

THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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RABI ALAWWAL 16, 1437 AH

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Crunching numbers behind the scenes





In final year, **Obama seeks** to stave off lame-duck taa Stoke leave Van Gaal on Man **United brink**



ASHOUR: EXPATS GAIN MOST FROM SUBSIDIES MP CLAIMS 'MEDICAL VISITORS', CONSULTANTS A DRAIN ON BUDGET

09° Min **Max** 18° **High Tide** 14:05 Low Tide 07:35 & 19:22

STORMS KILL 15 IN SOUTHERN US

CHICAGO: Millions of residents in the southern United States struggled yesterday to recover from the deadly storms and floods that struck the region over the past days. At least 15 people have been killed in the states of Mississippi, Tennessee and Arkansas since Thursday, officials said. With more severe weather expected across the central United States, forecasters are warning of airport delays and flooded roads as travelers return home after the Christmas holiday.

Feeding on unseasonably warm air, storms left a trail of destruction in rural communities from Alabama to Illinois. More than a dozen tornadoes were reported Friday in six southern states. In Alabama, where Governor Robert Bentley had declared a state of emergency to deal with the heavy flooding, tornados uprooted trees and tore off rooftops, with one touching down in Birmingham, the state's most populous city. "The damage was ... confined to approximately one square mile," Birmingham Fire Department Chief Charles Gordon told CNN. "We have three houses that collapsed." No one died, but Gordon said victims were rescued from the debris.

Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant and Georgia Governor Nathan Deal also declared states of emergency in counties affected by the weather. Forecasters at the National Weather Service warned that the central United States "will continue to have widespread showers and thunderstorms this weekend." This weather system "has a history of producing heavy rain and flooding/flash flooding over much of the southeastern US, and the threat for excessive rainfall will persist."

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MOULTON, Alabama: Emergency officials transport a resident by boat because water over Byler Road prevented them from reaching him on Friday, before loading him into an ambulance. — AP

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: MP Saleh Ashour claimed that according to reports made by the parliamentary finance and budget committees on the total cost of subsidies and how they are spent, the majority of subsidies benefit expats. "Millions of dinars are spent on medicine and the majority who benefits from this is expat residents, in addition to visitors who come for medical treatment, mainly surgeries," he said, noting that the same applies to electricity subsidies.

Kuwait began selling diesel and kerosene at market prices at the start of 2015, cut spending by 17 percent and is in the process of raising petrol prices and charges on electricity and water. Ashour also pointed out that hundreds of millions of dinars are spent on foreigners hired as advisors and consultants at various ministries and government establishments, in



addition to fortunes spent on holding conferences, training courses and official assignments abroad.

Faced with heavy losses from low oil prices, Gulf states have embarked on belt-tightening measures to cut spending and boost non-crude revenues, but analysts warn much more needs to be done. After more than a decade of abundant surpluses thanks to high oil prices, the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are projected to post a combined record budgetary shortfall of \$180 billion in 2015 and the drought is expected to continue for years. Some countries have already cut subsidies, while others are considering measures to reduce their spending.



AJACCIO, France: Demonstrators, most of them angry against Muslim residents, march behind the Corsican flag on the French Mediterranean island of Corsica yesterday. —AP

VANDALS RANSACK MUSLIM PRAYER HALL ON CORSICA

AJACCIO, France: Demonstrators ransacked a Muslim prayer hall and attempted to burn copies of the Holy Quran on the French island of Corsica Friday, police said, following a night of violence that left two firefighters injured. Tensions had mounted in Ajaccio on Christmas Day after two firefighters and a police officer were wounded overnight in Jardins de L'Empereur, a low-income neighborhood of the city when they were "ambushed" by "several hooded youths", authorities said.

On Friday afternoon around 150 people had gathered in front of police headguarters in the island's capital in a show of support for the police and firefighters, officials said in a statement. But some in that crowd broke away to join as many as 600 who headed for the housing estate where the violence took place the night before. They shouted slogans in Corsican meaning "Arabs get out!" or "This is our home!" an AFP correspondent reported.

Nearby was a Muslim prayer room and a small group smashed the glass door and entered the place of worship, ransacking it and partially burning books including copies of the Holy Quran, said regional official Francois Lalanne. "Fifty prayer books were thrown out on the street," Lalanne said, adding that some of the

pages were burnt.

Police remained on the housing estate overnight on Friday, with a security presence around five Muslim places of worship in Ajaccio, Lalanne told AFP. They would receive reinforcements in the coming days, he added. Dozens of angry Corsicans staged a fresh protest yesterday. Despite a heavy police presence, one demonstrator managed to smash three glass entrance doors in Jardins de l'Empereur as protesters shouted "This is our home!"

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls wrote on Twitter that the break-in was "an unacceptable desecration", while also condemning the "intolerable attack" on the wounded firefighters. Anouar Kbibech, president of the French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM), said he had learnt of the mosque attack and the burning of "several copies of the Quran" with "distress". French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said the attack on the Muslim prayer hall showed signs of "racism and xenophobia". He also condemned the assault on law enforcement and safety officers in Corsica, saying he hoped "the authors of the violence would be identified and arrested as soon as possible."

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MODI'S SURPRISE PAK VISIT HAILED

SYRIA EVACUATION PLAN PUT ON HOLD

DAMASCUS: A plan to evacuate thousands of jihadist fighters and civilians from three besieged districts of Syria's capital was on hold yesterday, a day after an air strike killed a rebel leader. Zahran Allouch, 44, was the commander of the Jaish al-Islam (Army of Islam), the predominant opposition faction in the Eastern Ghouta rebel bastion east of Damascus. A senior member of Jaish al-Islam said planes had targeted a "secret meeting" of commanders, and confirmed that Allouch was among those killed.

His death, in a raid claimed by President Bashar Al-Assad's regime, was seen as dealing a heavy blow to the nearly five-year uprising and also complicating a fragile peace process. It also halted the planned evacuation of some 4,000 people, half of them jihadists, from the southern districts of Damascus. A government official has said the plan would see the evacuees transferred yesterday out of Qadam, Hajar al-Aswad and the besieged Palestinian camp of Yarmuk and into northern Syria. Those moved are expected to include members of the Islamic State (IS) group and Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Nusra Front.

But a security source close to the negotiations told AFP the plan was now on hold. "Jaish al-Islam was supposed to provide safe passage through areas east of Damascus for the buses heading to Raqqa," IS's Syria bastion, the source said by telephone.

Continued on Page 13

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi broke with diplomatic protocol to pay a surprise visit to Pakistan leader Nawaz Sharif, betting his personal brand on his ability to reset troubled relations, Indian media and analysts said yesterday. Spurning official talks in the capital Islamabad, India's leader chose instead to make an intimate trip to Sharif's ancestral residence near Lahore Friday, where he was celebrating his birthday and the wedding of his granddaughter. A source present in the meeting said the leaders of the nuclear-armed archrival nations "chatted like old friends" as they ate vegetarian food, with the Indian premier telling Sharif, "Your sincerity is beyond doubt".

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since gaining independence from Britain in 1947 and a lasting peace deal has so far proved elusive, with deadly violence still flaring in disputed Kashmir. Modi's stunning decision to drop in for talks with Pakistan's leader - something ex-premier Manmohan Singh failed to achieve in ten years of power - was roundly welcomed in India, where it was seen as a calculated personal gamble.

Continued on Page 13



LAHORE: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (right) shakes hands with his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif on Friday. — AFP



An Emirati falconer moves a lure to attract a falcon yesterday in the Liwa Oasis, southwest of Abu Dhabi. Falcons were traditionally used for hunting, however hunting is now prohibited in Abu Dhabi. — AFP

<u> Kuwait 🛥 Times</u>

In Brief

CP PATRONIZES WAQF MEETING

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawafl-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah patronizes the 22nd Waqf Meeting, organized by Awqaf General Secretariat, under the theme 'Al-Awqaf Administration .. Integration and Pioneering.' His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Nawaf has designated Minister of Justice, Minister of Al-Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sanea, to represent him at the inaugural ceremony, scheduled today at 10 am at Al-Jumeirah hotel. — KUNA

SUPPORTING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH 'VITAL'

CAIRO: Beefing up support for scientific research is vital for education development in Arab countries, Kuwait's Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa said on the sideline of the 15th conference of Arab ministers of higher education and scientific research. Financing higher education and scientific research is of Kuwait's main interest, he said, pointing out Kuwait's move to establish centers for evaluation and measurement of progress, as well as a training center for students of higher education. — KUNA



UNION SUPPORTS ARAB CAUSES

ABU DHABI: The newly-elected secretary general of the Arab Writers Union (AWU) Habib Al-Sayegh reaffirmed the Union's commitment to supporting the major Arab questions, notably the central Palestinian cause. The Arab nation is undergoing a challenging stage which requires concerted efforts by all institutions of the Arab countries, including contributions of the intelligentsia, he said Friday on the sidelines of the 26th AWU General Conference. Sayegh, of the United Arab Emirates made the remarks after being unanimously elected as new secretary general of the AWU. —KUNA





KUWAIT: Kuwaitis enjoy a day-out at a camp in the Salmi desert. Camping season in Kuwait extends from the beginning of November until the end of March each year. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat





DODOMA: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Tanzania Jassem Al-Najem is pictured with Tanzanian Minister of Defense and National Force Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi. — KUNA

KUWAITI DIPLOMAT, Tanzanian minister Discuss cooperation

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Tanzania Jassem Al-Najem met yesterday with the Minister of Defense and National Force Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, discussing with him means to bolster ties. Ambassador Najem said in a press release that the meeting reflected strong desires to boost relations within the defense and security domains. Ambassador Najem conveyed greetings of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense in Kuwait Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah to the Tanzanian Minister and the people of the African country. Meanwhile, the Tanzanian minister affirmed that his country was eager to develop relations with Kuwait to achieve the interest of the people of both countries.— KUNA

KUWAIT: The National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United States (NUKS USA) recently recognized Zain's exceptional support as a Platinum sponsor of the Union's 32nd annual conference that was recently held in San Diego during November under the patronage and attendance of the Minster of Education and Minster of Higher Education Dr Badr Al-Essa.

A NUKS USA delegation visited the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh whereby they met Zain Group Chairman Assad Ahmad Al-Banwan and Zain Kuwait Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan and expressed their gratitude to Zain's continuous support to the annual conference, implementing the important role of the private sector's contribution to supporting the Kuwaiti youth locally and abroad.

Reciprocally the Chairman and Kuwait CEO expressed their admiration of the tremendous efforts exerted by the union's members, resulting in a greatly successful event that witnessed vast participation from students studying the US.

Zain's annual participation in NUKS USA reinforces the company's commitment to the youth of Kuwait and its desire to see them reach their full potential. This is the main intention behind the company's support to NUKS USA for the past 12 years.

As in previous years, Zain took the opportunity to recognize and honor the top 10 Kuwaiti students studying in the US during the conference, with the aim of shedding light on accomplishments of leading students. The company also sponsored a sports symposium in which prominent Kuwaiti sports figures discussed issues relevant to the domestic sporting scene. Additionally, Zain organized several sporting activities held in conjunction with the event, where the company honored the winning team of the first place title of "Zain Football Tournament", which the company sponsored for the third consecutive year. The tournament was a way to engage with the youth and share a family-like atmosphere with the students, with immense participation of 20 teams. The company also organized and for the first time a football tournament dedicated to female students, where the company also awarded the winning team for achieving the first place title.

Zain's participation in NUKS USA reinforces the company's commitment to the youth of Kuwait and its desire to see them reach their full potential. The event brought together distinguished national figures from across Kuwait who have had a significant impact on the country's political, economic, cultural and sporting life, and is a rare blend of intellectual and social content for the attendees.

The company sees its annual participation in the conference as part of its responsibility as a leading national company to help provide bright and enthusiastic young Kuwaitis who are looking to enter the job market with suitable development opportunities.



OFFICIAL LAUDS KUWAIT'S SUPPORT OF EGYPTIAN TOURISM

SHARM EL-SHEIKH: "We would like to thank Kuwait for encouraging tourism in Egypt," said Sami Mahmoud, head of the Egyptian Authority for Tourism Promotion. Upon the conclusion of a Kuwaiti media delegation's visit to Sharm El-Sheikh,

Mahmoud said in statements yesterday that Kuwait had played a pivotal role in promoting tourism in his country, noting that the current Kuwaiti campaign (Egypt Is Safe) was a much needed step to bring back tourists to Egypt. During the visit, the Kuwaiti media

delegation visited numerous locations in Sharm El-Sheikh to highlight the region's touristic attractions, said the Egyptian official who called on Arab tourists to continue to promote and encourage tourism in Egypt. — KUNA



SHARM EL-SHEIKH: Head of the Egyptian Authority for Tourism Promotion Sami Mahmoud is pictured with the visiting Kuwaiti delegation. — KUNA

KUWAIT TO TAKE PART IN NANOTECH FORUM IN OMAN

KUWAIT: Kuwait will take part in the Second Gulf Forum on Nanotechnology Awareness due to begin in Sultanate of Oman tomorrow, the International Movement for Leisure Activities in Science and Technology (MILSET) declared on Friday.

President of MILSET Regional Office for Asia Adnan Almeer said in a statement yesterday that Kuwait would be represented with a delegation from the Ministry of Education and Kuwait University. The two-day forum, sponsored by Omani Minister of Education Dr Madiha Bin Ahmad Al-Shibaniya, is co-organized by MILSET and Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science. The forum, involving nanotechnology experts from Oman, regional and foreign countries, is aimed at examining latest innovations in the sector and other nations' experience in including this science in teaching curricula. It will be accompanied by diverse activities, workshops and seminars on means of applying this modern technology. —KUNA

<u> Kuwait 🗠 Times</u>



Crime

LAW STRIPS MINISTRY OF AUTHORITY TO BLOCK WEBSITES

Report

LAWMAKER'S SON CHARGED WITH OFFENDING OFFICER IN DUTY

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A customs officer working at Salmi land border exit filed a case of insulting a public officer on duty against a lawmaker's son, said security sources. Case papers indicate that the lawmaker's son was driving his father's vehicle out of Kuwait without having a power of attorney from his father, and when the officer told him he could not do so, he told him that he was the son of an MP. When the officer said that laws do not know MPs, the son insulted the officer, and was eventually banned from leaving. Security sources said that the MP tried to talk the officer out of filing a case but he refused.

Paramedics injured

An ambulance rolled over several times while dispatched to Benaider ambulance center, resulting in various injuries for the crew, who were rushed to hospital for treatment.

Gun caught with passenger

A 42-year-old citizen was arrested with a gun and five bullets during an inspection at Kuwait International Airport before boarding a flight to Saudi Arabia.

Body found

An Egyptian man was found dead in his bed in Sabah Al-Ahmed, said security sources, noting that forensic doctors removed the bod pending further investigations.

Landmine kills shepherd

A shepherd was killed when he stepped on a landmine in Mnia Abdullah desert, said security sources. An investigation was opened in the case.



t By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Member of the parliament's educational affairs committee MP Khalil Abdullah said that the new e-media law authorized the judiciary, and not the information ministry, to block certain websites. Abdullah added that penalties for working without a license were also reduced from a fine ranging between KD 3,000 and KD 10,000 to only KD 500, adding that even fines would be paid through court orders.

Priorities ' committee

The parliament's priorities committee is due to convene today morning to discuss the laws approved by the parliament without issuing executive charts so far. The meeting will be attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Social Affairs and Labor Minister Hind Al-Subaih, Housing Minister Yasser Abul, Communications and Municipality Minister Essa Al-Kandaro, Public Works Minister Ali Al-Omair and Education Minister Bader Al-Essa.

