisting of words and expressions that are not considered appropriate for formal occasions.
19. Any of various often strong-smelling plants of the genus Cleome having showy spider-shaped flowers.
21. Aristocratic Italian family of powerful merchants and bankers who ruled Florence in the 15th century.
23. Marked by good order and cleanliness in appearance or habits.
27. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
29. (Roman mythology) God of love.
31. Plot of land belonging to an English parish church or an ecclesiastical office.
32. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
35. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
36. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
38. (astronomy) A relatively small extraterrestrial body consisting of a frozen mass that travels around the sun in a highly elliptical orbit.
39. Earlier a god.
40. (from a combination of MOdulate and DEModule) Electronic equipment consisting of a device used to connect computers by a telephone line.
42. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
43. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
45. A coarse obnoxious person.
46. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
49. Lower in esteem.
50. Praise, glorify, or honor.
52. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
53. Type genus of the Percidae.
55. The word class that qualifies verbs or clauses.
58. (computer science) A system of worldwide electronic communication in which a computer user can compose a message at one terminal that is generated at the recipient's terminal when he logs in.
59. (informal) "in the dumps".
60. Rock star and drummer for the Beatles (born in 1940).
64. Evergreen trees and shrubs having oily one-seeded fruits.
65. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
67. Projectiles to be fired from a gun.
68. A small cake leavened with yeast.
69. Stairway in India leading down to a landing on the water.
71. A unit of electrical power in an AC circuit equal to the power dissipated when 1 volt produces a current of 1 ampere.
74. A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
75. An informal term for a father.
76. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are most persuasive today and can be quite charismatic in speech and your approach to things. You may find yourself lecturing or guiding others. You are a natural for self-expression. You enjoy guest appearances, or writing professionally or just simply a sales job-however, whatever you do, you go all the way. If you are in sales, you will soon find yourself in the competition for the best salesperson this year. Import, export business may be of interest-particularly if it allows you more time at home. Exercise is important to you and you may want to grab a friend or loved one and enjoy a bike ride near your home this afternoon. Tonight you may be asked to join a planning committee for the next celebration in your neighborhood.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your ability to take action and get things accomplished is appreciated-as long as you are not too strong in expressing yourself. Working out ways to organize projects and people is liable to become a topic of special interest-and a challenge. You will do well. Your health and work improve and profits are good. You are happy when you can live on a royal scale. However, your generous nature and your love of fine possessions could have you in trouble soon if financial plans are not made. You must put aside funds, building up the amount a little at a time in order to have a sense of security. Before you know it you will have a nice nest egg. Get your tax papers in order for next year. Any opportunity to work on this ahead of time is a good thing.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are great at coordinating events. Any entertainment group or business that depends on bookings would be at an advantage with you on staff. A business of your own will give you freedom and this is where you seem the happiest. Organizing projects and people is a plus now. If you are not working for yourself, you could consider working for a hotel or a catering group or a theme park, etc. When organizing a lecture, have more material prepared than you can use in the time required. This will give you some sort of a safety net. An elderly person in your life may need more attention than in the past. Remember that there is always enough time for the important things-if it is important, you will find time for it.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your feelings are much more reflective than expressive just now-but there are places to go, people to see and business over which to be productive. Your superiors praise your work and your keen eye for detail. Be realistic with your estimate of the length of time you think it will take you to finish a project. You and your team are feeling good about the accomplishments of late. You have already accomplished quite a lot and it will not be long before you will be able to enjoy a celebration of completion. The relationship between you and a boss or superior improves. You discover that a personal checking or savings balance is starting to look good due to your efforts to keep the budget under control. Everything in your life is coming together well.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Besting others in the heat of competition and taking on a leadership role means more to you now than in the past-second best just will not cut it with you at this time. You may have been waiting for some time to take on a new job. The only thing standing between you and a new position is a little competition and yet you would be wise to compete with only yourself... This is where you find the winner. Make sure the interviewer knows that you do very well at remaining calm under fire. You are mentally strong. This afternoon you need to make an extra effort to hang on to your wallet; you watch the spending spree of a friend and may be tempted to follow along. Why not just offer to help hold the packages you won't have to spend the energy to make the payments.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Insight into your own inner self or psychology could come to the surface today, and in a form that you can manage. You may find yourself in the mood for penetrating conversations or thoughts. Solving problems or making important decisions should be easy for you today. You will find a way around just about any obstacle that you might come across today. You will, however, be in control and be able to guide yourself with ease. Your sense of inner direction is good and may lead to good opportunities. Wanting to expand your horizons and trying to be the very best that you can be, could have you exploring some interesting places today. This evening, your attention may be sparked in areas such as politics, education, travel, religion or law.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

There is a good possibility of a career turning point that may require some careful thought and good judgment on your part. The current flow of events may dictate a path that runs against your best talents and abilities. Do not sell yourself short. Hang in there. Appreciating things of value is easy for you now, even the idea of value itself. You may find yourself gaining materialistically at this time, as it is certainly a time when material things have a great deal of importance for you. Your practical side is showing and you could be recognized for your vision of ways to create a better business. Remember to add people to your holiday list that are easily forgotten. This is the season to show your appreciation to the people that bring you comfort: service people.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Going out and about to gather and exchange information becomes a more enlightened part of your life, a very educational experience. Neighbors or family have a big impact on your goals and make a big impression. This is a very socially active period. Emotional support comes from your good friends, ideals and social interaction now. Your life may be due for some important changes to take place. There is a need to break away from old-fashioned ideas that you may carry from your past, to something totally new, different and unique. Allowing yourself to trek into the future with new concepts and leaving some of the old patterns behind will benefit you in many exciting ways. Dare to be different and allow your aesthetic and perceptive side to emerge.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may discover some new method in which you can communicate effectively. This communication could be with an old customer that was hard to deal with in the past. Your attention today to gain the best results with this customer is a good thing. You have time left this morning to help others complete their tasks. Do not fuss over the little stuff; it's all little stuff! Today and tomorrow could be the beginning of a successful work program and this attitude will help you move forward. It is always a good idea, however, to proof your work before moving forward. Humor is sometimes necessary when we become rushed and today is perfect for your sort of humor. Make it a point to laugh. Expect surprise visits.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Things are really moving in the direction of helping you to bring out your unique and unusual qualities. You may find that someone close to you understands and is supportive of your eccentricities. Opportunities keep appearing mysteriously to aid in your climb up the corporate ladder. This could all be beneficial in allowing you to come up with new solutions or inventions. Everything suggests that you will be taking the initiative. You could feel great support from those around you, or circumstances could dictate your taking action. You have been working very, very hard. Enjoy socializing or plan to socialize as a host or guest this week in some fun gathering. This could be a get-together with people that enjoy the same things you enjoy.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Others may see you as a bit reserved; it should, however, work to your advantage. Someone in authority recognizes your talent. You may want to attend some sort of schooling to fine-tune your craft. What is expressed by others today may be based on fact, but you seem determined to check the facts for yourself. This action may be necessary to your profession but harmful to the psyche of a co-worker, depending on your insight. Commit to a financial deal with a club, group or organization today. Avoid being the one who does all the work by compromising with others. It may be your turn to cook this evening and if so, others will stay around to reap the benefits. If you walk with your sweetheart after the evening meal tonight, there will be rewards.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Gentleness is a very important asset that you present to others. This is almost a gracefulness that is regal. You may not seem disturbed by any difficult events that naturally occur around the office, but you could take a few frustrated feelings home with you. If you notice this happening, slow down, take a deep breath and adjust your thinking to a most positive place. This could possibly be the memory of a vacation or birth of a child; then let go of the day and create a healing place for you and your family in your home. This is your castle against the slings and arrows of the world, so to speak; create a good place. Others should see you as rather elegant just now, especially in social circles. You are genuinely pleased to share what you know with others.

WORD SEARCH

Physics 2

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 58 letters spell a Bruce Feirstein quotation.

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

ABSOLUTE ZERO
ADHESION
AERODYNAMICS
AIR MASS
AMPLIFIER
BIG BANG
BOILING POINT
CENTRIFUGAL
CHAIN REACTION
DECIBEL
DIFFRACTION
DISTANCE

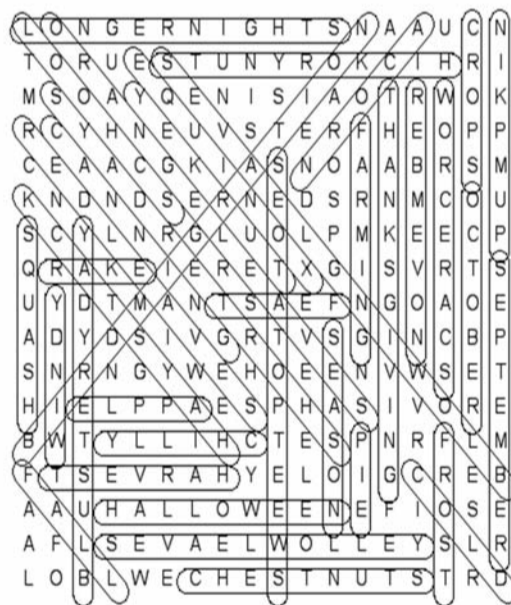
DRAG
ELASTICITY
ELECTRONICS
ENTROPY
FARADAY
FORCE
FRICTION
FUNCTION
GALILEO
HALF LIFE
HEAT
INERTIA

IONIZATION
JOULE
KINETICS
LIGHT
MATTER
MOLECULE
MOTION
NEUTRON
NIELS BOHR
PARTICLE
PHOTON
PRESSURE

PROTON
PULLEY
REFLECTION
SCIENCE
SPEED
TEMPERATURE
TORQUE
VACUUM
VELOCITY
VOLUME
WAVELENGTH
WEIGHT

Yesterday Solution

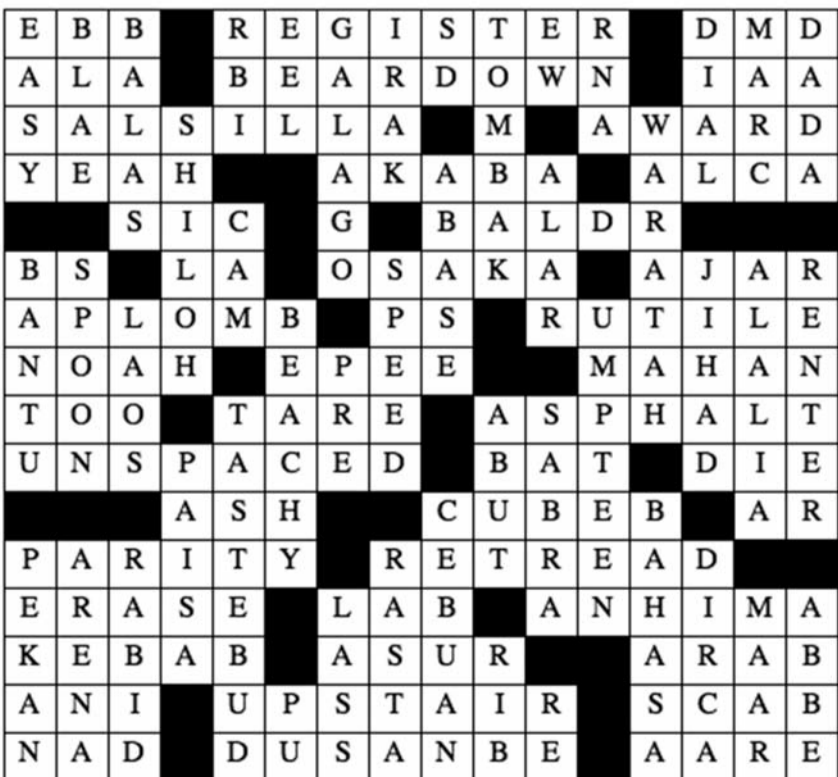
Autumn



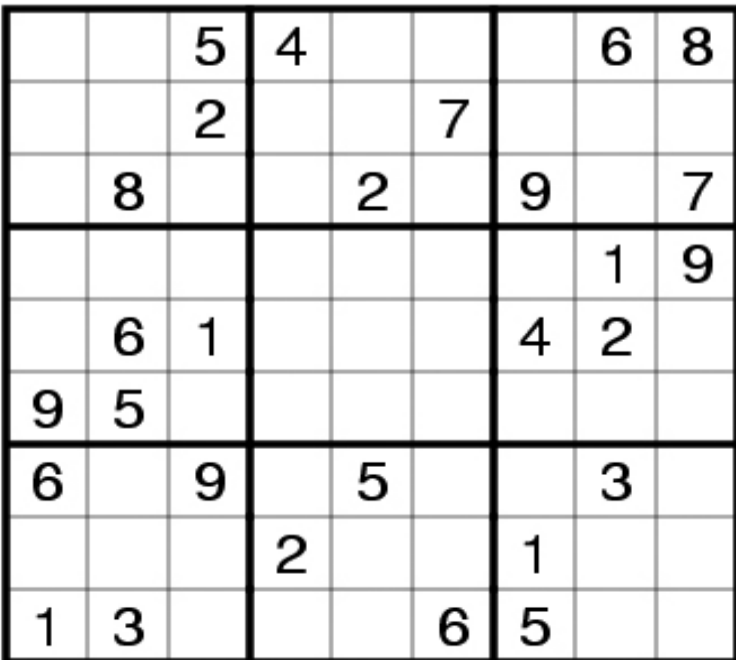
ACORN
APPLE
BIRD MIGRATION
BLOWING LEAVES
BLUSTERY DAY
CANNING
CHESTNUTS
CHILLY
COLD
CROPS
EQUINOX
FALL
FARMING
FEAST
FROST
HALLOWEEN
HARVEST
HAYSTACK
HICKORY NUTS
LONGER NIGHTS
NOVEMBER
OCTOBER
ORANGE LEAVES
PIE
PUMPKIN
RAKE
RED LEAVES
SCARECROW
SCHOOL
SEASON
SEPTEMBER
SHORTER DAYS
SQUASH
SWEET POTATOES
THANKSGIVING
TURKEY
WINDY
YELLOW LEAVES

The hidden sentence is: AUTUMN IS A SECOND SPRING WHEN EVERY LEAF IS A FLOWER

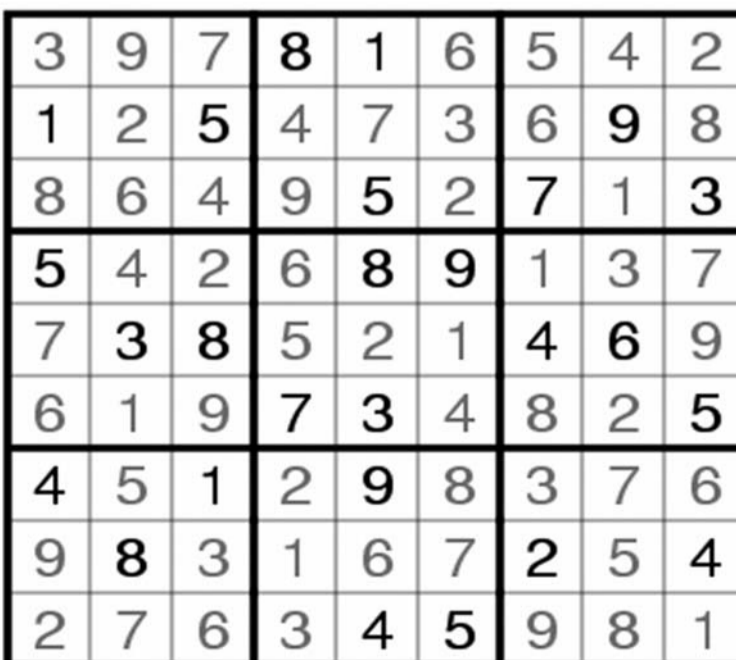
Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



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

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 |
| Khaldiya | 24848075 |
| Kaifan | 24849807 |
| Shamiya | 24848913 |
| Shuwaikh | 24814507 |
| Abdullah Salem | 22549134 |
| Nuzha | 22526804 |
| Industrial Shuwaikh | 24814764 |
| Qadsiya | 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 |



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

| 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 Khaldiya Coop | Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya 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 |

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



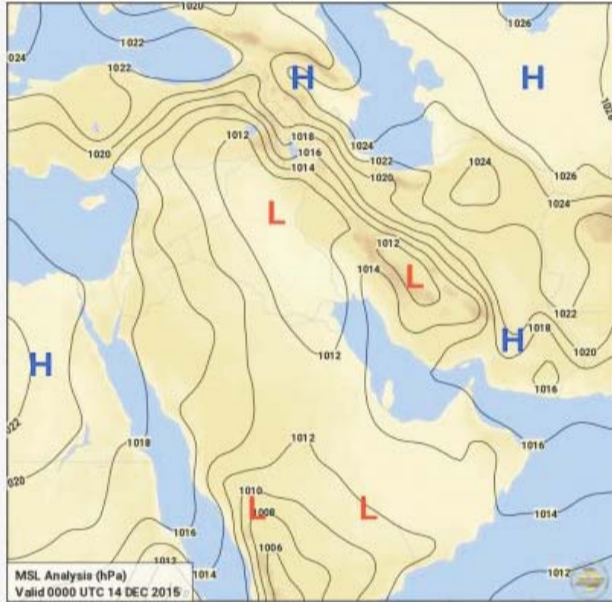
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 14/12/2015-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