KAC law Presided by MP Faisal Al-Shaye, the parliament's financial and economic affairs committee is due to discuss a pro-

affairs committee is due to discuss a proposal made to amend law number 6/2008 pertaining turning Kuwait Airways (KAC) into a shareholding company in its meet-

without issuing executive charts so far. The meeting will be attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Sheikh

Club's privatization

Chairman of the parliament's youth and sports committee MP Abdullah Maayouf said that the committee's report on a parliamentary proposal made pertaining privatizing sports clubs would be finished within three months.

Anti-corruption law

MP Shaye demanded that the government must respond to parliamentary demands on filling the gaps in the new anti-corruption law in order to prevent the recurrence of crimes like the 'multimillions bank deposits' scandal. On the same issue, MP Kamel Al-Awadhi said that lawmakers' attitudes were clear and that the new law would be a top priority for the parliament. He also called to subject the Anti-Corruption Authority directly to the parliament just like the Audit Bureau.

MP Khalil Al-Saleh called for solving the problems of the dissolved anti-corruption authority employees in a way that would not jeopardize their posts or incentives. "Those employees' financial and vocational rights must be protected," he stressed, calling for transferring them to a government body and keep paying their salaries pending reappointing once the authority is revived.

'MANPOWER' STAFF HURT IN CEILING COLLAPSE 'Heavy rain' expected Wednesday

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources at the Manpower Public Authority said that the ceiling of the archive's room at the labor inspection department collapsed on some porters looking up some files, injuring many of them. The sources added that many of the authority's buildings are worn out and stop functioning whenever it rains due to bad wiring and being infested with rats.

Automation

Meanwhile, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Development and Planning Hind Al-Subaih said that ever since she came to office, she has a vision to automate all ministry facilities, especially the manpower authority, which had been financially and administratively separated from the ministry. Speaking at a special ceremony held to honor 25 manpower authority employees who had taken part in workshop on developing vocational performance jointly held with EQUATE, Subaih approved the work-

shop, which aims at cutting red tape. Subaih added that the law should equally apply to all without any exceptions and urged the workshop trainees to act accordingly and work on improving the services provided to the public. She also criticized a number of employees who had left their offices to have breakfast at a labor department while people waited to be served. "How can a public servant do this and how can you enjoy breakfast knowing that you are upsetting people and wasting their time?" she asked.

EQUATE CEO Mohammed Hussein stressed that achieving goals was directly linked to improving employees' efficiency through constant development of human resources, which is the cornerstone of sustainable development. Hussein added that efficiency development is achievable through some criterions and methodology using Six Sigma and LEAN, which develop performance and cut down cost, time and effort.

Rain

Kuwait Meteorology Center predicted heavy rain that might be accompanied by thunderstorms on Wednesday, after Kuwait saw rainy weather last Wednesday and Thursday.

Penalties

Kuwait Medical Association (KMA) Secretary General Dr Mohammed Al-



Damage seen at the site where the collapse was reported.

Qenae said three Ministry of Health committees formed to study insurance against medical errors, vocational description and amending medicine practice law had concluded their work and submitted recommendations to Minister Ali Al-Obaidi. Qenae added that the medicine law amendments include increasing doctors' penalties to reach three years in prison and KD 5.000 in fines.





A bedoon man arrested in Saad Al-Abdullah with possession of drugs, guns and cash.

Drug possession

Following a wild chase, a bedoon man was arrested in Saad Al-Abdullah with 500 illicit pills. The sources added that on searching the suspect's house, a further 6,000 pills, two guns and cash were found. The suspect confessed to owning the drugs for trade purposes and that he had been using the guns for 'self-defense'.

Liquor possession

An illegal resident was recently arrested with a number of whiskey bottles ready for sale in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, said security sources, noting that the suspect led police to a Salmiya apartment he had been using to store more bottles.



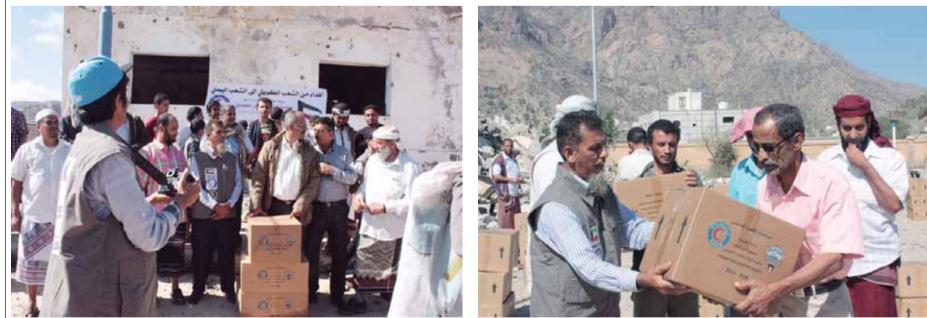
Environment police officers talk to people during an inspection campaign at the vegetables and fruits market in Sulaibiya.

Inspection campaigns

Environment police agents inspected the vegetables and fruits market in Sulaibiya to ensure the market waste was properly handled and that the market had enough hygienic specifications. Meanwhile, an inspection campaign at Kabd camps areas resulted in finding three unlicensed camps, four ready-mix trucks dumping extra concrete in addition to used tires and industrial waste dumped in desert areas. In another case, a citizen, who had been wanted for a 40-month prison sentence in a drugs related case, was arrested at a checkpoint in Sabah Al-Salem.



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Environment Police Department carried out an antismoking campaign at the Avenues Mall recently, in compliance with the environment protection law number 42/2014, which bans smoking in public places under article 56.



KUWAIT: The fourth batch of relief aid materials for the Yemeni people was delivered by members of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), an official said yesterday. KRCS' Deputy Chairman of the Board Anwar Al-Hasawi told KUNA that the relief aid materials were distributed in several Yemeni governorates. This current batch of relief aid is within KRCS' continuous efforts to aid the Yemeni people who are living under harsh conditions due to the ongoing conflict in their country, said Hasawi. The relief aid consisted of food materials, necessities, as well as Kitchen and cooking utensils and tools. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) launched a security campaign Friday night at the Mutla'a camps to raise safety awareness. It was carried out in cooperation with EQUATE and the Kuwait National Guard.

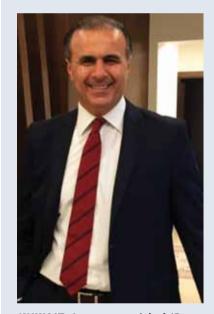
Kuwait 🗠 Times

CATHOLIC CHURCH CELEBRATES CHRISTMAS



KUWAIT: Thousands of Christians congregated at the Holy Family Cathedral Church in Kuwait City on Friday for a Church service marking the Christmas day celebration. In his message to faithful, Bishop Camillo Ballin urged Christians to follow the footsteps of Christ and be good to all. On 25th December every year, Christians all over the world celebrate the birth of Jesus (PBUH). — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

CORRECTION







JOREDOO KUWAIT ORGANIZES 'EXECUTIVE

KUWAIT: In a story titled 'Bano Professional Mix a Horeca Silver Sponsor' published on Thursday, December 10, 2015, the company's general manager Tawfiq Essam Al-Hashwi was mistakenly referred to as 'Essam Al-Hashwi' in the caption under the picture that was published with the story.

PRESENCE' WORKSHOP FOR ITS LEADERS

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of Ooredoo international group, concluded this year's development agenda for its Leaders with the 'Executive Presence' workshop. The workshop was held at the company's headquarter in Kuwait City, and was attended by a number of Ooredoo Kuwait directors and executive staff members.

The main focus of the two day workshop, led by the reputable Canadian based organization, was to develop skills and abilities that communicate the executive presence required to achieve upward mobility. Additionally, the workshop aim to empower Leaders with the credibility to secure business goals, in addition to encouraging confidence and elevating the global stature of the organization as a progressive innovator.

The Executive Presence development program was an outcome need of the extensive assessments and the Talent Reviews that were conducted earlier this year.

Commenting on this, Saleh Al-Houti, Ooredoo Kuwait Chief Human Resources Officer said: "We are very pleased to collaborate with the renowned organization such as Corporate Class Inc. to conduct a two day workshop, which is the first of its kind in the GCC. Throughout the year, we have worked with renowned institutes to develop our employees and empower them with knowledge and training experience. This stems from our deep-rooted belief in the importance of investing in our employees."

Ooredoo Kuwait has always been keen on providing its employees with the needed workshops and development programs to continuously help improving their skills and talents to achieve excellence in their performance. In 2015 Ooredoo Kuwait had conducted 51 development programs in addition to an 'On job training' for Front Liners. These development programs covered various topics for different departments including technical and soft courses, attended by Ooredoo employees and franchises representatives.

In addition to the training courses and workshops, Ooredoo Kuwait offered 2 opportunities for funded bachelor degrees for its national's employees this year and 3 seats for master's degree.

These assessments, talent reviews, workshops and development programs are part of Ooredoo's strategic plan to invest in its human capital and develop the talents and capacities of its employees in order to attain the high standard level they wish to achieve and further contribute to the success of the company.



ANTIQUES DISPLAYED AT DISCOVERY MALL

KUWAIT: A number of amateurs have displayed their antiques at the 10th Kuwait and Gulf auction for antiques that was held at the Discovery Mall. The displayed items included antiques, carpets, glassware, old coins, magazines, newspapers and historical documents. — KUNA



MINISTER REITERATES RESPECT OF ALL FAITHS WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF LAW

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Friday reiterated the State's respect of all religions, and keenness on providing a climate of religious tolerance and freedom within the framework of law and public morals.

"Kuwait is the country of coexistence and toleration," Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khalid stressed during a tour of churches and other Christian places of worship to inspect security and traffic measures for New Year celebrations.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khalid underscored eagerness on the protection, security and safety of all people in Kuwait who respect laws, regulations and customs and traditions "that bind citizens and expats in single fiber," the ministry's Security Information Department said in a statement. It added that the minister urged provision of security and peacefulness for the Christian sects in the country.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khalid was briefed by the security field and traffic commanders on the preventive plans for control, quick response and abilities to move and other measures adopted during such occasions.

He was also informed of commitment by leaders of churches and Christian sects to the preventive instructions and guidelines and precautionary measures previously announced and reiterated by the ministry and security bodies.

Meanwhile, leaders of churches and Christian sects as well as many expats have highly appreciated the State of Kuwait and the sincere efforts "around the clock" by the Interior Minister and security bodies during all occasions, which allows followers of all faiths to practice their rituals in an atmosphere of freedom and tolerance. — KUNA



Special Report

Figuring it out: Official talks statistical bureau's role, future

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Many public departments and institutions do important work, but are not well known. For instance, census and other official statistics are very important for public and private institutions and even individuals. The Central Statistical Bureau is one of the institutions in charge of producing important official data. It used to be part of the Ministry of Planning, but in 2007 became an independent body.

Kuwait Times spoke to Mona Khalaf Al-Daas, Assistant Undersecretary for Statistical Affairs at the bureau, who spoke about the role of this institution and the projects it is working on. Law no. 27/1963 on statistics and census gave it the legal framework to practice this activity, especially the responsibility for collecting data. "This applies to both field surveys and administrative records. According to this law, the Central Statistical Bureau is the only reference for statistics in Kuwait. So any statistical figures can only be published through our department," Daas said.

Statistical report

According to the law, the bureau is also responsible for the statistics departments at various ministries and public institutions. "We are in charge of discussing and reviewing any statistical report issued by these institutions, in addition to training the staff," she added.

There is also an international dimension to their work. "Statistical activities started internationally in 1947 with the founding of the Statistics Committee at the United Nations, as it felt the importance of having an international committee. This committee develops the methodologies and frameworks that are necessary to produce any statistical data. Kuwait is a member of this committee, and we attend their meetings annually. This organizes our local activities, as we have to respect the international timing, rating and methodologies used," Daas noted.

Daas graduated from the Social Studies Faculty of the Kuwait University in 1994 with a bachelor's degree. Before being appointed as undersecretary in 2010, she was the head of development studies in 2003, observer of monitoring regional and international changes in 2006, head of the future expectations department and the secretariat general of the Supreme Planning Council between 2007 and 2010.

Issuing Data

The bureau issues 41 specialized periodicals annually. "Some of these periodicals are based on field surveys, such as the inflation rate, which we publish and provide to the Central Bank and some local banks, and we are the only body authorized to issue it, along with data on foreign trade. Manpower surveys and Kuwaiti and expat unemployment rates, which reached 5 percent in 2014 among Kuwaiti citizens, are also provided by us. The latest published inflation rate in Kuwait was recorded at 3.2 percent in October 2015 compared to October 2014," explained Daas.

who can register their personal expenses to get statistics," she pointed out.

"We also conduct the household income and expenditure survey, which shows the priorities of families. These figures have great economic value in planning policies. For instance, if we compare this rate with the rate from 1986, we notice that the structure of family spending has changed. Food was the priority in 1986, while today housing is in first place and constitutes the biggest part of spending," Daas said.

Census

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The bureau is obliged to hold a population census every 10 years. "Some countries used to do it every five years, including Kuwait in the past. In Kuwait, we had a census in 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and then in 1995 due to the invasion. But the cost of holding a census is very high, so we are now doing it every 10 years, according to the law. The last census was done in 2011 and the next one will take place in 2020, according to the harmonized GCC population census. Even the UN has set 2020 as the international census year," stressed Daas.

at various ministries

Bureau for Census in each GCC country should collect all the data in a database including the civil ID number," said Daas

But this is huge work. "Convincing all institutions and ministries to participate in this unified system of census needs great efforts. We have prepared an initial report on this issue and found that 13 institutions keep administrative records. What organizes this process is the UN requirement for public census. We cooperate with the institutions in charge and get the available data, while helping them by providing what they are missing," she added.

The Statistics Center of the GCC was established in 2014, and its headquarters is in Muscat in Oman. Kuwait as well as the other GCC countries finance it and it has a good budget. "The main goal of this center is to build abilities. So we invite all the institutions that are working with us to attend this meeting. If we have visiting experts, we also invite staff from these institutions to attend our workshops to gain experiences and build skills. We hold workshops and train local staff to be ready for the upcoming census," she stated.

Future Projects

One of the most important projects is the total economic statistics. "We set the basis of this project in cooperation with the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises that will be financing it. This project will provide data and statistics of all businesses and economic activities of companies and will start in 2016," highlighted Daas.

The other important planned projects include the record statistics project, and the quarterly national accounts that include commitments of various countries, which used to be published annually, but should now be published quarterly. "It provides important data including GDP growth, which is important for economists," she said.

Improving commercial records according to the international classification of economic activities is another project executed by the bureau. "The database of these

activities at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is classified locally. We started in this project in 2012 and we have finished about 60 percent of it now," concluded Daas.