MAX Temperature 22 °C

By Day : Partly cloudy to cloudy with moderate to fresh south easterly changing to south westerly wind, with speed of 25 - 50 km/h causing raising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times
By Night : Cold with light to moderate freshening gradually at times westerly changing to north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

| | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Expected Weather | | | | |
| Min Temp °C | 06 | 06 | 07 | 07 |
| Max Temp °C | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| Wind Direction | north westerly | north westerly | north westerly to light variable | variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly |
| Wind Speed km/h | 15 - 35 | 08 - 28 | 06 - 26 | 06 - 26 |

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings
Scattered thunder rain

Kuwait Forecast

| Station | MIN °C REC | Max °C EXP |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| KUWAIT CITY | 19 | 22 |
| KUWAIT AIRPORT | 17 | 22 |
| ABDALY | 16 | 21 |
| BUBYAN | 16 | 19 |
| JAHRA | 16 | 23 |
| FAILAKA ISLAND | 18 | 21 |
| SALMIYAH | 19 | 20 |
| AHMADI | 18 | 20 |
| JAL ALIYAH | 15 | 22 |
| QAROH ISLAND | 21 | 22 |
| UMM AL-MARADEM | 21 | 22 |
| NUWAISIB | 17 | 23 |
| WAFRA | 15 | 22 |
| MANAGISH | 14 | 21 |
| SALMY | 14 | 20 |
| MUTRIBA | 15 | 21 |

| Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Max Temp (°C) | 24 |
| Min Temp (°C) | 09 |
| Max Rel Hum (%) | 89 |
| Min Rel Hum (%) | 30 |
| Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction | 50 SE |
| TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR | 0 mm |

| | | |
|--|---------|-------|
| | Sunrise | 06:34 |
| | Sunset | 16:51 |

Prayer Times

| | |
|---------|-------|
| Fajr | 05:10 |
| Sunrise | 06:34 |
| Zuhr | 11:43 |
| Asr | 14:32 |
| Sunset | 16:51 |
| Isha | 18:14 |

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|----------------------|--------|
| Afghanistan | 0093 | Luxembourg | 00352 |
| Albania | 00355 | Lesotho | 00266 |
| Algeria | 00213 | Macau | 00853 |
| Andorra | 00376 | Macedonia | 00389 |
| Angola | 00244 | Madagascar | 00261 |
| Anguilla | 001264 | Majorca | 0034 |
| Antiga | 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 | Nigar | 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 Tone | 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 |



PRIVATE CLINICS

| Ophthalmologists | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor | 25622444 |
| Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea | 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 | 24555050 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 | 24555050 Ext 123 |
| Dr. Yousef Al-Omar | 24719312 |
| Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem | 23926920 |
| Dr. Kathem Maarafi | 25730465 |
| Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadad | 25655528 |
| Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi | 24577781 |
| Dr. Dina Abidallah Al-Refae | 25333501 |
| Urologists | |
| Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy | 22641534 |
| Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul | 22639955 |
| Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi | 22616660 |
| Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C) | 25313120 |
| Dr. Leons Joseph | 66703427 |

| Plastic Surgeons | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf | 22547272 |
| Dr. Abdal-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 | |
| DrAdrian arbe | 23729596/23729581 |
| Dr. Verginia s.Marin | 2572-6666 ext 8321 |
| Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan | 22655539 |
| Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami | 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 Gupare | 23713100 |
| Dr. Zacharias Mathew | 24334282 |
| Dermatology | |
| Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University | 23845955 |
| Dentists | |
| Dr Anil Thomas | 3729596/3729581 |
| Dr. Shamah Al-Matar | 22641071/2 |
| Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed | 22562226 |
| Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer | 22561444 |
| Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan | 22619557 |
| Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash | 22525888 |
| Dr. Abidallah 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 Abidallah 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.Mohammes Akkad | 24555050 Ext 210 |
| Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital | 25339667 |
| Consultant Cardiologist | |
| Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC | 2611555-2622555 |
| Inaya German Medical Center Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123 | |

Psychologists
/Psychotherapists

Soor Center
Tel: 2290-1677
Fax: 2290 1688

info@soorcenter.com
www.soorcenter.com

Kaizen center
25716707

Noor Clinic
23845955

William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677
Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677



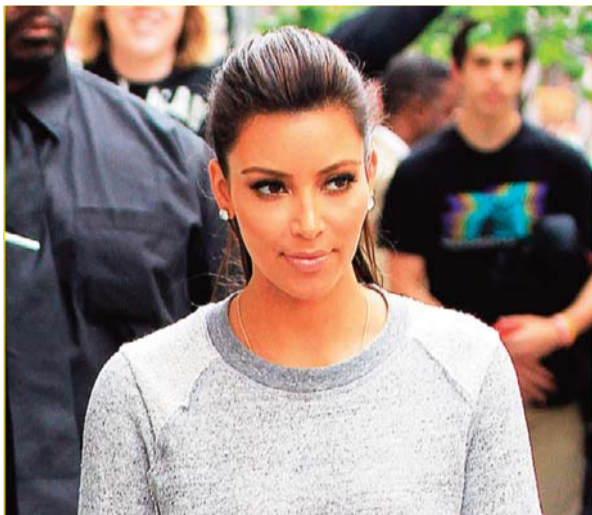
Dita Von Teese's make-up confidence

Dita Von Teese feels more confident when she wears make-up. The 43-year-old Burlesque dancer admits she finds it more fun to apply her own make-up and feels a sense of "integrity and pride" when she's put her own face on. She shared: "Doing it [make-up] myself is a matter of integrity and pride. I look forward to stepping out into the world and honestly stating, 'Yes, I did this.' 'I love the confidence it gives me. Truth is, it takes less time for me to do it myself. It is also so much more fun!' And Dita insists it is all about practice and that no one is born with a "perfect" face. Writing in her book 'Your Beauty Mark: The Ultimate Guide To Eccentric Glamour', she added: "Beauty takes practice. And you know what

practice makes. So often, a stranger or friend will admire my look, and, in the same breath, hopelessly follow up that she or he can't possibly achieve such 'perfection'. 'I am not perfect. Who is? What is perfection, anyway, but striving to be the best you can be! Strive for glamour! Glamour is a thing of beauty - but it's not about being born beautiful. Don't just work what you have - accentuate and exaggerate. If perfection is being free of all flaws, then the only flaws worth fretting over are apathy and self-doubt. Feel beautiful, and you'll look it too."

Kim advised against more kids

Kim Kardashian West has been advised not to have any more children. The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star - who has daughter North, two, and son Saint, nine days, with husband Kanye West - has been warned by doctors that it is 'nearly a guarantee' she will suffer from life-threatening placenta accreta for a third time if she gets pregnant again. And, according to TMZ, 35-year-old Kim - who has previously spoken of how much she doesn't enjoy being pregnant - is also scared of having another "extremely painful birth" if she does conceive again. The couple also think another addition to their brood would be "too much" so they are not too upset at stopping with two children. Though they are very busy with their two kids, little Saint is making life easier for his parents as he is described as the "perfect baby" who is eating and sleeping very well and barely cries - the "opposite" of his older sister. It was previously claimed Kim was "extremely anxious" ahead of delivering Saint, who was born almost three weeks ahead of his due date. A source said: "She had some pretty intense anxiety the last couple of days [of pregnancy] and especially just before the baby came." "She was scared for [this] delivery because of her past issues. She is thrilled [but it was] just so painful for her."



Khloe Kardashian slams Kris Jenner

Khloe Kardashian branded her mother Kris Jenner a "psycho" for staying in touch with Lamar Odom. The 31-year-old star was furious with the family matriarch when she discovered she was still in constant contact with her estranged husband, even after she decided to finally move on with their divorce. In 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' scenes filmed before Lamar's near-fatal overdose in October, Khloe confronted Kris after she gave the basketball player her new phone number. She fumed over the phone: "I was removed from this whole situation. I don't care, are you psycho?" And Khloe's sister, Kim Kardashian West - who had earlier advised her mother not to speak with Lamar - branded Kris a "piece of s**t". However, the 60-year-old star refused to apologize and insisted she hadn't done anything wrong. She said: "He's had so many issues he's been dealing with. "Lamar doesn't have a lot of extended family. When he reaches out I'm going to respond." Kim slammed her mother as "stupid" while furious Khloe - who split from Lamar in December 2013 - admitted she felt particularly hurt because she sided with Kris when she divorced her stepfather Caitlyn Jenner, who was previously known as Bruce. She said: "When you wanted to be mad at Caitlyn, the first thing I did was be on your side and I protected you and I defended you. And that was my dad of 23 years!" The former 'X Factor' host told her mother she felt they needed a "major break" from each other, so Kris agreed and decided not to go on their family vacation. Following Lamar's collapse from a drink and drugs binge, Khloe again put her divorce on hold as she felt it wasn't the right time to go through the process.