Bureau responsible for statistics departments Bureau issues 41 specialized periodicals Bureau holds population census every 10

years

annually

Bureau working on 'total economic statistics' project

Mona Khalaf Al-Daas

The GCC also decided to follow the record census method instead of the field census. "In the past, we used to go personally to collect data from people in the field, which won't be done now. Some countries still use the field census method such as Jordan this year, but using computers instead of papers. Morocco in 2014 also used the field census method as well as Brazil and China. Even the United States uses it, but it's a little different as they also deploy call centers and mail, as they have discipline there. Scandinavian countries and Singapore use the record census method," she stated. "The GCC countries are not very big and do not have people living on mountains or valleys, so we do not need a field census. For instance, the Public Authority for Civil Information has a register, the Ministry of Justice has records of marriages and divorces, while the Ministry of Interior has records of expats and those who enter and leave the country. The GCC decided that the Central

The rates and data are published on the official website of the Central Statistical Bureau and are immediately sent to Kuwait News Agency, as it is the main source of news in Kuwait. "At the same time of sending the inflation rate to KUNA, we send it to the Central Bank as they depend on these figures in their financial operations. All this data serves decision makers, and even individuals,



NBK's team with the Students

NBK SPONSORS LOYAC'S TRIP TO SRI LANKA

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsors a camping trip for the secondary students to Sri Lanka organized by Loyac. This sponsorship comes in line with NBK's commitment to its Corporate Social Responsibility as well as the vital role it plays in supporting students, youths and self-building initiatives in Kuwait.

This sponsorship goes with NBK's support to Loyac's activities and events for a whole year including the trip. More than 15 students are participating in this one-week trip which is designed to build the leadership skills in their personality.

NBK always strives to empower Kuwaiti youth to realize

their potentials, providing career and training opportunities. Also, NBK develops the professional skills of young Kuwaitis as part of its strategy to develop national human resources.

NBK continues to promote a range of philanthropic missions and social welfare programs as part of its corporate social responsibility to assert its leadership in supporting Kuwait's social development, standing as a model in serving all aspects of the community.

LOYAC is a nonprofit organization that runs several programs for the youth to develop their professional skills, enhance their personal growth and help them find their sense of purpose by extending themselves to others.

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Kuwait <u>Times</u>

FROM THE ARABIC PRESS

Al-Anbaa

Crime

Report

TRANSGENDER ARRESTED FOR CROSS-DRESSING

KUWAIT: A young transgender man was sent to vice detectives after being caught in revealing women's clothes in Salmiya. Hawally police thought the driver of a car they stopped was a woman, but the civil ID showed it was a 19year-old man. He was arrested and charged with crossdressing.

Suicide

A 26-year-old Lebanese man committed suicide by jumping from the 17th floor of a Mahboula building. Ahmadi police, paramedics and criminal evidence went to the area and they found the man had succumbed to his injuries. The body was recovered by the coroner, and detectives are questioning the family to find out what happened.

Contrabands

Hawally police arrested a man with unlicensed aphrodisiacs and illegal drugs. He was sent to criminal detectives for further action. The arrest was made when the man was seen walking suspiciously in Jabriya with a bag in his hand, who seemed confused when stopped. Policemen searched him and found the illicit material.

Construction material theft

A thief stole construction material that was in front of a house under construction in Jaber Al-Ahmad, according to a complaint by the house owner at Sulaibkhat police station. The owner said the cost of the stolen material is estimated at KD 2,400. Detectives took over the case.

Child negligence

Policemen accused a woman in Fintas of negligence in caring for a minor following her son's fall from the stairs of the building she lives in. The woman rushed him to hospital for treatment for a head wound.

Search for hacker

An Egyptian man told Nugra police that he received a text message from his bank about a transfer of KD 1,100 from his account. He called the bank and suspended the account, then filed a complaint against a hacker. Police referred the case to the electronic crimes department. — Al-Rai



الأنياء

JABER STADIUM... A JOY!

ur words today will not be about the merits of the Jaber Stadium project and we will not get into the how, why and where about this structure - rather we will focus on the joy of the stadium's opening.

I was honored by attending the opening of Jaber Stadium, which was under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah protect him, and what I found that day is a message for anyone who attempts to compromise the national unity that Kuwait's people and those who live in it have, hand-in-hand, and is a cohesive shield for the "pride of the Gulf". This is what we saw and felt during the celebration, which was a festival in which all Kuwaitis and expatriates participated to make Kuwait pulsate with joy and make its people happy, as our father the Amir said "let us be happy", and that sentence was interpreted completely during that celebration.

Our words today are of thanks to everyone who participated, be they government or private, headed by the interior ministry, and what the officers,

headed by Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled, did in facilitating and organizing entry and exit and helping fans to their proper seats. Thanks here is not limited to the interior ministry, rather to all our uniformed men and their unity with the crowd with their smiles and welcome for all people who came to share in Kuwait's joy.

Al-Anbaa

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

We, after the security and stability, thank all officials at PAYS for their efforts that was felt by all those who attended the celebration, be it the organization in the stands, taking care of the fans at all levels and making those present feel warm and welcome. These things were the main reasons of having the joy come out of the heart, and made everyone feel safe and enjoy what they came to see.

A last word: The opening of Jaber Stadium is a clear message that Kuwait is one indivisible home, that was crowned by the lyrics of the opening operetta "Here...here...the glory is here." This is Kuwait, and it is still the glory and pride of the Gulf. -Translated by Kuwait Times

ABK RECEIVES AWARD FOR 'ABK EMIRATES VISA SIGNATURE AND INFINITE CARDS'

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced that it has been awarded the 'Best New Product 2015' Award by Visa International, for its premium co-branded credit cards with Emirates Airline; the ABK Emirates Visa Signature card and the ABK Emirates Visa Infinite card.

الأنياء

JEREMY BENTHAM AND WORLD DESTRUCTION

By Mohammed Al-Khaldi

n the 1970s, there was a dangerous design fault in a model of one of the famous American automobile brands, where the fuel tank at the bottom rear of the vehicles used to explode on impact from behind during accidents, leading to considerable deaths and serious injuries. Guess what the manufacturing company did?!

The company used the classical American mentality that fully adopts the philosophy of the famous British philosopher Jeremy Bentham, the founder of modern utilitarianism, who died in 1832. It denies the existence of values and argues that "the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the measure of right and wrong", which means that 'right' is what is beneficial and wrong is what causes pain and loss.

Accordingly, the company analyzed its possible gains and losses, which is the basis of Bentham's utilitarianism philosophy, and found that redesigning the fuel tanks to prevent the problem would cost \$11 per vehicle, and by calculating the number of faulty vehicles - there were 12 million of them would make the total cost \$132 million. They also found that if they ignored the fault and compensated each of the 180 fatalities with \$200,000 and each of the 180 injured with \$67,000 and paid \$700 to fix 2,000 faulty vehicles, the total cost would only be \$49 million. Thus, the company decided to ignore the fault and opted for the least cost.

This utilitarianism is a real disgusting fact of people with the least and faintest conscience, yet is forms the basis of American and European policies and they boast about graduating the best utilitarian minds in the world that are able to assess gains and losses. The same principle applies to the Phillip Morris tobacco company that deals with the entire world with the same utilitarian mentality of calculating gains and losses and prices the life of individuals by dollars they would make.

The very same pragmatics is used in politics and greedy economies. Thus, what is going on in Syria is no wonder and nobody pays attention to killing thousands and displacing millions there despite the presence of the UN and international courts and agreements, simply because decision-makers have assessed the gains and losses and believe that things are better and more profitable this way.

Notably, those doing such assessments and calculations are known as 'experts' and are paid handsomely for 'pricing' peoples' lives and thus saving millions for tycoons and businessmen and achieving diplomatic gains for politicians. This is how things are going on in this ugly world because of Bentham's utilitarianism that turned the world into a dead, heartless one!

—Translated by Kuwait Times

The award was presented to Stewart Lockie, General Manager Retail Banking at ABK by Ihab Ayoub, General Manager -Middle East and North Africa, at the Bank's Head Office on 8 December, 2015. Also present from Visa was Ahmed Gaber, General Manager - KSA, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman and Amit Vij, Kuwait Country Manager and from ABK Garry Ceaplen, AGM, Retail Banking.

The ABK Emirates Visa Signature ('Signature') and ABK Emirates Visa Infinite ('Infinite') cards have been specifically designed to offer the Bank's premium customers an unrivaled variety of benefits, services and exclusive offers.

As 'Signature' and 'Infinite' cardholders, customers are automatically enrolled in the award-winning frequent flyer program of Emirates Airline; Emirates Skywards, which grants cardholders 'Skyward Miles' that can be used for reward tickets, upgrades, or other rewards offers by the program. In addition to earning Skywards Miles on local and international spends, new Signature and Infinite



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include the Hilton Honors Gold, the Visa Fine Dining Discounts and rewards program, the Harrods exclusive Black Card membership, access to the ABK Advantage Program, full multi-trip travel insurance up to 1,000,000 and so much more.

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that bring additional value to its customers, along with exclusive services that differentiate it from its competitors.

For more information on Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait please visit www.eahli.com or contact an ABK representative via 'Ahli Chat' or by contacting a customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.

50,000 TO SPEND NEW Year holidays abroad

KUWAIT: Operations Manager at Kuwait International Airport Saleh Al-Fedaghi said that a special high-season plan had been put into practice since Thursday to meet the growing numbers of passengers expected to leave and spend the New Year holidays abroad. Accordingly, Fedaghi urged all passengers to make sure their passports are valid, respect the allowed luggage and weight rules, not carry any banned items and check in in due time prior to their flight. The airport's deputy director for aviation safety Emad Al-Jlowi said that up to 50,000 passengers were expected to spend the holidays abroad using various airlines. He also stressed that emergency teams were ready for the rush. —Al-Anbaa

UP TO 2,000 DAYS LEAVE **BALANCE FOR POLICE FORCE**

KUWAIT: Director of Mol's police force affairs department Brig Faisal Al-Foudery announced amending article 83 of the police law pertaining leaves in a way that entitles force members to maintain an open leave balance even if that balance reaches 1,000 or 2,000 days throughout their service. Foudery explained that a police officer can use those days to go on leave, replace, or encash them effective since May. "A police agent can benefit from 90 days of his/her balance a year provided work circumstances allow it," he added, noting that an agent could also encash 60 days of the balance but stressed that taking leaves and encashing leaves could not be done in the same year. —Al-Rai

MOI TRANSACTION BAN ON 12,000 CITIZENS BY **2016 FOR NOT RENEWING WEAPONS LICENSES**

KUWAIT: High-ranking security sources said that Mol Undersecretary Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahd gave the ministry's IT department the green light to impose a ban on around 12,000 citizens' transactions with the ministry for not renewing their weapons' licenses. The sources explained that the ban would include renewing passports, driving licenses, registrations, bringing in domestic labor, renewing labor residencies and others.

The sources explained that the new instructions would take effect by the beginning of 2016, especially when a report made by the weapons detectives director Maj Gen Farraj Al-Zobi showed that 12,000 arms licenses had

been issued to citizens who neither renewed them nor handed over their weapons. According to Zobi's report, the owners of 10,000 shotguns, 10,000 guns and 1,000 machineguns had not renewed the licenses nor handed over their weapons to the weapons police, especially those who had machineguns that were only licensed in the 1990s for certain reasons that no longer wxisted and thus those weapons were no longer needed.

Responding to a question if the ministry had to resort to bans and blocks which would delay citizens' transactions, the sources stressed that the weapons issue was related to national security and stability and that

decisive measures had to be taken against those who had not made use of the grace period granted to hand over weapons or renew licenses without accountability.

Finally, the sources explained that once any of the concerned citizens renews or hands over weapons, the ban would be automatically lifted. The sources added that Mol had consulted PACI to remove the names of those who passed away from the list. "However, their families will be contacted and asked to hand over the license of the weapons. They will sign an affidavit if they know nothing about the weapons," said the sources. —Al-Anbaa

'Repentant' extremists banned FROM TRAVELLING TO PROTECT THEM

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources said that the ministries of interior and awqaf were coordinating to ban 'repentant' extremists from travelling lest they might rejoin terrorist groups. The sources explained that a list was made with the names of some 'extremists' who had been subjected to rehab programs and showed repentance to prevent them from travelling, as well as to assess how far they benefited from the rehab programs they had been

subjected to. In addition, the sources explained that the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs intends to make use of these people by including them in a document prepared to fight terrorism as well as have them examined by sociologists and psychiatrics to help them rehabilitate and fit in the society after familiarizing them with the concept of moderation and protect them from any extreme ideas under the name of jihad. —Al-Qabas

الانجاع BAATH = IS

By Sam Al-Nisf

n a testimony before the UN's Security Council, Yazidi princess Nadia Murad stressed that the killings, mass rape, torture and mass graves by IS in northern Iraq were definite proof that IS leaders are the very same Saddam's leaders and intelligence agents after they changed their military uniforms and wore turbans and black masks.

The Baath party was created and its leaders were left to hoist flags of and call for nationalism and Arab unity so that they could be later on used to describe regional peoples as non-believers. Doing this, Baath, Gaddafi and Saleh managed to make peoples of Iraq, Libya and Yemen, who used to be overwhelmed by Arabism, detest this Arabism and nobody dares nowadays in those

> The current terrorism that is forcing the entire world to hate us is not different from that practiced in the 1970s

countries to mention Arab unity. This was no coincidence - it was carefully and meticulously planned and put into practice.

Similarly, Baath, Gaddafi and Saleh's men were allowed to pledge alliance with Muslim militias, use Muslim slogans, destroy countries, kill peoples, trigger civil wars and commit atrocities in the name of Islam while they cannot be farther from it, so that things would end up the same way they did with Arab nationalism.

The current terrorism that is forcing the entire world to hate us is not different from that practiced in the 1970s and the following years when terrorists hijacked planes, blew up airports and embassies and killed innocent people. Suspicions about those committing such devastating terrorism are the very same because they are using the same methods and have only changed the flags and slogans they are using!

—Translated by Kuwait Times

Al-Anbaa



Powerful quake jolts Afghanistan, Pakistan



Syria rebel group names successor to slain leader

Page 8

IRAQI FORCES IN FIERCE BATTLES IN RAMADI TROOPS CLOSE IN ON ISLAMIC STATE REDOUBT

jihadists from the Islamic State group defending the former government complex in the heart of the city of Ramadi. After a major push on Tuesday that broke IS defences around the city centre, government forces have been slowed by snipers, booby traps, roadside bombs and suicide attackers. While initial hopes of a quick victory have faded, Iraq's elite counter-terrorism service (CTS) and the army have advanced steadily through the devastated capital of Anbar province.

They reached a key intersection in the Hoz neighborhood home to the government complex, whose recapture would go a long way towards ensuring a full recapture of Ramadi. "CTS has cleared Hoz neighborhood in central Ramadi completely and arrived near the government complex," the force's spokesman Sabah Al-Numan

BAGHDAD: Iragi forces yesterday clashed with diehard told AFP. Irag's war media cell, which speaks on behalf of the interior and defence ministries as well as the paramilitary groups fighting against IS, said the jihadists' use of improvised explosive devices had forced a shift in strategy.

"The plan was to enter Hoz from Dhubbat but because of the mines, CTS changed tack and came in from the river bank," a statement said. The latest fighting around the government complex left at least two members of the Iragi security forces dead and nine wounded, according to Ahmed al-Dulaimi, a police captain. At least three were killed on Friday, according to several senior officers and local officials. The figures they provide for IS casualties are high, with at least 23 killed on Friday alone.

The number of IS fighters hunkered down in central Ramadi was estimated at the start of the operation five

days ago at no more than 400. "You have the 8th Iraqi army and CTS... and they're all pushing forward," said Colonel Steve Warren, the spokesman for the US-led coalition which has been supporting Iraqi forces in Ramadi with daily air strikes. "CTS have made more progress, they're several hundred metres closer to the government complex," Warren said.