Harington's bus embarrassment

Kit Harington stopped using buses when they began advertising his movies. The 28-year-old actor was embarrassed when his movie 'Pompeii' was released in cinemas because the promotional posters were so hard to avoid. He said: "I used to love to catch the bus, and I couldn't catch them for months during that, because of the fear that I might be sitting above my own head on the side of the bus. Occupational hazard, isn't it?" And the buses also caused problems for Kit while he was shooting 'Spooks: The Greater Good' as the movie was filmed in London and they kept driving past the outdoor scenes. He told Vulture: "It's funny to look back at it now, but at the time, they were a real pain in the ass!" "I was half naked on a bus the whole time we were shooting because of the 'Pompeii' poster. Every two seconds, we would have to call, 'Cut!' because there

was some bus with the 'Pompeii' poster going across in the background. "The first time, it was funny, but then after that, it just became really tedious." Kit enjoyed working on the action film because he didn't have a stuntman so could do all the physical scenes himself. He said: "I was supposed to be smashed against the wall, but I went through it by accident. I went straight through the wall! And that made the final cut, which is quite fun. "There was a lot of cool stuff I got to do because I didn't have a stuntman for this. I did everything myself. I like that! "I like it when they say, 'You know, we haven't got a stuntman for you. Can you do it?' "So I was climbing up buildings, jumping from building to building, sprinting through Heathrow airport, all sorts of stuff!"



Holland: Social media can transform fashion

Henry Holland thinks social media can transform fashion. The 32-year-old designer believes the photo-sharing app Instagram could help fashion houses sell more clothes straight from the runway. He said: "There's only so long that fashion houses are going to spend huge amounts of money on shows and not get their money back. "The fact that those looks are on Instagram while the public has to wait three months to purchase them seems so backward." However, Henry admits Instagram, in particular, is making people more vain as users try to "curate" their lives. He added to the London Evening Standard newspaper: "The fact that we broadcast our lives all over the internet means all aspects of our lives become more curated. "People are conscious about what their houses look like in their Instagram feeds and they're conscious of their outfits. If they like their outfit they'll post it, it's show-off. People are more conscious of what their lives look like and we all know the reality is you're sat by yourself with a hot chocolate." Meanwhile, Henry is happy to be a pioneer of mixing fashion and technology, having recently dressed his models in wearable payment technology.

Dyke celebrates 90th birthday with flash mob

Dick Van Dyke's 90th birthday was marked by a chimney sweep flash mob. The veteran actor reached the milestone age yesterday and enjoyed a number of public celebrations, including the 'Mary Poppins' dance tribute at Los Angeles' outdoor shopping mall The Grove on Saturday. Dick and his wife Arlene Silver-Van Dyke, 44, stood on an upper level to cheer as the flash mob danced along to 'Step in Time', 'Jolly Holiday', 'Chim Chim Cher-ee' and 'Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious' and took part in a sing-along, and he later described the performance - which was choreographed by Dana and Jenna Spellman - as "unbelievable". He said in a YouTube video which he shared on Twitter: "Unbelievable! Oh my God! Great!" Dick later joined the crowd to sing another tune from the musical, 'Let's Go Fly a Kite' and enjoyed having 'Happy Birthday' sung to him. He later tweeted: "I am very grateful that at 90 years old, I can still go out and play!!" And the birthday fun didn't end on Saturday as yesterday he was honored in Disneyland with a dedication ceremony. This time, he sang 'Jolly Holiday' for well-wishers, and was serenaded with 'Let's Go Fly a Kite'. He and wife Arlene were the marshals for the Christmas Parade at the Californian resort and led the troupe in a classic car. The crowd sang a Happy Birthday song to the legendary actor And the theme park even produced a limited-edition birthday cake to mark the actor's birthday, which was only available yesterday.



Johnson's girlfriend doesn't want big baby

Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson's girlfriend is worried about having a "20lb baby". The 'San Andreas' actor and long-term partner Lauren Hashian will welcome a daughter into the world next year and the singer is hoping her well-built partner's genes won't be passed down to the little girl. She wrote on Instagram alongside a picture of herself and Dwayne: "And like Big Daddy says - Couldn't be prouder of all the kickass women she's going to have around her! And Men of course :). "#LetsJustHopeBigDaddyDoesnt=20lbBaby (sic)" Lauren has been fairly quiet on social media since announcing her pregnancy, but is enjoying every minute. She also wrote: "I know I'm late to the party... Sometimes life gets full and busy in the best ways :). So grateful and in awe of this time. To experience creating a little life is just incredible. This beautiful cycle of life and womanhood beginning again. (sic)" The couple announced in September they were having their first child together and the 43-year-old wrestler-turned-actor - who already has a 14-year-old daughter, Simone, with ex-wife Dany Garcia - revealed last month they found out they are expecting a girl. He posted a picture of himself cradling Lauren's baby bump, and captioned the image: "I was raised by and live with amazing and strong women, so the universe felt we needed one more... IT'S A BABY GIRL!! THANK YOU guys so much for the awesome support and love you've sent @laurenhashianofficial and myself from around the world. We're so grateful for this blessing and thrilled to share the news with y'all. (sic)"

One Direction thanks fans

Louis Tomlinson has thanked One Direction's fans for a "special" five years. The group are now going on hiatus following their final performance on UK TV show 'The X Factor' last night and the 23-year-old singer admitted taking to the stage for the last time was very "emotional". He tweeted: "Well that was an emotional night!! Never can we thank you enough for how special you have made the last five years for us! ... I hope you realise what we have all done together really is incredible. You guys have made us what we are today! We'll be back soon enough (sic)! Elsewhere, band-mate Harry Styles, 21, referred to the fans as "team mates" and thanked his legions of followers for having "changed their lives". He posted to Twitter: "To you, you have changed our lives and no words will ever be good enough to thank you for what we have done together ... You are the greatest team mates we have ever known. Thank you (sic)." During their appearance at the 'X Factor' final, the quartet - which also includes Liam Payne and Niall Horan - performed their latest single 'Infinity' before their mentor Simon Cowell led a star-studded tribute video, which included contributions from the likes of David Beckham, James Corden and Little Mix. Speaking to the group, Simon said: "It's been a privilege, it's been fun. Enjoy the break and I'll always be there." Little Mix said they were "proud" of their pals. They said: "You guys have smashed it for many years and we are so proud of you." And David, 40, added: "Boys, what can I say. Five years and you have given so much to so many people. You are unbelievably talented but more importantly unbelievably nice guys. You need to come back soon or you're going to have more videos like that." They then bowed out with a rendition of 'History', which they sang while a video montage of their career - including with former member Zayn Malik - played behind them.





Rowland not buying Christmas gifts for son

Kelly Rowland is giving her son last year's gifts this Christmas. The former Destiny's Child singer insists she and husband Tim Witherspoon won't be spoiling 12-month-old Titan over the festive season because he got so many presents last year. She told the New York Post newspaper's Page Six column: "He's gotten so much stuff in one year. When he was born, he was set for next Christmas. "We're going to honestly pull some of those toys out and wrap them .??. He'll be set until he's three." Being a mother has given Kelly more opportunity to bond with friends like

her former bandmate Beyonce - who has three-year-old daughter Blue Ivy with husband Jay-Z - but she insists they talk about more than just their kids. She said: "Well, we definitely have more things to talk about now, but we don't consume our conversations with our babies." Though the 34-year-old singer tires of being asked when Destiny's Child plan to reunite, she can understand the curiosity. She admitted: "I would ask the same question." While Kelly isn't planning much for Christmas, she previously spoke of how much she enjoyed Halloween with her family. She said: "I

thought Titan would look so cute in his little skunk costume. We tried it on him the other day and he looked adorable. "It's all about having family time and this moment to really bond because everybody's on the go now. I think Halloween just gives you time to celebrate with the ones closest to you."

Clooney launches campaign to feed homeless in Scotland

George Clooney has launched a new campaign to provide food to the homeless in Scotland over Christmas. The 54-year-old actor has joined forces with Social Bite to feed thousands of people living on the streets over the festive season and throughout 2016 after he recorded a video message to encourage people to part with their money in name of a good cause during his flying visit to the remarkable sandwich shop in Edinburgh last month. Josh Littlejohn, Social Bite's co-founder, said: "Last year we asked the public to pay £5 to allow us to open on Christmas day and give local homeless people a place to go for a good meal. Our target was to provide 800 meals. "We were amazed by the response and received over 36,000 donations from all over the world meaning we not only fed folk at Christmas, we were able to feed them all year round in

all five of our shops." "When George visited our shop last month, we asked him to make the first donation and with such a global star on film supporting us we're hoping we can smash last year's total and help even more people." The video leads viewers to the deals and events website itson.com where people can give just £5 to buy a homeless person a Christmas dinner. The money raised will also contribute towards a convoy of Social Bite vans, which is leaving on 26 December stashed with food and winter essentials to deliver to refugee camps in Calais, the Serbia-Croatia border, and Lesbos. Meanwhile, George has already chipped £650 off the charity target after he left the large sum of money with the organization during his visit in November.



Swift celebrates birthday at a Christmas-themed party

Taylor Swift celebrated her birthday at a Christmas-themed party yesterday. The 'Shake It Off' hitmaker was accompanied by boyfriend Calvin Harris and her mother Andrea for a lavish bash at Apple executive Jimmy Iovine's Malibu home, which, as well as marking the pop star turning 26 also saw guests toast another birthday girl, Jimmy's daughter Jessica, as well as ring in the festive season. A source told Us Weekly magazine: "Taylor was given a cake and they sang 'Happy Birthday.'" And Taylor and Calvin weren't the only famous guests at the bash. The source added: "Gwen Stefani and Blake Shelton were there and they looked really, really cute." In a video posted on snapchat, Taylor, Calvin and DJ Snake were shown snuggling up to Santa while posing for photographs, while Jimmy's son Jamie Iovine shared a selfie of himself hanging out with the couple. Jamie's other pictures from the bash showed guests were entertained by a giant, real-snow, ski slope, reindeer, penguins and a Santa's grotto. As well as enjoying the party, Taylor also

announced yesterday she is teaming up with Jimmy for a new venture. The 'Bad Blood' hitmaker took to Twitter to reveal the forthcoming release of the '1989' World Tour LIVE concert film on Apple Music. She tweeted: "Thank you so much for all the birthday wishes. I have a little surprise for you.#1989WorldTourLIVE @applemusic (sic)." And Taylor also included a clip of the film in which she explained her dreams for the tour. She said: "Getting ready for this, I wondered about a lot of things. I wondered what it would be like to perform for 70,000 people. I wondered what it would look like if they were all lit up and just dancing around like no one was watching them." Referring to her many celebrity guests on the tour, she said: "I wondered what would happen if I invited the most amazing artists in the world to come out with me and perform with me on my stage. Would they do it?" The film has been directed by Jonas Akerlund and will be released on December 20.

Presley wants to relive wedding day with ex-husband Elvis

Prisilla Presley would love to relive her wedding day with her late ex-husband Elvis Presley just one more time. The 70-year-old actress may have divorced the legendary rock 'n' roll star in 1973 - four years before his death in 1977 - but she has admitted she still gets a warm fuzzy feeling inside when she reminisces about their "private" nuptials at the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas in 1967. Asked what one moment she would like to relive with the late singer, she said: "Probably our wedding, 21 was the age and it wasn't a fanfare, it was all arranged where it was very private. It wasn't like it is today where everyone has the biggest, the best, the most expensive wedding. "It was really a nice wedding. Then we had our friends join us all in Memphis after that." However, the vibrant-haired beauty has very different views on her life with the famous lip-quivering hunk as she struggled with her rock and roll lifestyle at such a young age. Speaking on 'Good Morning Britain' this morning, she said: "[It was] not like anything I could have imagined. I was a kid thrown into rock 'n' roll at a very young age. "Life was not normal in any way, we lived during the evening and slept during the day."



Kris relieved she can't have more children

Kris Jenner feels relieved she can't have any more children. The 60-year-old showbiz matriarch - who is already a mother of five daughters, one son and a grandmother to five children - is shown wondering whether she can still get pregnant in a new episode of 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians'. A group of her friends, one of them asked if she was on birth control. Recalling the conversation, Kris said: "Why in the world at 60 years old would I be on birth control?!" And she said, "Because you can still get pregnant." "I don't

think I could get pregnant. If I am pregnant, I don't know what I would do!" Following her candid conversation with Kourtney, Kris rings her gynecologist who tells her emphatically that there's no chance she will get pregnant. Kris subsequently admitted: "Never thought I'd be happy to hear, 'No, you can't get pregnant!'" Earlier this year, Kris revealed: "I realized I don't want to get married. But I really have a lot of fun with Corey and I love being with him."

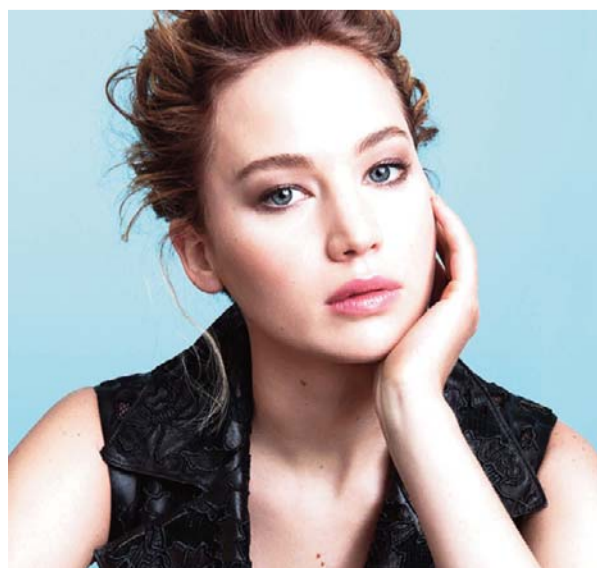


Gomez fuels Horan dating rumors

Selena Gomez was reportedly spotted backstage with Niall Horan at the UK version of 'The X Factor'. The 23-year-old beauty and the One Direction singer have been romantically linked in recent weeks and although they've continually rubbished the rumors, the sight of Selena mingling with Niall and the rest of the chart-topping band is sure to heighten speculation about their relationship status. The former Disney star was seen mixing with fans and a few of Niall's friends at the show, according to E! News. The show itself featured a special performance from One Direction and a video tribute to the band, who are taking a break in 2016. Earlier this month, Selena admitted she thinks Niall is "amazing", but insisted they are definitely not dating. Asked if they're a couple, Selena said: "Oh my god! No [but] I love him, I always have. He's amazing." Selena has also been romantically linked to her ex-boyfriend Justin Bieber after he was recently seen serenading her at a bar. However, a source claimed she is "terrified" of trusting him. The insider said: "Selena is still in love with Justin, but as exciting as it is for them to be back together, she's terrified to trust her heart again because he's hurt her so many times. "Justin has this belief that Selena's cool with him hooking up with other women and that they don't need to be exclusive. She may say it's OK, but in reality it tears her apart to know he's seeing other girls."

Lawrence compares Saint West to Princess Charlotte

Jennifer Lawrence thinks the birth of Kim Kardashian West's son was as exciting as when Duchess Catherine gave birth to Princess Charlotte. The 'Joy' actress thinks the anticipation around the birth of the reality TV star and husband Kanye West's little boy Saint was as huge as when the British royal, who was previously known as Kate Middleton, and her husband Prince William welcomed their second child into the world earlier this year. Jennifer - who is a huge fan of 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' - said: "Oh, my God! It was like when Princess Kate was having a princess. "I can't wait for it to be 16 years from now, we'll have a teenage princess. That's just the same in America and we'll have a little prince." However, the Oscar-winning actress joked she wasn't very impressed when she heard what Kim and Kanye - who already have a two-year-old daughter, North - had named their son. She told E! News: "I'm so mad that they stole my baby name though-Saint Lawrence." The 'Hunger Games' star has made no secret of her love of the reality TV family and almost passed out when her friends invited a surprise guest to her 25th birthday celebrations in August - Kim's mother Kris Jenner. She said at the time: "My knees buckled. I fell. Seriously! It was the closest I've ever come to losing consciousness. I had NO IDEA. I'd never met her before, but we've always watched 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians'."





In this file photo Justin Bieber arrives at the American Music Awards at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles.



In this file photo Justin Bieber performs live during a small concert for charity in Toronto.



In this file photo Justin Bieber performs at the American Music Awards at the Microsoft Theater, in Los Angeles. — AP photos

Grown men now love Bieber's music, too

Most grown men love musical acts like the Black Keys and Kendrick Lamar. Now, you can add Justin Bieber's name to that list. With his recent batch of hit singles and a semi-grown-up sound - including the electro-pop "Where Are U Now" with DJ-producers Skrillex and Diplo - adult men have begun attending the musical church of Bieber, and while some have issues acknowledging it, others proudly say they're Beliebers.

"You can't deny where Justin Bieber is right now musically. You want to not like him, but you kind of just have to respect it," said Timothy Javier, a 30-year-old nurse from Fort Lee, New Jersey. Javier said Bieber's new album, "Purpose," reminds him of Justin Timberlake's "Justified," his 2002 solo debut that helped him transition from 'N Sync frontman to a leader of pop music. The singles "Sorry" and "What Do You Mean?" - cur-

rently at Nos. 2 and 4 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart - helped Bieber solidify his comeback after years of a broken image that included arrests, public smoking and fainting onstage that led to hospitalization.