The advance by the government forces has also been hampered by the possible presence of dozens of families trapped in the combat zone and used by IS as human shields. Government forces held off months of IS assaults in Ramadi until May 2015, when the jihadists blitzed their opponents with massive suicide car bombs and seized full control of the city. That defeat was Baghdad's worst in the war against IS, and a victory now would provide a welcome boost to the much-criticized federal forces. —AFP



Page 11

RAMADI: A member of Iraq's counter-terrorism forces monitors his surroundings in a street in Ramadi's Dhubbat neighborhood, adjacent to Hoz neighborhood, on Friday. —AFP

RECORD 12,000 CANDIDATES FOR **IRAN ELECTIONS**

TEHRAN: More than 12,000 candidates have signed up for Iranian parliamentary elections due in February, the most since the Islamic revolution in 1979, official media said yesterday. The number of people who registered to stand before a Friday deadline was up nearly 100 percent compared with the previous legislative polls in 2012, the interior ministry said. At the close of registration, the number of candidates stood at "12,123, of whom 1,434 were women," state news agency IRNA quoted the interior ministry as saying.

Women accounted for 11 percent of the hopefuls for the 290 seats available in the February 26 vote, up from eight percent last time. The proportion of candidates below the age of 50 increased from 67 percent to 73 percent. The youngest candidate to apply was 30 years old, and the oldest 75. However, the final number of candidates is expected to be lower after the Guardians Council vets applications, with a final list published on Feb 9.

Voting will be held on the same day as the ection for the Assembly of Experts, which monitors the work of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, 76, and would be responsible for picking a replacement if he dies. A total of 801 candidates applied to run for the 88-seat assembly, although this number is also likely to decrease after they have been screened by the Guardians Council. President Hassan Rouhani, who took office in 2013 on the platform of more social and political freedom, has largely dedicated the first half of his four-year term to nuclear negotiations that culminated in a July deal with major powers. The agreement will see punishing economic sanctions rolled back in exchange for Iran curtailing its nuclear program. Rouhani, who faces a re-election battle in 2017, plans to devote the rest of his term to economic and social reforms. To achieve that, he is hoping for the support of a majority of lawmakers in the next parliament. Rouhani has faced vocal opposition from conservatives in the current parliament, including on the nuclear deal. —AFP



REPS, ADMIN SPAR ON IRAN **TRAVEL RULES**

WASHINGTON: Top GOP lawmakers accused the Obama administration Wednesday of ignoring congressional intent and the spirit of the law in offering reassurances to Iran about new visa rules. "There is no ambiguity," said House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy of California. "The administration should follow the law as written and agreed to." At issue is a new law tightening visa-free travel to the US, enacted as part of a sprawling spending bill passed overwhelmingly by Congress last week and signed by President Barack Obama.

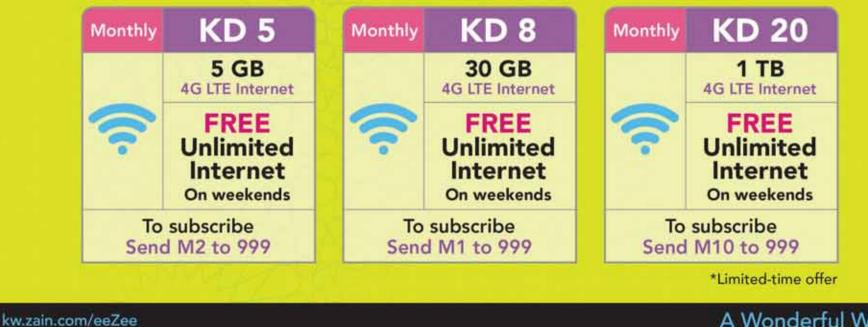
The legislation, a response to the Paris terror attacks, deals with the "visa waiver" program that allows the citizens of 38 countries to travel to the US without obtaining a visa. It makes a series of changes, including requiring a visa for anyone who's visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan in the previous five years, as well as dual nationals with citizenship in any of those countries. This could make travel back and forth to the US more difficult for Iranian-Americans or for Europeans with business dealings in Iran.

Iranian leaders complained in recent days that the new requirements contradict elements of the landmark nuclear deal reached earlier this year with Iran, the US and five world powers, under which Iran must curb its nuclear program in exchange for relief from international sanctions. The agreement also committed the signing nations to refrain from policies adversely affecting normalization of trade and economic relations with Iran. —AP

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A Wonderful World

<u> Kuwait – Times</u>

CHILDREN OF CUBAN REVOLUTION RECALL EXODUS TO US

MIAMI: At the start of the Cuban revolution, Javier Llorens was one of thousands of children who left the island unaccompanied for the United States, thinking it would be temporary. He is now 64 - and is still in the United States. Like many of the Cuban children who headed to America as part of what is now known as Operation Pedro Pan, named after the fictional leader of the orphaned Lost Boys, Llorens tells of a bittersweet experience. "It was very hard, but from a good perspective, I would not be the person I am today without having gone through this crisis," Llorens, now a dentist and married with two daughters, tells AFP.

Llorens began life in America in one of the shelters that was set up in Florida to receive some of the 14,000 children in an exodus from Cuba that began on Dec 26, 1960 and lasted until Oct 1962. He left Cuba with his 16-year-old brother on Aug 15, 1962 - a date he says is etched in his memory. "I remember having a rather bad cold with fever, but we had to leave - we had been making preparations for months and months. We needed to have courage," he said.

Llorens's parents made the difficult decision to temporarily part with their young children, fearing indoctrination by Fidel Castro's communist government, a fear that spread among other families in Cuba. "When the government of Fidel Castro took power in Cuba in 1959, everything changed. They started to strip people of their personal freedoms, they limited freedom of the press, they took away people's homes," says Eloisa Echazabal, who was 13 when she ended up in Miami on September 6, 1961 with her younger sister and three cousins. "The final straw for my parents was when the government took over private and religious schools, and communism began to be taught in public schools."

A Boy Named Pedro About half of the children who came to the United States were met by family or friends at the airport, according to Operation Pedro Pan Group Inc, which documents the stories of those who participated in the program. The operation was created by the Catholic Welfare Bureau (CWB; Catholic Charities) of Miami at the request of parents in Cuba to provide an opportunity for them to send their children to Miami to avoid indoctrination.

The other half of the thousands of children were cared for by the CWB, under the direction of a young Irish priest named Bryan Walsh, at a network of temporary shelters in Miami and then homes in other US states. After diplomatic relations were severed between the United States and Cuba in 1961, the CWB was authorized by US officials to notify parents in Cuba that visa requirements had been waived for their children. This meant that Cuban children were able to travel by commercial flights to Miami.

Walsh first became aware of the plight of unaccompanied Cuban children when a Cuban man brought a 15-year-old boy to see him who had come to Miami to live with relatives, but the family had hit hard times and wanted to find foster care. That boy was named Pedro and Walsh discovered there were many more like him alone, and in a strange country.

Reunited

Echazabal went with her sister to an orphanage in the state of New York, where she later lived with a family. "I remember it was not the happiest days of my life. It was hard to adjust to living in the orphanage," she says. Nine months after coming to America, she was reunited with her parents. "I know others with Peter Pan who had happy experiences, and others who had worse experiences than mine. I'm not complaining - it's just the way it was," she adds. Llorens had to wait five long years to

see his parents again, and the reunion was not without its difficulties. "It had been so long that they looked at me like the little boy who had left Cuba all those years ago, but I had been through a lot and had developed into a teenager who had become used to fending for himself for years," he says.

According to Operation Pedro Pan Group, by 1966, about 90 percent of children who were in shelters were reunited with their parents. Echazabal, 67, says she has seen many in the program go on to make hugely successful lives for themselves in the United States. "There are doctors, lawyers, engineers and mayors. All of those in Pedro Pan, we feel like siblings because this experience unites us," she says. "Every time we meet, we talk about things relevant to today, but we always come back to discuss what we went through. There are more than 14,000 of us, and each had a different experience." — AFP

SYRIA REBEL GROUP NAMES SUCCESSOR TO SLAIN LEADER

RUSSIA BLAMED FOR COMMANDER'S KILLING

BEIRUT: Militant groups in Syria yesterday mourned the death of a powerful rebel commander killed the previous day in an airstrike near Damascus - a highprofile assassination that may shift the balance of power in rebel-held suburbs of the country's capital. Zahran Allouch, the head of the Army of Islam group, was killed in an airstrike that targeted the group's headquarters during a meeting on Friday. He was instantly killed along with a number of commanders from the ultraconservative Ahrar al-Sham and the Faylaq al-Rahman groups.

His death may also have contributed - at least partially - to a delay in the agreed-on pullout of thousands of militants and their families from neighborhoods on the southern edge of Damascus. The pullout, which was supposed to start on Saturday, was to involve mainly militants from the Islamic State group who earlier this year overran the Yarmouk area, which is home to a Palestinian refugee camp and has been hotly contested and fought-over in the Syrian conflict, and two adjacent neighborhoods.

A Palestinian official in Damascus, Anwar Abdulhadi, told AP that the withdrawal is being delayed for "logistical reasons." However, other unconfirmed reports said that Allouch was a key figure in arranging the rare deal, and his assassination delayed its implementation. Allouch's killing - a month before peace talks are scheduled to begin between the Syrian government and opposition rebel groups - is a blow to insurgents fighting to topple President Bashar Assad and a boost to government forces who have been bolstered by the Russian military intervention in Syria in the past few months.

Syrian government forces have been on the offensive in several parts of the country since Russia began its military campaign in late September to shore up Assad's forces. The Army of Islam took part



DOUMA, Syria: Zahran Allouch, then slain head of the Jaish al-Islam (Islam Army) Syrian rebel group, speaks during the wedding of a fighter of the group on July 21, 2015 in this rebel-held town on the eastern edges of Damascus. - AFP

those leaders who began the uprising," wrote Abu Hassan Al-Muhajer, another senior member of the aroup on Twitter.

Other insurgent groups, including the Al-Qaeda branch in Syria, the Nusra Front, lamented his killing. The Army of Islam group swiftly appointed Essam Al-Buwaydhani, a field commander known as Abu Hammam, as the new leader of the group, replacing Allouch. In a video posted on the Internet late forces, the Army of Islam faction fought pitched battles against its rival, the Islamic State group near Damascus.

A former prisoner who was released in a general amnesty after the uprising against Assad began in March 2011, Allouch joined the armed opposition and formed the Army of Islam - which soon became one of the most organized rebel factions in Syria. Critics accused him of sectarian politics and brutal tactics similar to that of the Islamic State group. He is blamed by other opposition groups for the Dec 2013 disappearance of four prominent activists, including human rights activist and lawyer Razan Zaytouni. He has denied holding them, although they were abducted from an area under Army of Islam control. Earlier this year, after government airstrikes on the suburbs of Damascus killed dozens, Allouch's fighters forced some Alawites whom his group was holding into cages that were then displayed in public areas and markets, using them as human shields to try to prevent further airstrikes. Alawites are a Shiite offshoot to which Assad's family also belongs. The large metal cages with men and women inside were then put on pick-up trucks that drove around Damascus suburbs. — AP

ISRAEL LAW RENEWS HEATED DEBATE ON ARMY SERVICE

JERUSALEM: When a rabbi showed up at a synagogue in Israeli military uniform, David Croise and others there were not impressed. He denies they assaulted him, but admits they shouted him down. The incident last year led to the arrest of 19-year-old Croise, followed by his detention for around a week for having failed to enlist in the army. "I explained to them that we are Jewish people. We don't believe in the state," Croise said before lighting a Hanukkah festival of light candle in front of his home among the narrow streets and stone buildings of Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox Mea Shearim neighborhood.

"We don't go to the army," he added, wearing the wide-brimmed hat and black coat common to the ultra-Orthodox, the strictly religious Jews who abide by a traditional lifestyle. A decadesold debate over whether ultra-Orthodox young men studying at seminaries should perform mandatory military service like the rest of Israel's Jewish population has flared again. In November, lawmakers passed legislation extending their exemption from duty, reversing a law passed in 2014 that would have seen it expire.

. But ultra-Orthodox must go to the enlistment office to qualify for exemption - which some refuse to do because of their rejection of the state - and Croise was detained on a technicality. The issue reverberates strongly in the Jewish state, illustrating the divide between the ultra-Orthodox and their secular or less strictly religious compatriots. The ultra-Orthodox currently make up between seven and 10 percent of Israel's more than eight million population, but are among its fastest-growing communities.

At the same time, unemployment is high and 54 percent of ultra-Orthodox families are considered poor. Some see military service as key to integrating them into society - but that's why many oppose it. "This is exactly what's threatening the ultra-Orthodox," said Mordechai

salty language and other unreligious behaviour.

The law change followed March elections that led to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu assembling a coalition with only a one-seat majority in parliament. Ultra-Orthodox parties agreed to join on condition that last year's law, which would have ended the exemption in 2017 and set out criminal penalties, was rolled back. The law had also allowed for civil service in place of military service.

The new law extends the exemption by six years, then sets out a three-year period when the defence minister can decide how to move forward. It was the latest move in a debate that dates back to the early days of Israel's creation in 1948. Founding father of Israel and former prime minister David Ben-Gurion granted the exemption due to special circumstances of the era, said Yedidia Stern of the Israel Democracy Institute.

It was shortly after the Holocaust, "when the majority of yeshiva students basically disappeared, many rabbis were killed, the whole world of Torah (holy books) was basically destroyed", he said. His decision was "based on the understanding that it is just for a while to create a new intellectual elite". At the time, it involved 400 students. Today the number is in the tens of thousands and the population is growing quickly, with ultra-Orthodox families often having large numbers of children. Croise, the 19-year-old from Mea Shearim, is one of 16 siblings.

'They Can Kill Me'

The military has been seeking to encourage the ultra-Orthodox to join. It has created special units, allowing them to continue Torah study and limit interactions with women - a religious requirement. A total of 1,972 ultra-Orthodox joined in 2014, the military says, with the numbers having steadily increased. "It is very hard to go back and to feel that there are people who you grew up with and who don't want you there anymore," Ovadia Somech, a 22-year-old who recently joined the military, said of criticism he faces from neighbors when he goes home to his ultra-Orthodox community. "But I'm proud of the fact that I drafted. I went home in uniform to show people," he said at a base near the northern city of Haifa, a kippa atop his head. Somech, who also has 15 siblings, wants to pursue a career as an electrician. But while the more moderate among the ultra-Orthodox may be tempted to join, opposition remains firm. It is likely to roil politics for years to come. "If they want, they can kill me," Croise said, insisting he would never join up, something he likened to "a rebellion against god". - AFP

earlier this month in an opposition meeting held in Saudi Arabia to agree on an opposition delegation that would negotiate with Assad's government representatives in peace talks planned for late January in Geneva. The Syrian government describes the group as "terrorists" and has said it will not negotiate with such factions.

The Syrian army claimed responsibility for the airstrike that killed Allouch, although many among the opposition blamed Russia. "The martyrdom of Sheikh Zahran Allouch should be a turning point in the history of the revolution and rebel groups should realize they are facing a war of extermination by (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's regime," said Labib Nahhas, a senior member of the Ahrar al-Sham group. "The next stage will witness the liquidation of

Thursday, a spokesman for the Army of Islam said Allouch's killing "will only increase our fight" against Assad's government and the Islamic State group. "We are moving forth on the path, and we do not change or alter," the unidentified speaker said, reading from a statement. In a statement, the Nusra Front said Allouch died after years of "sacrifice" and wished his successor luck.

Powerful Commander

Allouch, who was in his mid-40s, was widely known to be supported by Saudi Arabia and Turkey. He was one of the most powerful rebel commanders with thousands of fighters controlling large parts of the eastern Damascus suburbs of Eastern Ghouta and Douma. In addition to fighting government Goldman, a consultant on ultra-Orthodox issues and analyst for the Al-Monitor website. "They want to preserve their identity."

'New Intellectual Elite'

Military service is required for Jewish Israelis after they turn 18 — three years for men and two for women. Ultra-Orthodox men studying in seminaries, or yeshivas, are exempt. Women from ultra-Orthodox families also do not serve. They are against it for a variety of reasons, with the most extreme believing a Jewish state is not allowed before the coming of the Messiah. Others argue that yeshiva study is just as important to Israel as military service or that ultra-Orthodox soldiers would be confronted with



SILWAD: Mourners pray over the body of Mahdiyah Hammad, a 38-year-old woman who was shot dead by Israeli border guards the day before, during her funeral in this occupied West Bank village northeast of Ramallah yesterday. — AFP

ISRAELI POLICE KILL PALESTINIAN MAN

JERUSALEM: A man allegedly tried to stab an Israeli police officer yesterday near Jerusalem's Old City and was killed, a police spokeswoman said. "Police officers spotted a man who aroused their suspicions and approached him to check" she said. "The terrorist pulled out a knife and tried to stab the policeman and was quickly killed by police gunfire." The Palestinian health ministry in the occupied West Bank indicated that the dead man was a Palestinian whose identity was not yet known.

A wave of violence since the start of October has claimed the lives of 132

have grown frustrated with Israel's people on the Palestinian side, 19 Israelis, an American and an Eritrean. Many of the Palestinians killed have been attackers while others have been shot dead by Israeli security forces during clashes. On Friday, Israeli border quards shot dead a Palestinian woman who tried to ram a car into them in the West Bank, shortly after a Palestinian was killed in clashes with Israeli forces near the border with the Gaza Strip.

A number of Palestinians have attempted attacks with kitchen knives in what some analysts have described as virtual suicide missions. Palestinians occupation, the complete lack of progress in peace efforts and their own fractured leadership. Pope Francis, the leader of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics, used his traditional Christmas Day address to urge Israelis and Palestinians to resume "direct dialogue", saying the conflict had "serious repercussions" on the Middle East. USbacked peace talks between the Palestinians and Israel collapsed in April 2014 after nine months of fruitless meetings amid bitter recriminations and mutual blame. — AFP

OBAMA FEELS 'SMALL' COMPARED WITH MEMBERS OF US MARINES

KANEOHE BAY, Hawaii: US President Barack Obama is one of the most powerful men in the world. He's commander in chief of one of its mightiest militaries, too. Yet in spite of all that, Obama feels inadequate from time to time. Especially when he's vacationing in Hawaii and working out alongside strapping Marines at their gym. "The only problem I've got when I'm here is having to work out with Marines in the gym," Obama said during his annual Christmas Day visit with US troops at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay. "Because I generally feel like your commander in chief is in pretty good shape, and then I get next to some guy, you know, curling 100 pounds and it makes me feel small.

Obama works out at the base gym just about every day when he vacations here. With New Year's Day approaching, though, he told the troops he's inspired "to work harder so I can keep up with you next year." Perhaps using the "workout stuff" his wife, Michelle, had said she was getting him for Christmas. The 6-foot-1 Obama is known to enjoy a daily workout whether he's at home in the White House, traveling or on vacation. He also plays golf practically every weekend in Washington when the weather cooperates, and he swings his clubs just about daily during extended vacations on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, or here in his native Hawaii.

The Christmas visit with the troops has become a yearly tradition for the Obamas during their annual vacation on Oahu. Obama said it's one of their favorite things to do because they get a chance to "say thank you on behalf of the American people." This year's visit came four days after six US service members were killed in a suicide attack in Afghanistan. In his first public comments on the attack, Obama praised the six individuals as "outstanding, brave men and women.

"As we know, when you're deployed overseas, it's tough," Obama said Friday. He said that although his administration has brought home troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, "there are still folks over there every single day and it's still dangerous, as we saw this past week, where we had some outstanding, brave men and women who were killed." "So we never take for granted what all of you do for the American people," Obama said. "You help keep us free. You help keep us strong. Whatever service you're in, whatever branch, we are extraordinarily grateful for everything that you do every single day."

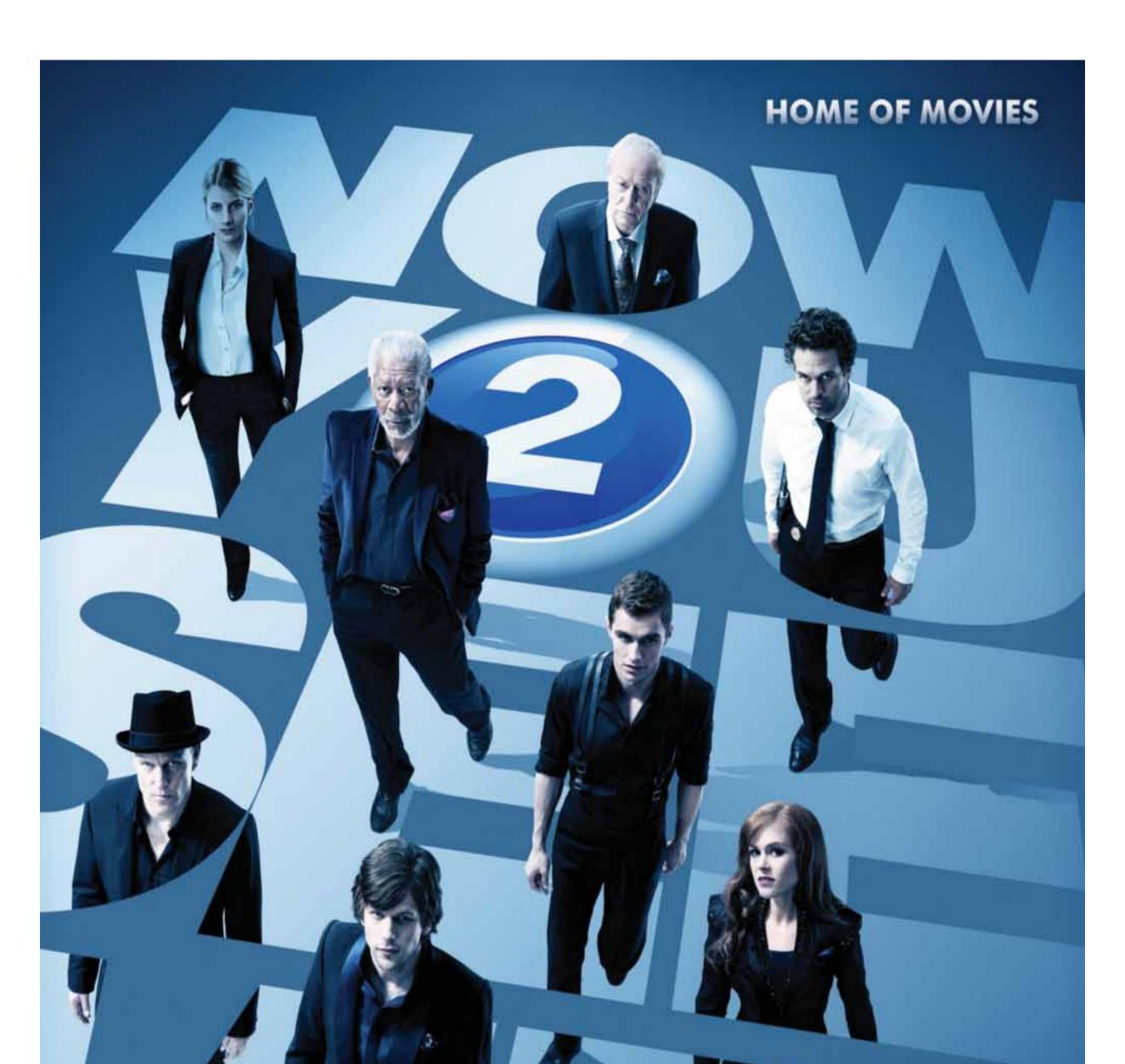
in the U.S. National Guard, were killed Monday at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan, the largest U.S. facility in the country, when a suicide attacker rammed an explosivesladen motorcycle into a joint NATO-Afghan patrol. The Taliban claimed responsibility. Before the afternoon visit, Obama opened Christmas gifts and sang carols with his family at their vacation rental in nearby Kailua, about a half hour from downtown Honolulu. Obama also spent part of Christmas Eve telephoning US service members stationed around the world to thank them and their families for their service, the White House said. Obama is on a 16-day vacation from Washington. He is scheduled to return to the White House just after the start of the new year. - AP

New York City police detective who served

The six service members, including a



KANEOHE BAY, Hawaii: US first lady Michelle Obama listens while US President Barack Obama speaks to members of the US Marines, their loved ones and others to celebrate the holidays during Christmas Day at Marine Corps Base Hawaii. — AFP



NOW YOU SEE ME

TOMORROW MONDAY PREMIERE 11 PM KWT

mbc.net

<u> Kuwait & Times</u>

INTERNATIONAL

HOMES EVACUATED, CARS SUBMERGED AS FLOODING HITS UK

LONDON: Homes were evacuated, cars were submerged and boats were brought in to help bring people to safety yesterday as parts of England, Scotland and Wales faced severe flooding caused by repeated heavy rains. The Boxing Day holiday saw a battle against the elements, particularly in northwestern England. More than 30 "severe" flood warnings were issued - each one meaning people faced possible loss of life if they didn't exercise extreme caution.

In the county of Lancashire, some 220 miles (350 kilometers) northwest of London, emergency workers backed by the military buttressed defenses with extra sandbags and heavy trucks brought in rescue equipment able to drive through waters too high to safely traverse on foot. Hundreds of people were evacuated from their homes after water breached flood barriers and poured into the streets.

Beleaguered residents in some towns were told to abandon their homes for higher ground while others were told to move their valuables and listen to advice from emergency services about possible evacuation. Abbi Blackburn, stranded, said she had no sandbags to protect her home and had already lost major appliances to flooding in the basement. She said it was too dangerous to leave either



CALDERDALE: A car drives through flood waters at Mytholmroyd in Calderdale, West Yorkshire, England yesterday. Parts of northwest England already hit hard by flooding in recent weeks were under severe flood warnings yesterday because of forecasts for more heavy rain, with some areas being evacuated. — AP

on foot or in a vehicle. "It's getting quite bad and it's still walloping down with rain," she said. Lancashire police tried to persuade the curious to stay away from

the danger zones: "A severe flood warning means danger to life. It doesn't mean 'come and have a look," the department tweeted



WEST YORKSHIRE: A man wades through flood waters at Hebden Bridge in West Yorkshire, England yesterday. — AP

Its fire department reported one fire station had been evacuated due to floods but that its boat crews and "swift water rescue" crews were helping others to safety. Authorities issued some 335 flood alerts in all. The government's emergency response team convened by telephone to

coordinate rescue plans. Floods Minister Rory Stewart said rainfall in the affected areas is unprecedented. Resources are thin. Officials said 85 percent of Britain's flood defense barriers have already been deployed to the Cumbria area, in the far northwestern corner of England. — AP



BANGUI: A man passes over a metal gate to receive his voter registration card in the PK5 Muslim district in Bangui during a voter card distribution ahead the country's presidential elections. - AFP

SECURITY TIGHT FOR VOLATILE CAR'S LANDMARK ELECTIONS FIGHTING FORCES 10% OF THE POPULATION TO FLEE

CAR WRACKED BY DECADES OF STRIFE, MISMANAGEMENT

BANGUI, Central African Republic: Djotodia proclaimed himself presi-Volatile Central African Republic, which votes for a new president and parliament Wednesday, is rich in natural resources but mired in biting poverty largely due to chronic unrest. These are the major issues facing the country:

Instability

The most recent unrest came after longtime president Francois Bozize, a Christian, was overthrown in March 2013 by Muslim rebels from the Seleka coalition, who were in turn ousted a year later by a military intervention led by France, the country's former colonial ruler. The events sparked the bloodiest sectarian violence in the country's history as Christian militias sought revenge against their mainly Muslim foes. Central Africa's troubles started back in Dec 1965, five years after independence, when president David Dacko was ousted by Jean-Bedel Bokassa.

Bokassa took charge in Jan 1966 and crowned himself emperor in 1977 in a wildly extravagant ceremony that

dent.

Christians who comprise about 80 percent of the population organized vigilante units dubbed "anti-balaka", in reference to the machetes used by the rebels. The Christian militias then began to target Muslims, plunging the country into a crisis that ended when French troops backed by a UN mandate stepped in once again on Dec 5, 2013. Parliament then elected Bangui mayor Catherine Samba-Panza as interim president. In mid-December this year, a constitutional referendum on limiting the president's tenure was approved by a large majority, clearing the way for the upcoming parliamentary and presidential polls.

Poverty

The chronic crises have greatly harmed key sectors, and economic activity now comprises mainly subsistence agriculture, particularly cotton, coffee and tobacco. Almost 70 percent of the country's 4.8 million inhabitants live in poverty, and in 2014 the World Bank estimated per capita income at \$320 (295 euros), making it one of the world's poorest countries. It nonetheless possesses substantial resources, including uranium, diamonds, gold and timber. Administrations have been paralyzed by the unrest, and the customs, tax and public treasury services are unable to collect funds needed to pay salaries and pensions. Gross domestic product (GDP) plunged by 36 percent amid the unrest in 2013, but managed to expand by a slight 1.0 percent last year.

BANGUI: Central African Republic holds a key election amid tight security, hoping to turn a page on the worst sectarian violence seen in the notoriously restive nation. The much delayed legislative and presidential elections follow a Dec 13 referendum that delivered a resounding 93 percent vote in favor of a new constitution - signaling just how many Central Africans yearn for a return to normalcy.

The new constitution, installing the country's sixth republic since its 1960 independence from France, limits the president's tenure to two terms and reins in armed militias which proliferate in large parts of the country. After more than two years of fighting that forced 10 percent of the population to flee their homeland, the vote will show whether the mineralrich but dirt poor nation can slam the door on bloodshed to begin an era of peace.

Despite the presence of 11,000 UN and French peacekeepers, large chunks of the country remain out of bounds, either under the control of rebel chieftains or bandits. There are 30 candidates vying for the presidency, including the son of former self-proclaimed 1970s coronation was modelled on Napoleon's. The frontrunners include Anicet Georges Dologuele, a former premier widely known as "Mr Clean" for his efforts to wipe out graft and theft.

Dologuele's main electoral planks are his pacific past and his record as prime minister. "At age 58, I have never held a weapon," he said recently on the campaign trail. "I am still happy to recall that between 1996 until now, the only time there was no military or political crises in the country was during my time in office," he also said. The other leading contenders are another former premier, Martin Ziguele, and Abdoul Karim Meckassoua, who held several ministerial positions under ousted veteran ruler Francois Bozize.

'No to Hatred'

Central Africa has been rocked by violence since a mainly Muslim rebellion in 2013 overthrew Bozize, triggering revenge killings by Christian militia that spilled over into civilian communities. The second round of the polls is scheduled for Jan 16. There are about 1,800 candidates in the running for parliamenemperor Jean-Bedel Bokassa, whose extravagant tary seats. Almost two million Central Africans have

registered to vote in a population of 4.8 million.

Pope Francis, who visited the Central African Republic in November, had made an impassioned appeal for peace, saying: "Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters." "Together, we must say no to hatred, to revenge and to violence, particularly that violence which is perpetrated in the name of a religion or of God himself," the pope said.