But now, at 21, his music is in the spotlight. "He dropped an album that was ... solid across the board," said DJ Enuff, a veteran radio personality for New York hip-hop station Hot 97. "There's urban radio stations across the country that play it, there's rhythmic crossover stations that can play it, there's pop stations that can play it." "Purpose," which features downbeat R&B tracks, ballads and club-worthy anthems, debuted at No.1 and sold an impressive 649,000 equivalent album units in its first week. Skrillex produced a number of the tracks; Ed Sheeran co-wrote the ballad "Love Yourself," a Top 5 hit; and guests include Nas, Big Sean, Travis Scott and newcomer

Halsey. And the Grammy-nominated "Where Are U Now" - first released on the album "Skrillex & Diplo Present Jack U" in February - helped Bieber achieve his first Top 10 hit since 2012's "Beauty and a Beat." Some fans were surprised when they learned it was Bieber singing smoothly on the song. "I kept asking my girlfriend, 'Who is that guy? I keep hearing his voice.' She didn't even know until we actually had to go through the radio station's playlist to find out it was Justin Bieber," said 33-year-old Ennis Itheme of Jersey City, New Jersey, who works in rail service operations. "I'm a Justin Bieber fan now."

Others say they're surprised they enjoy Bieber's new sound and are coming to terms with being Bieber fans. "I think grown men have a problem with the term 'Belieber,'" said Paul Costabile, a host at iHeartRadio. "We're like, 'Can we be OK

with Justin Bieber ...?' And now we all are I think." Bieber released his debut EP in 2009 at 15, and before this year, he'd been best known for the bubble gum-pop jam "Baby," despite releasing other hits.

DJ Enuff said Bieber is accepted among older fans because he's grown up and entered a new chapter in his life. "A lot of male listeners we have at our station wouldn't even touch a Justin Bieber record. But now ... we're playing Justin Bieber records and no one's even questioning it," he said. "It's part of the format." —AP



This file photo taken on October 17, 2015 shows Belgian pop sensation Paul Van Haver aka Stromae attending a press conference in Kigali, Rwanda. — AFP

Singer Stromae secretly marries stylist in Belgium

Stromae, the Belgian pop superstar whose French-language songs have found global appeal, secretly tied the knot with his stylist at the weekend, the venue manager said yesterday. The genre-merging singer married Coralie Barbier just weeks after completing a world tour that took him as far away as New York and Rwanda, where his father was killed in the 1994 genocide.

"The wedding took place on Saturday. It was a family affair with some friends there too," said Stijn Beschuyt, the manager of the hotel wedding venue, a stylishly converted church in the town of Malines. The 180 invited guests were at first unaware of the event's true purpose but quickly caught on, Beschuyt said. "It was a beautiful ceremony done in great taste," he said, adding that he had faced the formidable task of keeping the secret "for months". Brussels resident Stromae, 30, and his 31-year-old bride first visited the hotel "about a year ago" and fell in love with it, Beschuyt said. Stromae, whose real name is Paul Van Haver, has won a huge following in Belgium and France for his tunes which merge pop, electro and rap, including his 2009 hit "Alors on danse". While danceable they are also introspective with themes including the absence of his Rwandan father. In October he became just the third French-language artist to fill New York's legendary Madison Square Garden venue after crooner Charles Aznavour and warbler Celine Dion. — AFP

Jennifer Lawrence on 'Hunger Games' prequels: 'It's Too Soon'

If Lionsgate, the studio behind the mega-grossing "Hunger Games" series, decides to re-enter the arena, it will do so without Jennifer Lawrence. The woman who brought Katniss Everdeen to life on the big screen made it clear that she won't be dusting off the bow and arrows for rumored prequels to the series that made her a star. "I wouldn't be involved," Lawrence told Variety during the premiere of her new film, "Joy." "I think it's too soon. They've got to let the body get cold, in my opinion."

"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2" was originally supposed to be the end of the franchise, but Lionsgate vice chairman Michael Burns hinted that the studio was exploring new plot lines and spinoff opportunities at last week's UBS Global Media and Communications Conference. He told investors that the series could be like Harry Potter and "live on and on." Lawrence may be right that audiences need a breather from the world of Panem. "Mockingjay - Part 2" is a box office hit, but it is on pace to be the lowest grossing film of the series on a domestic basis. The audience seemed thrilled to be reuniting with David O. Russell for a third go-round. Her "Silver Linings Playbook" and "American Hustle" director pitched her on the idea of getting the band back together in an unusual way, she told Variety. —Reuters

Lawrence Kasdan on the past, present and future of Han Solo

Lawrence Kasdan isn't afraid to play favorites. For him, Han Solo is it. He didn't create the scruffy-looking smuggler. He hadn't even heard the lore that George Lucas partially based Han on Francis Ford Coppola. But it was Kasdan who helped fully realize "Star Wars'" favorite scoundrel when he stepped in to write "The Empire Strikes Back" and "Return of the Jedi." "He's reckless, he's feckless," Kasdan said in a recent interview. "He's cynical. He's tough. He's pragmatic. He's not that smart. I like that. He's the most fun."

In fact, it was the character of Han that made him consider coming back to the world of "Star Wars" in the first place. When Kathleen Kennedy called him up in 2012 to tell him that she was taking over Lucasfilm and that they were planning to make more "Star Wars" films, Kasdan took the meeting of course, but wasn't certain he wanted to rejoin the franchise. Yet for Kasdan, 66, a four-time Oscar nominee who wrote "Raiders of the Lost Ark," and wrote and directed "The Big Chill," "The Accidental Tourist" and "Grand Canyon," the shadow of "Star Wars" loomed large.

"It's always been playing in the background of my life. The movies were so big," he said. "They never go away." At Skywalker Ranch, Kennedy, Kasdan and George Lucas talked about plans for a new trilogy and a number of spin-offs, including one about a young Han Solo. "I said, 'Oh, that's interesting,'" Kasdan recalled. So he signed on to write the young Han anthology movie with his 36-year-old son, Jon Kasdan, and agreed to consult on "The Force Awakens," which Michael Arndt ("Toy Story 3") was writing. Kasdan had been consulting for nine months on "The Force Awakens" - coming in once or twice a week while also writing the Han movie - when they asked him to take over the script with director J.J. Abrams.

No big adjustment

"There were issues that were coming up and there was enormous pressure to get the thing done, recalled Kasdan. "People were being hired. Stages were being rented...when everyone decided that J.J. and I would write the script, there was no big adjustment. We were already really getting along. Then, we just started again." While the

specifics of what exactly "The Force Awakens," out Friday, is about are being treated like state secrets, fans have been able to glean a few things from the trailers and promos. In the over 30 years since the events of "Return of the Jedi" Han Solo, for one, has changed his tune about the force, which he once dismissed as a hokey religion.



"(Hans is) older and wiser. But wiser is only worth so much," Kasdan teased. "We don't get any smarter. What we call wisdom is really just the accumulation of experiences. But when you do have a lot of experience, it gives you perspective. You think about your life in terms of, do you want to continue to do the things you've always done or do you want to break it up somehow? ... Are you stuck now or is there still a possibility of change? And I think those are the issues, not just for Han, but for everybody."

Ford's legacy

If that sounds like a lot of philosophizing and soul-searching, don't worry, Kasdan promises Han is still funny, too. "Harrison is sort of beyond belief in this movie," Kasdan said. "He's absolute gold. It's like Spencer Tracy." Ford's legacy and iconic embod-

iment of Han is why Kasdan understands keenly how difficult it will be to find an actor to play a young Han. Directors Phil Lord and Chris Miller ("21 Jump Street") have seen thousands of actors as they try to fill those twentysomething shoes.

"Harrison is one of a kind. He's a one-off," Kasdan said. "There is going to be a lot of pressure on any-

one who tries to be that (younger) character ... He's got to be a believable antecedent." But beyond finding that perfect person, Kasdan has just been enjoying the chance to work with his son on the script - even if it's been trying at times. "Collaborating with anyone is challenging. But when it's your son, now there's this additional thing of like, 'Dad, do you know what you're talking about?'" Kasdan laughed. "But 'Star Wars' is all about that - fathers and sons." After the Han film comes out in 2018, Kasdan said he will really be leaving "Star Wars" behind this time. "That's enough," he said with Han Solo definitiveness. "I'm done." — AP

This photo provided by Lucasfilm shows Peter Mayhew as Chewbacca and Harrison Ford as Han Solo in 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens,' directed by J.J. Abrams. — AP photos



In this Thursday, Dec 10, 2015 file photo, director J.J. Abrams, third right, and actors, John Boyega, second left, Daisy Ridley, third left, and Adam Driver, second right, pose for photos during the Japan Premiere of their latest film 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' in Tokyo. — AP

Curtain rises on first 'Star Wars' film in a decade

Hollywood rolls out the red carpet yesterday for the premiere of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," the first film in the epic space saga in a decade, and fans are frantic. The star-studded screening of the most anticipated movie of the year will be followed by a global release starting Wednesday. It officially hits US theaters Friday. "When we finished shooting it felt like 'Oh, it's so long until it comes out-and now we're here,'" Daisy Ridley, who plays the scavenger Rey, told AFP as the clock ticked down.