The international community, which has been pouring aid into the country for over two years, was keen for the referendum and elections to take place. The UN mission in Central Africa said it wanted the ballot to "pass off without incident ... and for every Central African to be able to vote in total security."

The unrest in the country - which has seen six republics, an empire and several transitional governments - has wreaked havoc on the economy. Almost 70 percent of people live in poverty, and in 2014 the World Bank estimated per capita income at \$320 (295 euros), making it one of the poorest countries in the world. It nonetheless possesses substantial resources, including uranium, diamonds, gold and timber. — AFP

made waves across the world. His reign was marked by bloodshed, notably the 1979 massacre of school children who refused to buy school uniforms from a firm owned by one of his wives. The French drove Bokassa out on Sept 20, 1979, while he was on a visit to Libya. Dacko was reinstated but two years later forced to hand power over to senior military officers.

A multi-party system was unveiled in 1991, but then three mutinies in 1996-97 were followed by a failed coup in 2001. Bozize, a former military chief, rebelled and took over in 2003. Several more rebellions followed, starting in September 2005, and France intervened with help from Chadian soldiers in Nov 2006 to recapture towns in the north that had fallen to rebel forces. Bozize was re-elected in 2011 though the vote was marred by fraud, and in March 2013, Seleka rebels seized the capital Bangui and Michel

Insecurity

The country's armed forces are estimated to number about 8,000 and are backed up by 900 French troops and an 11,000-strong UN force dubbed MINUSCA. They have stabilized the situation, but do not control the entire country, which covers almost 623,000 sq km - a little less than Afghanistan or Chile. — AFP

WHAT IS BOXING DAY AND HOW DID IT GET ITS NAME?

LONDON: In Britain and other countries like Australia and Canada, the day after Christmas is a secular national holiday known as Boxing Day. Here's a brief look at some theories about how the holiday got its name and how people celebrate it:

No need for boxing gloves

While no one seems to know for sure how it came to be called Boxing Day, it definitely has nothing to do with the sport of boxing. Perhaps the most widely held understanding of its origins comes from the tradition of wealthier members of society giving servants and tradesmen a socalled "Christmas Box" containing money and gifts on the day after Christmas. It was seen as a reward for a year's worth of service.

Other believe it comes from the post-Christmas custom of churches placing boxes outside their doors to collect money for distribution to less-fortunate members of society in need of Christmas cheer. Some trace it to Britain's proud naval tradition and the days when a sealed box of money was kept on board for lengthy voyages and then given to a priest for distribution to the poor if the voyage was successful. There are other explanations, but it's clear the designation has nothing to do with the modern habit of using the holiday for shopping at "big box" stores selling televisions, computers and the like.

Sharing the wealth

No one knows for sure when Boxing Day

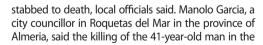
started, but some believe it was centuries ago, when servants would be given the day after Christmas off as a day of rest after feverish preparations for their masters' celebrations. Others trace it back even earlier, to the Roman practice of collecting money in boxes - they say Roman invaders brought this practice to Britain, where it was taken up by the clergy to collect money in boxes for the disadvantaged. The tradition gained popularity during the Victorian era and has flourished to this day. The British Empire may now be a thing of the past, but Boxing Day is still celebrated in some other parts of the Commonwealth, including Canada, Australia and Kenya. In Canada, some say Boxing Day is losing out to the US import of Black Friday, the day after US Thanksgiving in November, but a representative from Best Buy in Canada says Dec 26 remains its biggest shopping day of the year.

What Do People Actually Do?

Boxing Day has evolved into a day of relaxation and indulgence - and shopping. It is filled with sporting events (including a marathon soccer schedule tailor-made for TV viewing from a comfortable couch) and it is often a day when people open their homes to family and friends who drop by for turkey and perhaps half-consumed bottles of wine left over from Christmas dinner. In Britain it used to be a day for fox hunting in the frost-tinged countryside, but that practice has been mostly banned for more than a decade now. — AP

IMMIGRANT DEATH SPARKS RIOT IN SPAIN BEACH CITY

MADRID: African migrants rioted in a southern Spanish beach city on Friday, setting fire to garbage bins and cars, after a man from Guinea-Bissau was





ROQUETAS DE MAR: Members of the Spanish Civil Guard patrol a street yesterday where a man from Guinea-Bissau was found dead, in Roquetas de Mar, near Almeria. — AFP

city led to protests which descended into violence in the working class neighborhood of Cortijos de Marin. "Garbage bins are being burned, cars have been burned, windows have been shattered," he told radio news station Cadena Ser.

Local online newspaper Ideal published a photo of a garbage container engulfed in flames in the middle of a street near a pharmacy as well as a video of man pushing a garbage container onto a burning car. Police found the body of the man from Guinea-Bissau on a street in Roquetas del Mar in the early hours of Friday. Police suspect the man was stabbed following a dispute over a traffic accident, local media reported.

About 30-40 people had taken part in the unrest but police have since brought the situation under control, the assistant deputy of the national government in Almeria, Andres Garcia Lopez, told Cadena Ser. "At this moment the situation is back to normal," he said. Police would remain at the scene throughout the night and for the next few days to prevent any renewal of unrest, he added. No one was injured in the riot and no arrests were made, Lopez said.

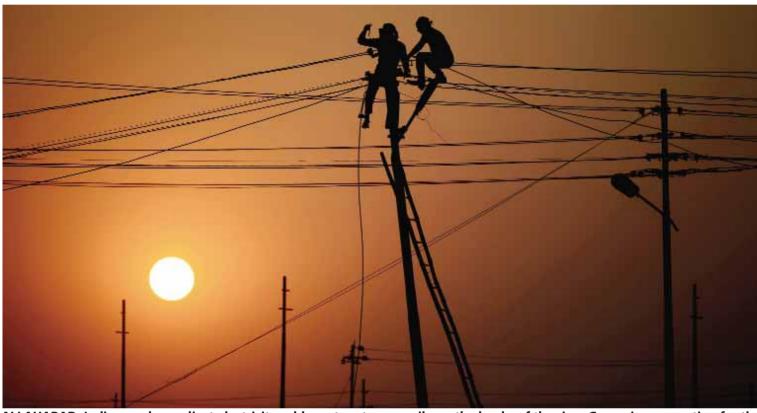
The province of Almeria is home to a sea of plastic greenhouses that employ many migrants as vegetable and fruit labourers. It also relies on tourism but the jobless rate in the province stand at 31 percent, much higher than the already high national rate of 21 percent. In 2008 African migrants in Roquetas del Mar set fire to cars and houses, and attacked police and firefighters with stones, after a 28-year-old Senegalese man was stabbed to death. - AFP

<u>Kuwait & Times</u>

INTERNATIONAL



SYDNEY: Brazilian acrobat Jackson Carmelo Topazio does a trick on Bondi Beach while celebrating Christmas Day in Sydney, Australia on Friday, Dec 25, 2015. — AP



XMAS LETDOWN: WOMAN IS NOT ACTIVIST'S LOST GRANDDAUGHTER

BUENOS AIRES: In a Christmas gift gone awry, a woman thought to be the lost granddaughter of an activist who searches for babies stolen during Argentina's 1976-1983 military dictatorship turned out to be someone else. Two genetic tests showed that the 39 year-old woman in question is not the granddaughter of Maria "Chicha" Mariani, the government said Friday. Mariani, 92 and nearly blind, is one of the best known Argentine rights activists, and the Christmas Eve news that she had finally found her granddaughter was the feel-good story of the season. President Mauricio Macri even congratulated her on Twitter.

She is one of the founders of the Grandmothers of the Plaza del Mayo, a human rights group seeking to find children stolen or illegally adopted during Argentina's so-called "Dirty War." Babies born in captivity to political prisoners or orphaned by assassinations were given to families sympathetic to the regime or even taken in by their parents' killers. Mariani's granddaughter, Clara Anahi Mariani, was abducted as a three-month-old infant when regime agents killed her mother.

On Christmas Eve a statement from th

1989 after stepping down as president of the Grandmothers group, said DNA testing had confirmed "with 99.9 percent" certainty that the woman identified as Clara Anahi was Mariani's granddaughter. That DNA test was carried out privately by the woman, who has not been named. However two DNA tests-one in early 2015 and the other made public Friday show no relationship between the two women, said Pablo Parenti, head of the government office that searches for children kidnapped during the dictatorship.

The second test was carried out by the National Genetic Data Bank (BNDG), the institution that provides official results for such cases. "Both reports are conclusive in showing that there is no relationship between the genetic profile of this young woman and the Chicha Mariani family group, nor with the other families that are still looking for abducted children," read the statement. Mariani urged "caution" in a separate statement, saying that the results of the second test needed to be confirmed. Mariani will hold a press conference on Saturday to explain what happened, her biographer Juan Martin Ramos Padilla said in a state-

ALLAHABAD: Indian workers adjust electricity cables set up temporarily on the banks of the river Ganga in preparation for the annual Hindu religious fair of Magh Mela yesterday. — AFP

INDIA CLOSING IN ON DEAL TO BUILD 6 NUKE REACTORS Reactor sites in PM Modi's home state

NEW DELHI: India expects to seal a contract with Westinghouse Electric Co LLC to build six nuclear reactors in the first half of next year, a senior government official said, in a sign its \$150 billion dollar nuclear power program is getting off the ground. The proposed power plant in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat will accelerate India's plans to build roughly 60 reactors, which would make it the world's second-biggest nuclear energy market after China.

India wants to dramatically increase its nuclear capacity to 63,000 megawatts (MW) by 2032, from 5,780 MW, as part of a broader push to move away from fossil fuels, cut greenhouse gas emissions and avoid the dangerous effects of climate change. The United States signed a pact with India in 2008, opening the way for nuclear commerce that had previously been stymied due to New Delhi's nuclear weapons programme and shunning of the global Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

But hopes that reactor makers would get billions of dollars of new business evaporated after India adopted a law in 2010 giving the state-run operator Nuclear Power Corp of India Ltd (NPCIL) the right to seek damages from suppliers in the event of an accident. Indian officials have been trying to assuage suppliers' concerns, including by setting up an insurance pool with a liability cap of 15 billion Indian rupees (\$226.16 million).

A final hurdle - ratification of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC) - is expected within weeks, the Indian government official said. The CSC requires signatories to shift liability to the operator and offers access to relief funds. In a statement, Westinghouse said it expected India would move towards a framework that satisfies the CSC and channels accident liability exclusively to the operator. The statement made no reference to ongoing negotiations.

Shares of Westinghouse's parent, Toshiba Corp, jumped as much as 3.3 percent on Thursday after the news, before slipping back. A Toshiba spokesman declined to comment on the report, but noted that Westinghouse has been confident of winning orders from India. A deal with Westinghouse could also put pressure on General Electric Co, whose nuclear energy venture with Hitachi was offered a site six years ago to build reactors.

GE has still not decided whether it would move ahead with the plan, the official said, adding that India was keen for a decision from the company soon. GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy said it had strong interest in India, and that the CSC would be "a sustainable solution to concerns about India's existing domestic nuclear liability law". India's plans for ramping up nuclear capacity have in the past fallen far short of targets and industry officials say that the aim to lift the share of nuclear power to a quarter of its energy mix, from barely 3 percent now, is very ambitious.

No More Technical Hurdles

Later this week, India is expected to offer Russia a site in its southern state of Andhra Pradesh to build six reactors, on top of the six it is already expected to build in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, Indian and Russian officials have said. Separately, India expects Japan, which supplies components used in most reactors, to ratify an agreement sometime in the second quarter of 2016 to support its nuclear program, another senior Indian government source said. "There are no more technical hurdles in the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes," the source said.

French nuclear company Areva, which uses Japanese components, also has a deal to build six reactors in India, although restructuring within that company was likely to delay construction until 2017, the first official said. French utility EDF agreed earlier this year to buy a majority stake in Areva's reactor business. Areva has been in price negotiations with NPCIL for several months now, officials at the Indian operator told Reuters in November. Areva did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Westinghouse Deal

Negotiators from Westinghouse and Indian operator NPCIL have held several rounds of talks on the nuclear plant in Mithi Virdi, the government official said. NPCIL declined to comment on the negotiations. Federal minister for Atomic Energy Jitendra Singh told parliament this month that talks were going on with French and US firms to arrive at project proposals. He offered no details. But the government source said Westinghouse and NPCIL were negotiating all six reactors in one go, instead of an earlier plan to strike deals for two at a time. — Reuters

COUPLE SEEKING TO UNDO DIVORCE GET TURNED DOWN

CONCORD: Should those irreconcilable differences suddenly become reconcilable, don't go looking to get un-divorced in New Hampshire. The state's Supreme Court this month upheld a lower court ruling refusing to vacate a New Castle couple's 2014 divorce after 24 years of marriage. Terrie Harmon and her ex-husband, Thomas McCarron, argued on appeal that their divorce decree was erroneous because they mended fences and are a couple once more. But the justices, in a unanimous ruling issued Dec 2, said the law specifically allows them to grant divorces - not undo them.

Courts in some states - including Illinois, Nebraska, Mississippi, Arkansas, Maryland and Kentucky - will vacate divorces within a certain time frame or under certain circumstances, at the parties' request. Others - including New York and South Dakota - maintain they, like New Hampshire, have no statutory authority to undo a divorce. Attorney Joshua Gordon, appointed to defend the lower court's ruling, said allowing the couple's divorce to be undone could jeopardize the finality of all divorces. "Divorce is a uniquely fraught area of litigation," Gordon argued. "For divorced couples, it is often important to have the solace of knowing that their former spouse is indeed former."

Harmon and McCarron did not return calls seek-

ing the answer to the question: Why not just remarry? They were married in 1989 and filed for divorce in January 2014; the divorce decree was finalized in July that same year. In March, they filed a joint motion to vacate the decree. New Hampshire law does allow for divorces to be set aside for reasons of fraud, accident, mistake or misfortune. Gordon said that none of those circumstances happened in the Harmon-McCarron divorce and that any adverse financial consequences the couple claimed were "self-imposed."

He said it's his understanding they had several reasons for trying to vacate the decree. "I think it was partly sentimental, and partly that they had some business interests that a divorce and remarry would be more complicated than undoing the divorce," Gordon said. Harmon, a lawyer, argued in court papers that a couple shouldn't have to show the decree was legally flawed if they reconcile. She said that test is "designed to balance the interests of adverse parties," not those who want to get back together. Attorney Kysa Crusco, head of the family law section of the New Hampshire Bar Association, said Harmon's argument was "creative" but the law and prior New Hampshire rulings are clear. "People just have to be cautious in making sure divorce is what they really want," she said. — AP

Anahi Foundation, which Mariani created in

ment. — AFP



BUENOS AIRES: The woman supposed to be Clara Anahi Teruggi (right), the 120th granddaughter who was snatched from her mother and identified by Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo (Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo), hugs Maria (Chicha) Mariani on Dec 24, 2015. — AFP

Powerful quake jolts Afghanistan, Pakistan

KABUL: A 6.3-magnitude earthquake centred in the Hindu Kush jolted Afghanistan and Pakistan, damaging homes and leaving dozens of people injured just two months after a killer quake rattled the same mountainous region. The tremor late Friday hit at a depth of 203.5 km, the US Geological Survey said, sending people fleeing shaking buildings into a bitterly cold night and prompting fears of aftershocks.