The 23-year-old British actress, in her first big screen role, is among the fresh faces joining the latest installment of the sci-fi smash hit that has a huge following around the globe. Others include fellow Brit John Boyega who plays Finn, portrayed as a rene-

gade stormtrooper in the trailer, as well as Oscar Isaac who slips into the skin of pilot Poe Dameron. Much to the delight of millions, beloved veterans of the original blockbusters Harrison Ford and Carrie Fisher will once again play Han Solo and Princess Leia. "Star Wars" has attracted generations of loyal fans ever since the first film arrived in 1977, creating a signature moment in the history of pop culture. It turned Ford, Fisher and Mark Hamill (Luke Skywalker) into stars overnight. "You could say it's the themes, it's the Force, it's the lightsaber-there's just something in this that touches people, and I don't think you can summarize that," Ridley said. —AFP

Disney's 'Star Wars' marketing force reaches for female fans

"Star Wars" actress Daisy Ridley smiles on the cover of Glamour magazine, Stormtrooper necklaces are on sale at Kay Jewelers, and commercials for the new film "The Force Awakens" are running during Kim Kardashian's reality TV show. Walt Disney Co is reaching out to women and girls to broaden the franchise's male-dominated audience and help recoup the \$4 billion it spent to buy "Star Wars" producer Lucasfilm. Female fans may determine if "Force Awakens" meets projections for record-breaking box office returns after it opens Dec. 18. The casting of Ridley, 23, as the film's star plus a flood of R2-D2 purses, BB-8 droids and other merchandise suggest Disney is courting the female young adult audience that turned movies such as "The Hunger Games" into blockbusters, said Jeff Bock, senior box office analyst at Exhibitor Relations Co. "The guys are already in," Bock said. "If you can get that 'Hunger Games' and 'Twilight' fan base to join up, then you are talking about possibly \$700 million domestically, maybe even more."

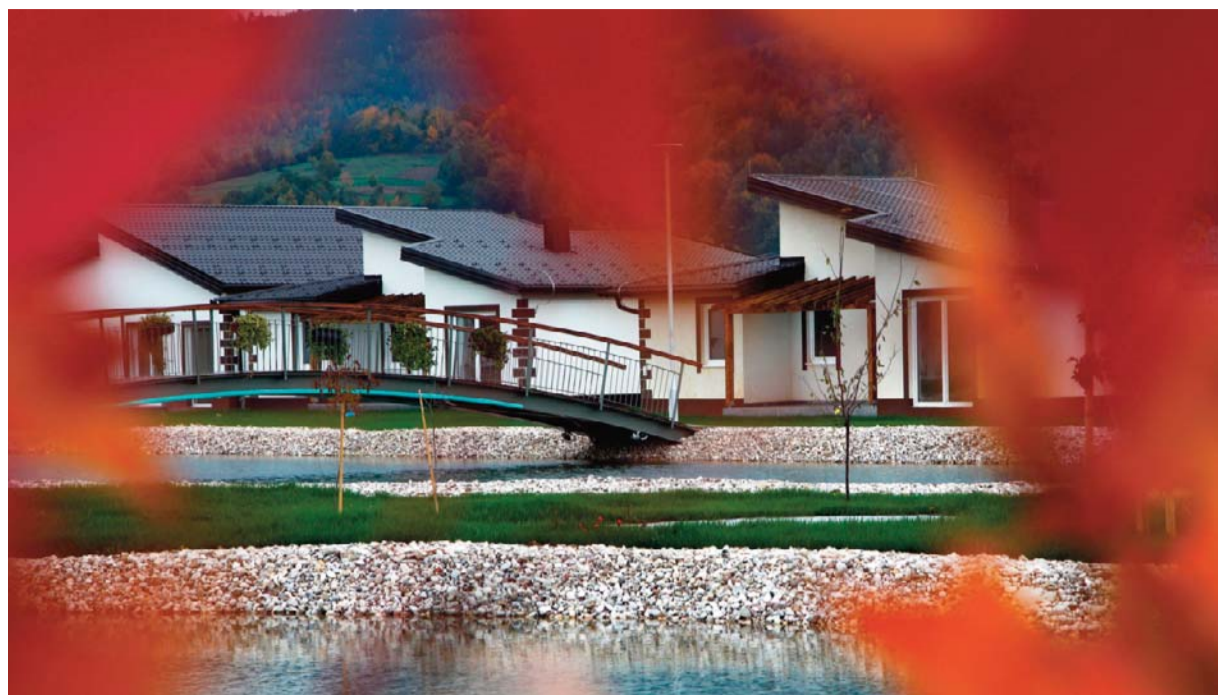
Only one film, "Avatar," reached that level, selling \$760 million worth of tickets in the United States and Canada after its December 2009 release. Disney has honed its strategy in recent years, though, with superhero and action franchises. Stars of "The Avengers" visited talk shows such as "The View," and the sequel, "Age of Ultron," had two leading female characters. About 40 percent of opening weekend audiences was female for both films, according to Shawn Robbins, senior analyst at BoxOffice.com.

While it's difficult to quantify the gender breakdown of fans historically, earlier "Star Wars" movies featured just one main female character

- always royalty. In the "Force Awakens," Ridley's character, Rey, was created as a scrappy scavenger and a pilot, not a princess. In movie trailers, Rey battles with a staff-like weapon, not unlike "Hunger Games" warrior Katniss Everdeen and her bow and arrow. Gwendoline Christie plays the first female villain, Captain Phasma. Actress Lupita Nyong'o has a significant role, and Carrie Fisher is back as Princess Leia, now a general. —Reuters



This photo provided by Disney/Lucasfilm shows Daisy Ridley as Rey in a scene from the film, 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens,' directed by J.J. Abrams. — AP



OSENİK: Photo shows recently opened the first Arab-funded resort in Bosnia Osenik, 50 kms south of Sarajevo, with 160 individual houses and apartments built around an artificial lake. — AP photos



Photo shows recently opened the first Arab-funded resort in Bosnia Osenik.



Photo shows a billboard announcing building of euro2.3 billion (\$2.4 billion) town called Buroj Ozone on the Bjelasnica mountain area, less than 15 kilometers southwest of Sarajevo.



Ismail Ahmed, right, the head of Buroj Property Development from Dubai looks at the plateau where his company plans to build a euro 2.3 billion town.



A shepherd protecting from rain at the plateau where his company plans to build a euro2.3 billion town.

As tourists from the Persian Gulf countries look to book their next holiday to escape the summer heat, Arab investors are betting on an unusual destination: Bosnia. The mountainous Balkan country, which was devastated by the 1992-95 war, is becoming a popular destination for tourists from the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar thanks to its comfortable summer temperatures and local Muslim community.

Attracted by cheap land and labor, Arab investors are looking to ride the trend. They are building thousands of homes and hotels around the capital Sarajevo and heavily promoting the destination to middle class families looking for cheaper alternatives to the glamorous Swiss resorts. It's also a boost for Bosnia's economy, which is still recovering from the war and struggling with unemployment of over 40 percent. All the construction is done by local companies, ensuring jobs. "Bosnia's tourism has a bright future," said Jasem Ahmed Al Kanderi, the head of the Gulf Estate Company from Kuwait. "The country is beautiful."

His company built and recently opened the first Arab-funded resort in Bosnia. Located southwest of Sarajevo, it includes 160 individual houses and apartments built around an artificial lake. The gated community offers swimming pools, supermarkets, sport facilities and views of the mountains where the Winter Olympic Games were held in 1984. "It is a tourist village but also an investment opportunity," said Al Kanderi. "We managed to promote Bosnia's tourist potentials in Gulf countries and we are proud to be the first ones to complete a project."

But the 25 million-euro (\$27 million) project appears tiny compared with the one planned by Ismail Ahmed, the head of Buroj Property Development from Dubai. Wearing his traditional Arab jalabiya and sandals, Ahmed stood in the icy rain above the plateau where his company plans to build a 2.3 billion-euro (\$2.4 billion) town called Buroj Ozone on the Bjelasnica mountain, less than 15 kilometers (9 miles) southwest of Sarajevo.

"Jannah," or paradise in Arabic, he said as he waved his hand over the picturesque plateau where in April construction work will begin on 2,000 villas, 60 hotels, 186 residential buildings, a hospital, shopping malls, restaurants and even a dancing fountain. For tourists from the United Arab Emirates, Buroj Ozone's altitude at nearly 1,000 meters (3,280 feet) and an average summer temperature of 25 degrees Celsius (77 Fahrenheit) can offer refuge from summer temperatures of up to 49 degrees (120 F) in Dubai.

Ahmed acknowledges that for many, Bosnia is still associated with its terrible war 20 years ago and overcoming that image is a challenge. "We spent millions on marketing," he said. Bosnia has seen a significant rise in tourism in recent years, with visitors from East and West flocking to Sarajevo to see "little Jerusalem" - a city loaded with history that features Catholic and Christian Orthodox churches, Jewish temples and mosques next to each other.

Overall tourism numbers are up 30 percent this year from last year, with Austrians and Germans the most represented nationalities. But visits from Gulf countries are growing the fastest. The number of Kuwaitis has more than tripled this year to 33,000. Bosnian president Bakir Izetbegovic says the country is slowly becoming better organized and recovering from its past. The government is building a new highway that will make travel and transport easier and allow tourists to reach the coast from Sarajevo within an hour. "We will continue to work on the stabilization of this country, on passing laws that will speed up investments and make them safe," Izetbegovic said as he watched the opening of the Kuwaiti resort. — AP

Ahmed acknowledges that for many, Bosnia is still associated with its terrible war 20 years ago and overcoming that image is a challenge. "We spent millions on marketing," he said. Bosnia has seen a significant rise in tourism in recent years, with visitors from East and West flocking to Sarajevo to see "little Jerusalem" - a city loaded with history that features Catholic and Christian Orthodox churches, Jewish temples and mosques next to each other.

Overall tourism numbers are up 30 percent this year from last year, with Austrians and Germans the most represented nationalities. But visits from Gulf countries are growing the fastest. The number of Kuwaitis has more than tripled this year to 33,000. Bosnian president Bakir Izetbegovic says the country is slowly becoming better organized and recovering from its past. The government is building a new highway that will make travel and transport easier and allow tourists to reach the coast from Sarajevo within an hour. "We will continue to work on the stabilization of this country, on passing laws that will speed up investments and make them safe," Izetbegovic said as he watched the opening of the Kuwaiti resort. — AP

Ahmed acknowledges that for many, Bosnia is still associated with its terrible war 20 years ago and overcoming that image is a challenge. "We spent millions on marketing," he said. Bosnia has seen a significant rise in tourism in recent years, with visitors from East and West flocking to Sarajevo to see "little Jerusalem" - a city loaded with history that features Catholic and Christian Orthodox churches, Jewish temples and mosques next to each other.

Ahmed acknowledges that for many, Bosnia is still associated with its terrible war 20 years ago and overcoming that image is a challenge. "We spent millions on marketing," he said. Bosnia has seen a significant rise in tourism in recent years, with visitors from East and West flocking to Sarajevo to see "little Jerusalem" - a city loaded with history that features Catholic and Christian Orthodox churches, Jewish temples and mosques next to each other.

Frederique Constant & Behbehani Group reveal the first Swiss made Horological Smartwatch in Kuwait

Frederique Constant and Behbehani Group unveiled the Horological Smartwatch model powered by MotionX-365 in Al Hamra Thermae Premise on the 75th floor in Al Hamra Business Tower.

Abdul Mohsen Behbehani, Director of Behbehani Group, and Sebastian Cretegy, Regional Sales Director of Frederique Constant, welcomed guests to take a look at the Frederique Constant horological smartwatch.

With the introduction of these new Horological Smartwatch models, the Swiss Watch Manufacturer Frederique Constant has definitively managed to preserve its design spirit in offering a "real" Swiss watch, which has the addition smart feature to be connected.

With a dial design completely "horological" and proposed with a silver finishing, the model is available with an refined polished stainless steel 42mm case. An alligator strap finishes the models for an elegant style, with a folding clasp for a more sporty version.

Displaying central hours and minutes hands, the "smart" counter is positioned at 6 o'clock. The small red hand indicates you the date during the day and will point out the moon during your sleep, while the small steel hand shows you the percentage of your activity or sleep goals. One of the main asset that you have to remember is that the battery life of these models is two years.

Powered by MotionX, the Frederique Constant Swiss Horological Smartwatches are capable of bi-directional communication with iPhone and Android apps. The Swiss Horological Smartwatch is the synthesis of high-tech innovation and traditional Swiss watch craftsmanship; it is the link (no pun intended) between modern and classic, and the bridge between Silicon Valley and Switzerland. There is no digital screen on the Swiss Horological Smartwatch. Instead, the beautiful laser cut hands on the watch dial display information in analog form. The Swiss Horological Smartwatches retain their natural classic beauty and can deliver the benefits of the quantified self, all without ever having to

recharge a battery.

The Frederique Constant Swiss Horological Smartwatches will support the following functionalities:

- Always-on time & date
- MotionX activity tracking
- Sleeptracker sleep monitoring
- Sleep cycle alarms
- Get-Active alerts
- Adaptive coaching
- 2+ years battery life
- MotionX cloud backup and restore

Frederique Constant Swiss Horological Smartwatches: The beautiful Swiss watch that you love to wear that is now smart and connected, powered by MotionX

The MotionX patented sensor-fusion engine tracks activity and sleep patterns with high accuracy. Activity and sleep information is presented in real-time on the Swiss Horological Smartwatch using beautiful traditional analog dials. The Frederique Constant Swiss Horological Smartwatch synchronizes automatically with applications on Apple and Android smartphones. On the iOS and Android apps, simple and easy-to-understand graphics highlight how much one has moved and slept during the day, week, or month. This data will assist users to better understanding themselves, and along with appropriate goal setting and intelligent coaching, will improve their well being. Better sleep and a more active lifestyle are widely recognized as simple, but effective, positive behavioral changes. The Frederique Constant Swiss Horological Smartwatch now combines the features and functionality of the MotionX technology platform with a luxury timepiece.

Frederique Constant is housed under the luxury retail conglomerate, Behbehani group, with over 75 years of experience. Behbehani Group owns and manages a series of showrooms and stores exclusively for international watch brands as well as jewellery. These showrooms are located in prestigious malls around Kuwait such as, Marina Mall, Souq Sharq, Al-Kout, Laila Gallery, Al-Hamra Luxury Center, The Gate Mall, Behbehani Complex and The Avenues.



Photos show people at the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayat





People watch fireworks during the illumination of a giant Christmas tree at the launch of 2015 Christmas Festivities in Beirut, Lebanon, Friday. — AP

Christmas comes early to 8-year-old disfigured by fire

A little girl who lost her family and suffered disfiguring burns in an arson fire is having an incredible Christmas, thanks to the generosity of thousands of strangers around the world who were moved by her simple Facebook wish. "This year's been magical, amazing," said Liz Dolder, who posted a picture of her niece, Safyre Terry, on Facebook earlier this month. The post showed Safyre with a Christmas card tree Dolder got at a thrift store, and said the 8-year-old hoped to get enough cards to fill it. "I haven't found a word in my vocabulary to describe what has happened," Dolder said Wednesday.

Kevin Clark, a member of a motorcycle group who met Safyre at a benefit bikers held for her this fall, reposted the picture. Before long, it had been shared tens of thousands of times, and cards and gifts started pouring in from across the United States and overseas. Another friend put a post on the YouCaring.com crowdfunding site with a \$15,000 goal to help Dolder and her husband, Mike - Safyre's new family - deal with medical costs and other financial challenges. More than \$174,000 has been donated since the Christmas card post went viral this week.

On Wednesday, Safyre opened some of the hundreds of cards and gifts that had arrived at a post office box in a local mall. There were teddy bears, stuffed kittens, handmade jewelry, personalized Christmas tree ornaments, whimsical socks, books and cards signed by whole classrooms of schoolchildren. Safyre opened a silver box with a card that said, "Every

princess should have a tiara. Here's yours," and then skipped to Dolder to show her the shiny rhinestone tiara, saying "Look, Mom!"

Safyre has endured much since the awful day in May 2013 when firefighters found her clutched in the arms of her dying father, who had shielded her with his body and saved her from the flames that killed him and Safyre's three younger siblings in their apartment in Schenectady in upstate New York. She has had countless reconstructive surgeries to rebuild her mouth, nose and face. She eventually lost a hand and a foot to repeated infections. But her spirits lifted considerably last January when a tracheal tube was removed and she was able to speak again.

"That's when she came back out," Dolder said, wiping away tears. "She's been through hell and back. But she's an amazing girl, just so full of life and love. We can't keep her to ourselves. We wanted to share with the world her message of faith, hope and love."

Safyre, with long sandy hair, pink leggings and glitter-spangled sneakers, showed not a hint of self-consciousness as TV cameras pressed in to record her opening gifts and cards Wednesday afternoon. Asked by reporters what she would say to the strangers who had been moved to send these things, she beamed into a camera. "Thank you!" she said. — AP



Safyre Terry, 8, wears a rhinestone tiara, one of the gifts she received Wednesday, Dec 9, 2015, at a post office near her home in Rotterdam, NY. — AP photos



Safyre Terry, 8, and Kevin Clark collect cards and gifts, at a post office.

National Museum of Oman



A stone tower from the 3rd millennium BC is displayed.



Artifacts are displayed at the National Museum of Oman.



Omani Deputy Prime Minister Sayed Fahd bin Mahmud Al-Said (center) looks at artifacts displayed at the National Museum of Oman in Muscat during its inauguration ceremony.



Artifacts are displayed at the National Museum of Oman.



Sultan Qaboos' first throne is displayed at the National Museum of Oman in Muscat during its inauguration ceremony.



An artifact is displayed at the National Museum of Oman in Muscat.— AFP photos