The epicentre of the quake, which was felt as far away as New Delhi, was in the remote Afghan province of Badakhshan, close to the Pakistani and Tajik borders. A pregnant woman was killed when a boulder fell on her house in Peshawar and up to 50 others were left injured in the northwestern Pakistani city, officials said. Initial information suggested at least 45 houses were damaged in Badakhshan where communication with remote, mountainous villages is typically slow, and 12 people were injured in the Afghan province of Nangarhar. USGS had initially reported the guake's magnitude at 6.2.

In October, a 7.5-magnitude quake in the same region ripped across Pakistan and Afghanistan, killing nearly 400 people and flattening buildings in rugged terrain. For many in Pakistan, October's quake brought back traumatic memories of a 7.6-magnitude quake that struck in October 2005, killing more than 75,000 people and displacing some 3.5 million. Afghanistan is frequently hit by earthquakes, especially in the Hindu Kush mountain range, which lies near the junction of the Eurasian and Indian tectonic plates. In Nepal a quake in April and a strong aftershock in May killed more than 8,900 people. — AFP



SURKHROAD, Afghanistan: An Afghan villager removes bricks after his home was damaged from an earthquake in this district of Jalalabad east of Kabul yesterday. — AP



'ARMED' CHINESE SHIP SAILS NEAR DISPUTED ISLES: JAPAN

TOKYO: A Chinese coast guard ship which appeared to be armed with several cannons yesterday entered what Tokyo regards as its territorial waters near disputed islands, the Japan Coast Guard said. Japan and China routinely butt heads over ownership of the uninhabited East China Sea islets, as Chinese ships - mostly coastguard vessels - and aircraft have sometimes approached them to back up Beijing's claims and test Japan's response.

It was however the first time an apparently armed Chinese coastguard vessel had "entered the territorial waters near the Senkaku Islands", the Japan Coast Guard said. Japan administers the uninhabited islands under that name but China also claims them and calls them the Diaoyus. On Tuesday Japan said it had spotted the armed Chinese coastguard ship for the first time in the contiguous waters near the islands.

"The ship is seen carrying four pieces

of equipment, two at the front and another set of two at the rear, which each seem to have something similar to a cannon," a coastguard spokeswoman had said at the time. The same ship entered what Tokyo considers its territorial waters, with two other Chinese coastguard vessels without such equipment, at around 9:30 am (0030 GMT) Saturday and stayed for about an hour, the Japan Coast Guard said in statements. In November, Japan said it spotted a Chinese naval intelligence ship operating near the disputed islands for the first time. Relations between Japan and China hit a low after Tokyo in September 2012 moved to increase its formal control by nationalizing some of the islands. But the countries -Asia's two biggest economies - have taken steps over the past year to improve ties.

They issued carefully worded statements on the dispute ahead of a summit in November last year in Beijing between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The two sides acknowledged they had different views on tensions emanating from the issue but agreed on the need to keep them under control. Distrust, however, remains high as China is wary of moves by Abe to raise Japan's military profile while Tokyo frets about Beijing's increasing regional and global assertiveness. — AFP



VICTORIA: A Skycrane helicopter drops a load of water as it works to hold back a wildfire from the hamlet of Claredon in Victoria, Australia. — AP

MORE THAN 100 HOMES LOST IN AUSTRALIA XMAS BUSHFIRES

OFFICIALS WARN OF MORE BLAZES

MELBOURNE: More than 100 homes burned the rest of Victoria. "This fire doesn't go away," services, noting that there had so far been no Craig Lapsley, the state's emergency services loss of life, but he warned that the number of

homes destroyed could rise. Meetings were held yesterday for hundreds of victims urgently moved out of affected towns on Friday, many spending Christmas night in hurriedly organised shelters. Andrews said financial grants had already been issued to help those who had lost their homes. The fires started with a lightning strike on Dec. 19 and, fanned by winds, have burned more than 2,000 hectares. Walking tracks in the nearby Great Otway National Park have been closed to the public as some of the fires are within the park itself. The disaster is the latest of a string of bushfires to hit Victoria and other states in recent weeks. In 2009, Victoria witnessed Australia's worst ever bushfire disaster, since dubbed "Black Saturday". — Reuters

JOURNALIST ACCUSED OF 'CHAMPIONING' TERRORISM CHINA EXPELS FRENCH JOURNALIST

BELJING: China confirmed the imminent expulsion of a French journalist in the first such case since 2012, accusing her of "flagrantly championing" terrorist acts in a statement on its foreign ministry's website yesterday. Ursula Gauthier, a Beijing-based correspondent for French news magazine L'Obs, must issue a public apology for an article she wrote last month or China's foreign ministry will not renew her press credentials, officials told Gauthier on Christmas Day.

Her essay "flagrantly championed acts of terrorism and acts of cruelly killing innocents, triggering the Chinese people's outrage," said the foreign ministry statement. Citing her failure to make a "serious apology to the Chinese people", the statement said: "It is not suitable for her to continue working in China". "China will never support the freedom to champion terrorism," it added.

But the Chinese people expressed confusion over their own purported indignation, as most had not read or even heard of Gauthier's article, which has no Chinese-language version and remains inaccessible on the mainland's censored internet in its original French. "Triggered the Chinese people's outrage'? Don't presume to represent me - I don't even know what happened!" wrote one user on China's Twitter-like Weibo platform. "You should put out the original article for everyone to see - otherwise how can everyone be angry?" asked another.

Entitled "After the attacks (on Paris), Chinese solidarity is not without ulterior motives", Gauthier's article spoke of China's anti-terrorism policies in the country's western region of Xinjiang, homeland of the Muslim

they still had not found any bodies. The same

area was hit by a massive landslide last month

that killed more than 100 people. Locals say

dozens more have died throughout the year in

smaller accidents. The region is remote, with lit-

tle phone coverage and poor roads making it

difficult to obtain precise and swift data after

such incidents. Those killed in landslides are

mainly itinerant workers who scratch a living

picking through the piles of waste left by large-

scale industrial mining firms in the hope of

stumbling across a previously missed hunk of

Uighur ethnic minority - many of whom complain of discrimination and controls on their culture and religion. Xinjiang is often hit by deadly unrest and China blames the violence on Islamist separatists, but rights groups point to Beijing's own actions as a driver.

If Gauthier's press card is not renewed, she cannot apply for a new visa, forcing her to leave China. "They confirmed that if I did not make a public apology on all the points that had 'hurt the Chinese people'... my press card would not be renewed and I would have to leave on December 31," Gauthier told AFP Friday. Gauthier would be the first foreign correspondent to be expelled since the 2012 expulsion of Melissa Chan, correspondent for the English-language service of AI Jazeera.

The move has been met with widespread criticism from the French government, press watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and Gauthier's employer. "France will remain committed to the defence of freedom of expression and information throughout the world," wrote French minister of culture and communication Fleur Pellerin Friday on Twitter in response to the news. Gauthier's article in L'Obs triggered condemnation from Beijing and a virulent campaign in the state-run Global Times and China Daily, as well as thousands of often violent and abusive comments from Chinese Internet users. Her photo was also published online.

While the domestic media in China is subject to strict control and many topics are taboo, the foreign media is free to publish on any topic. However, foreign journalists frequently complain of harassment by the authorities while conducting routine reporting. — AFP



bushfires on Christmas Day and the situation remained dangerous yesterday, as officials predicted more blazes to come later in the hot southern summer. While around 500 firefighters and 13 firefighting aircraft battled the flames along parts of Victoria state's picturesque Great Ocean Road, teams moved in to assess damage from fires that had lit up the night sky along the coast on Christmas.

A spokesman for the state's emergency services said 98 homes had been confirmed burned in the community of Wye River and another 18 in nearby Separation Creek, for a total of 116 in the two townships, located about 120 km southwest of Melbourne. Top emergency officials warned that dry conditions posed a threat of more fires for the Great Ocean Road area and commissioner, told a news conference. "We will be back into hot, windy weather in January without a doubt. Everything's available to burn."

The Great Ocean Road is one of Australia's biggest tourist draws with its spectacular scenery and unusual offshore rock formations. It remained mostly closed to traffic on Saturday during what is typically one of its busiest times of the year. Although an evacuation alert was lifted for the popular tourist town of Lorne and rain overnight had helped the firefighting operation, officials said the situation remained potentially dangerous with many hotspots. Images from the scene showed hillsides charred to the ground all the way down to the coast.

State Premier Daniel Andrews surveyed the area from the air and commended emergency

BEIJING: French journalist Ursula Gauthier, a reporter for the French news magazine L'Obs, holds a statement from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as she sits at her desk in her apartment in Beijing yesterday. — AP

TOKYO TO PROPOSE NEW FUND FOR FORMER 'COMFORT WOMEN'

TOKYO: Japan plans to propose a fresh fund to support former comfort women as foreign ministers from Tokyo and Seoul meet next week to settle a bitter row over a Japanese wartime brothel system, reports said yesterday. The one-day meeting between Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and his South Korean counterpart, Yun Byung-se, will be held in Seoul on Monday, officials have said. The ministers are to discuss "matters of mutual concern" such as the issue of women systematically forced to have sex with Japanese soldiers during World War II.

The Japanese government is considering creating a new fund of about 100 million yen (\$830,000) to help former comfort women, the Mainichi daily reported, while other media said the sum would be larger than that. Tokyo also plans to propose that the two countries sign a statement confirming that the issue of comfort women is settled completely, the Mainichi and other Japanese newspapers reported. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is aiming for a resolution of the lingering issue that has overshadowed diplomatic relations between the two East Asian US allies.

Japan issued a landmark 1993 statement that expressed "sincere apologies and remorse" to the women "who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women". But it has long maintained that the dispute was settled in a 1965 normalisation agreement with South Korea, which saw Tokyo make a total payment of \$800 million in grants or loans to its former colony.

In its editorial yesterday, Japan's conservative Sankei daily called on the government to maintain that the dispute was settled in the 1965 agreement and assure that South Korea stop "rehashing" the issue as a diplomatic card. Seoul is demanding a fresh formal apology and compensation for the Korean women. The fate of the comfort women is a hugely emotional issue in South Korea and a source of much of the distrust that has marred relations between Seoul and Tokyo for decades. — AFP

Fresh landslide hits Myanmar jade mine

YANGON: Rescuers were searching through mud and rubble yesterday after a new landslide buried workers - possibly dozens - in a remote jade mining region in northern Myanmar, the second such incident in just over a month. The landslide took place on Friday afternoon in Hpakant, Kachin State, the war-torn area that is the epicentre of Myanmar's secretive billion dollar jade industry. "The rescue process has now started and we are searching for dead bodies but we can't tell the numbers yet," Nilar Myint, an official from Hpakant Administrative Office said.

An AFP photographer on the scene said mechanical diggers had been brought in to sift through a huge pile of debris that had slid down a steep hillside. Locals report as many as 50 people might have been buried by the wall of mud and stones. But a second official involved in the rescue operation downplayed that number. "According to what officials from nearby villages have told us, just three or four people are missing at the moment," Myo Thet Aung, also from the Hpakant Administrative Office, told AFP.

By mid-afternoon yesterday. officials said

HPAKANT: Rescue workers are pictured at the site of a landslide yesterday in Hpakant, Kachin State, the war-torn area that is the epicenter of Myanmar's secretive billion dollar jade industry. — AFP

jade that will deliver them from poverty.

Demand from China

Myanmar is the source of virtually all of the world's finest jadeite, a near-translucent green stone that is enormously prized in neighbouring China, where it is known as the "stone of heaven". The Hpakant landscape has been turned into a moonscape of environmental destruction as firms use ever-larger diggers to claw the precious stone from the ground. But while mining firms - many linked to the junta-era military elite - are thought to be raking in huge sums, local people complain they are shut off from the bounty.

In an October report, advocacy group Global Witness estimated that the value of Myanmar jade produced in 2014 alone was \$31 billion and said the trade might be the "biggest natural resource heist in modern history". Much of the best jade is thought to be smuggled directly to China. With little help from authorities, Hpakant community groups have pooled limited resources to help workers injured in the accidents which have become commonplace as the diggers creep closer to villages.

Heroin and methamphetamine are also easily and cheaply available on Hpakant's dusty streets, a side effect of Myanmar's massive narcotics trade. Locals have launched desperate campaigns to try to persuade Myanmar's quasicivilian government, which replaced outright military rule in 2015, to force mining firms to curtail their rapidly expanding operations.

But their pleas have so far fallen on deaf ears. Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy swept landmark Nov 8 elections and will form a new government early next year. But it has not yet outlined any firm plans for the jade trade beyond pledges for a more equitable allocation of profits from the country's natural resources. Analysts say reform will be difficult given the entrenched military interests in the trade and the remoteness of many of the mines, some of which are in the hands of ethnic rebel fighters. — AFP

Kuwait <u>~ Times</u>





Jockeys compete in a camel race during the Mazayin Dhafra Camel Festival in the desert near the city of Madinat Zayed, 150 km west of Abu Dhabi, on Friday. The festival, which attracts participants from around the Gulf region, includes a camel beauty contest, a display of UAE handcrafts and other activities aimed at promoting the country's folklore. — AFP

SYRIA EVACUATION PLAN PUT ON HOLD

Continued from Page 1

"About 1,200 people were supposed to leave today (Saturday), but the death of Zahran Alloush means we are back to square one," he said. He said buses standing by to transfer the evacuees had left empty and "the plan was on hold until Jaish al-Islam reorganizes itself".

Another source close to the negotiations said there was a delay in implementing the deal but that it was "still in place". Syrian Observatory for Human Rights chief Rami Abdel Rahman said the deal was "frozen, but not cancelled, because of logistical issues linked essentially to the difficulty of providing safe passage". The deal came after two months of intense talks between government and district leaders, according to the Britain-based monitor.

Syria's conflict erupted in 2011 with anti-government protests but has spiralled into a multi-sided civil war across the country. Allouch was a leading figure in the rebel movement in Damascus province, and had been holding a senior-level meeting in Eastern Ghouta when he was killed. A Syrian security source told AFP "dozens" of rebels died in two rounds of air strikes by Syria's air force with newly provided Russian missiles. At least 12 Jaish al-Islam members and seven from the Islamist Ahrar al-Sham group were killed.

according to the Observatory. Buwaydani is a 40-year-old businessman and fighter from Douma in Eastern Ghouta who hails from a family with strong ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, the monitor said. Backed by Saudi Arabia, the group recently took part in a landmark opposition meeting in Riyadh aimed at forming a united front for eventual talks with Assad's regime. It has remained firmly opposed to both Assad and IS.

Analyst Karim Bitar said Allouch's death is "a severe blow to the Riyadh negotiations process". "Given Allouch's authoritarian temper and strong rule, it will take time for Jaish al-Islam to recover from this blow and for the alternative leadership to emerge," he said. Aron Lund, editor of the Carnegie Endowment's Syria in Crisis website, said: "In a way, Zahran Allouch has been the rare successful centralizer in the Syrian rebel movement." But with him gone, that cohesion could "unravel", Lund added.

Elsewhere, a coalition of Kurdish and Arab groups said it seized the key Tishreen Dam from IS on the Euphrates River, as well as seven villages on the river's eastern bank, in the northern province of Aleppo. Syrian Democratic spokesman Talal Sello told AFP dozens of IS fighters had been killed. The SDF can now cross into IScontrolled territory along the river's western bank, bringing it less than 30 km from Manbij, an IS stronghold. The Observatory's Abdel Rahman said the SDF had crossed the dam, and "battles are now on the western bank of the river". — AFP

VANDALS RANSACK MUSLIM PRAYER HALL...

Continued from Page 1

Local authorities including Christophe Mirmand, the prefect or top official of Corsica, also vowed to arrest those responsible for the outbreak of violence over two days on the Mediterranean island. The Christmas violence came amid heightened security measures for the season in France after the Nov 13 attacks by jihadists in Paris that killed 130 people. Dalil Boubakeur, the rector of the Grand Mosque of Paris, said he was "dismayed and sad-

dened" by the events on Corsica in an appearance on France's BFMTV, calling for "calm and cool heads".

Around 120,000 French police, members of armed units and soldiers were mobilised on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Corsica is a department of France which held regional elections earlier this month, which had seen the far-right anti-immigrant Front National make unprecedented gains in the first round of the vote. On Corsica the nationalists won the regional election there taking power for the first time. — AFP

Modi's surprise Pak visit hailed

Continued from Page 1

"Modi has made clear he is willing to risk political capital to make peace," the Indian Express newspaper said, warning that any future terrorist attacks traced to Pakistan would invite "savage criticism".

The visit, announced by Modi on Twitter, gave the appearance of being spontaneous, with Sharif's foreign affairs adviser not able to reach Lahore in time. However, a senior Pakistan official told AFP that security had been planned days in advance. While Indian media suggested Modi was the driving force behind the visit, a Pakistan official said it was Islamabad's idea to arrange a meeting ahead of formal diplomatic talks set for January. "The goal behind this meeting was to humanise the other side by arranging a visit involving close family members," said the official, adding that some of Sharif's cabinet had opposed the visit. Television polls suggested most Indians welcomed the development while newspapers praised Modi's decision to avoid weighty expectations by staging an informal "stopover" on the way back from Kabul. "Traditional buildup to an Indian PM's visit to Pakistan would have seen different interest groups bringing all kinds of pressure to bear," The Times of India said. Yet members of the opposition Congress party denounced the "unpredictable" act, calling it un-statesmanlike, with some complaining such an important meeting should not have been announced on Twitter. Others questioned whether the newfound friendship would translate into concrete progress on peace, thwarted by issues such as India's fear of Pakistansanctioned terror attacks and violence-plagued Kashmir.

In his 18 months in power Modi has shown huge confidence in his political skills, announcing economic policies himself and fronting a key state election campaign in Bihar - unsuccessfully - instead of fielding a candidate. "Modi loves to spring surprises - he's disruptive, he's setting aside old taboos," Neelam Deo, a director at Gateway House think-tank in Mumbai told AFP. "He's personalized diplomacy to an extent we haven't seen in India since (India's first prime minister) Jawaharlal Nehru in the 1950s,"

Hours afterwards, leading members of Jaish al-Islam th elected Abu Hammam Al-Buwaydani as a replacement, th

STORMS KILL 15 IN SOUTHERN US

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The NWS warned that "flash flooding will be possible" yesterday in the area.

In Mississippi, eight people were confirmed dead and another 60 injured, the state emergency management agency said on Twitter. Among them was a seven-yearold boy killed when a storm picked up and tossed the car he was travelling in, fire chief Kenny Holbrook told reporters in the town of Holly Springs. Six fatalities were confirmed in Tennessee, including three people found dead Thursday in a car submerged in a creek, according to the fire department in Columbia, Tennessee. Another person was killed in Arkansas.

The East Coast meanwhile was enjoying unseasonably warm weather, with temperatures in New York peaking at 72 degrees Fahrenheit (22 Celsius) Thursday, the warmest Christmas Eve since records began in 1871. The temperature reached a record-setting 66 degrees (19 Celsius) the following day. In the US capital, the temperature on Friday reached 69 degrees (20.6 Celsius), a 30-year record, local media reported. — AFP

she said, adding the visit was likely part of a broader strategy.

In Pakistan, the population has largely backed efforts to bring peace between the two countries. But in Pakistaniadministered Kashmir, where cross-border shelling has claimed dozens of lives since 2014, the mood was sceptical. Aziz Ahmed, a refugee from Indian-controlled Kashmir called the meeting a "mere photo session". "Such meetings have been taking place in the past, but have proven useless after some time," he said in Muzaffarabad, capital of the Pakistan-controlled territory.

There were signs Pakistan's powerful army was not happy about the visit, with criticism on pro-army Twitter accounts believed to be run by the military. Modi and Sharif have had a stop-start diplomatic relationship since the Indian premier's surprise decision to invite Sharif to his inauguration in May 2014. A brief meeting on Nov 30 between the two leaders on the sidelines of the UN climate summit in Paris, followed by talks between their national security advisers in Bangkok, appeared to have broken the ice. — AFP





ANALYSIS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2015



Focus

SOCIALISTS RISK SUPPORT NO MATTER WHO LEADS GOVT

By Adrien Vicente

pain's Socialists hold the key to the next government after an inconclusive election but whether they reach a deal with the conservatives or team up with the anti-austerity party Podemos, they risk losing support, analysts say. The party, led since 2014 by telegenic former university professor Pedro Sanchez, came in second in last weekend's election, winning 22 percent of the vote and 90 seats in the 350-seat parliament.

The Socialists lost ground to far-left Podemos, which was founded just two years ago and came in a close third with 20.7 percent support garnering 69 seats. Despite a result that ranks as their worst ever, the Socialists are in a position to decide if acting Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's conservative Popular Party (PP) can stay in power. The PP received the most votes of any party but it fell well short of an absolute majority in parliament, taking 123 seats, and will need the support of the Socialists to govern in a minority.

But Sanchez has said the Socialists will not support any effort by Rajoy to stay on in his post via a coalition or a minority government. "We will vote against the continuity of the Popular Party at the helm of the government, with Mariano Rajoy as prime minister," he said Wednesday after holding talks with Rajoy.

Analysts said allowing the PP to stay in power could alienate leftwing voters who oppose austerity measures introduced by Rajoy in response to Spain's financial crisis. "It would be political suicide," said Anton Losada, political science professor at the University of Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain. He recalled that the Socialists focused their campaign on the need to "send Rajoy home".

Forming a pact with the PP could see the Socialists suffer the same fate as its Greek counterpart Pasok, which saw its support plunge after it joined a coalition led by the conservative New Democracy in 2012. "If they pact with the PP it would be very complicated" for Sanchez because "the base of parties is always more radical" then its leadership, said Narciso Michavila, who heads GAD3 polling firm.



Washington Watch

A CHRISTMAS LESSON

By Dr James J Zogby

here are two Christmas stories. There is the romanticized antiseptic tale that has taken hold in our popular culture. It is the "Silent Night"/"Oh! Little Town of Bethlehem" version. Mary is smiling; Joseph is hovering protectively over mother and child. Animals provide warmth; angels are singing; and shepherds come to see the new born "Babe in the Manger". In this version, all is pure and all is bright. It is a comfortable story. But it's not real.

If we stop for a moment and consider the actual circumstances of the birth, a very different story emerges. From scripture and tradition, we learn that Joseph and Mary had traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem because they were required to return to their home community to comply with an imperial edict to be counted in a census. The 80-mile trip covered on foot or on donkey's back was arduous and long, taking at least five days. With Mary more than eight months pregnant, it must have also been quite frightening and painful. When they arrived at their destination, we are told they could find no room and were forced to bed down in a stable - which in Bethlehem meant a cave where the animals were housed. The experience must have been both humiliating and difficult to endure.

which agrees with unwritten Christian tradition. Here we are told that as the time of birth nears Mary goes off by herself and when labor grows intense she cries out -"would that I had died before this" - precisely because she is frightened, alone in the throes of giving birth, and in pain.

The story doesn't end here because we are told that weeks later fearing for the life of their newborn at the hands of an angry Herod, Mary and Joseph were forced to flee to Egypt - again by foot and on a donkey's back where they were to live in exile for years before being able to return to their home in Nazareth. When we consider all this, instead of the idealized pristine myth of the birth of Jesus (PBUH), we are confronted with a very different reality - a child born to a frightened and exhausted woman, in a filthy cave.

Palestine's dusty roads. I thought of her fear and pain and of her bloodied newborn whom she couldn't wash to present to the shepherds. And I thought of that little family fleeing to Egypt. They were, in that time, the wretched of the earth.

What then came to mind were the hundreds of Palestinians born each day in Gaza's devastated squalor or in exile in refugee camps; or the hundreds of babies born to Syrian refugees in their camps in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, or now, in transit, in Europe; and of their frightened parents, concerned for the safety and survival of their newborns. And I thanked Walid for reminding me of what we should never forget.

We should not allow the Christmas story to be stripped of its humanity or cleansed of its muck and grime. Its power is in its reality that should serve to focus our attention on our responsibility to see in the birth of

New Elections

With leftwing parties holding the balance of power in the new parliament, Sanchez said the Socialists would try to form a government themselves by joining forces with Podemos and other smaller regional nationalist parties. That outcome would mirror recent events in neighbouring Portugal where the ruling conservatives won an October election but fell to a Socialist government backed by leftist parties just days later.

But analysts warned that teaming up with Podemos also has its risks. Podemos is the only national party to back an independence referendum in the wealthy northeastern region of Catalonia, where secessionist parties have an absolute majority in the regional parliament. It has said support for such a referendum is "indispensible" for any deal with another party.

If Sanchez accepts this condition, he faces the wrath of Socialist party barons who are fiercely opposed to Catalonia's separatist drive, such as Susana Diaz, the head of the regional government of the southern region of Andalusia, a Socialist bastion. "We can't negotiate with those that propose breaking up Spain," she said during an interview broadcast Friday on radio Cadena Ser. Podemos's demand on the Catalonia referendum was "specially designed to sink Pedro Sanchez" because if he agrees it would lead to the "collapse of the Socialists in Andalusia", Michavila said.

King Felipe VI is responsible for nominating a prime minister after the new parliament convenes on Jan 13. If no party leader manages to be approved by lawmakers as prime minister within two months of a first vote of confidence, fresh elections will have to be called. Podemos, which has shown no rush to discuss a coalition with Sanchez, could surpass the Socialists if another election is held and become the main opposition party, said political analyst Josep Ramoneda. "If Podemos sees victory is at hand, it will resist as long as possible to go to new elections," he said. —AFP

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It was here that Mary gave birth. At this point, the gospel stories fall silent and so our imagination, by default, has been forced to leap almost magically from their arrival in Bethlehem to the scene of Mary holding the child. In Surah Maryam, however, the Holy Quran provides us with the missing piece of the story, one

Disconnect

I thought of this today when I received an envelope containing what appeared to be a holiday greeting card from Walid Jumblatt - the Lebanese Druze leader. I opened it and was stunned to find a picture of the face of an anguished child peering out through the slats of a destroyed structure. Inside, the card simply read "Remember the wretched of the earth". My first reaction was to recoil in shock at the disconnect between the other joyous cards I had been receiving and this image of pain and sorrow. "What kind of greeting is this?" I asked.

As the day wore on, the image of that little face stayed with me, crying out to be remembered. I thought of Mary's tired and dirtied face at the end of her trip along

Jesus: the faces of the outcasts for whom there is no room in the inn; the wretched of the earth for whom there is no comfort; and the frightened exiles who seek only safety and refuge.

It is only when we do not avert our glance from these reminders that we can understand the story and spirit of Christmas. And when we sing the seasonal songs of joy we should think of them not as depictions of reality, but as aspirational - representing the vision of the world we should want to create for all children - ours' and those wretched and frightened little ones whom we all too often forget.

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

OBAMA SEEKS TO STAVE OFF LAME-DUCK STATUS

By Julie Pace

n June, during one of the best stretches of his presidency, Barack Obama strode through a West Wing hallway exclaiming, "Offense! Stay on offense!" It was a rallying cry for a White House that suddenly seemed to find its footing in the final quarter of Obama's tenure. An Asia-Pacific trade agreement was moving forward, as was the diplomatic opening with Cuba and work on an historic nuclear accord with Iran. The Supreme Court upheld a key tenant of the president's long-embattled healthcare law and legalized gay marriage nationwide. Even in the depths of tragedy following a church shooting in Charleston, South Carolina, the president struck an emotional chord with his stirring eulogy for the victims.

"I said at the beginning of this year that interesting stuff happens in the fourth guarter - and we are only halfway through," Obama said during his annual year-end news conference. But the seventh year of Obama's presidency also challenged anew his cautious and restrained approach to international crises, particularly in the Middle East. Attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California, heightened fears of terror on American soil and Obama's attempts to reassure Americans fell flat. And a seemingly endless string of mass shootings elsewhere in the country exposed the sharp limits of Obama's power to implement the gun control measures he speaks of with passion.

Obama now stares down 11 months before his successor is chosen in an election shaping up to be a referendum on his leadership at home and abroad. He stirs deep anger among many Republicans, a constant reminder of his failure to make good on campaign promises to heal Washington's divisiveness. But he remains popular among Democrats and foresees a role campaigning for his party's nominee in the general election.

The president is packing his final year with foreign travel and has about a half-dozen trips abroad planned, including a likely visit to Cuba. The White House's legislative agenda is slim and centers mostly on areas where he already has overlapping priorities with Republicans, including final passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact and criminal justice reform. But he's also eyeing provocative executive actions, including an expansion of back-

of the Guantanamo Bay detention center. "We recognize there's limited time left," said Jennifer Psaki, Obama's communications director.

Reverse

At times, Obama's second term has appeared to play out in reverse. He struggled to capitalize on his decisive re-election victory in 2012, stumbling through a two-year stretch that exposed the limits of his power and made him a political liability for his party. Then in an unexpected twist, his party's devastating defeats in the 2014 midterm election spurred one of the most productive years of his presidency, positioning Obama to be a valuable political ally for Democratic presidential frontrunner Hillary Clinton. "Barack Obama will loom over the election," said Dan Pfeiffer, a longtime Obama adviser who left the White House earlier this year. Advisers say the Supreme Court's ruling in May,

which upheld the subsidies at the heart

ground checks for gun purchases and the closure of Obama's health care law, came as a particular relief to the president. The decision ensures the law survives his presidency, even as Republican candidates campaign on pledges to repeal it.

> Obama sees the Iran nuclear accord, Pacific Rim trade pact and sweeping climate change agreement finalized in Paris earlier this month as examples of how America should wield its power on the world stage. The agreements have driven the debate in the presidential campaign for long stretches - a point of pride for a White House eager to show that the president remains the country's most relevant politician even as he eyes the exist.

> Yet Obama hasn't been able to escape the Middle East. No matter how many times he tries to pivot to Asia or rebrand U.S. foreign policy as more about diplomacy than military might, the volatile region continues to be the dominant force in the way his foreign policy is viewed.

> Nearly every candidate running for president including Clinton, his former secretary of state - is calling for more aggressive action to fight the Islamic State group. Obama has inched the military deeper into the conflict, including backtracking on his refusal to put US troops on the ground in Syria, but has largely stuck with his initial strategy of combating the extremist group from the

> The terror attacks in Paris and California, however, have taken a worrying but distant fight against the Islamic State militants and made it top-of-mind for many Americans. White House advisers say Obama is well aware that he misjudged the public's level of anxiety about terrorism and must scramble to counter what he sees as overheated rhetoric from Republican presidential candidates that filled the void he created by his tepid initial response.

> Aides say outlining an alternative to Republicans on foreign policy and other matters will be a central part of his final State of the Union address to Congress on Jan 12. The address was purposely scheduled earlier than usual to give the president space to make his case before primary voting begins. He departed for his annual Hawaii vacation with a draft of the speech in hand.

> Julian Zelizer, a political historian at Princeton University, said a well-crafted speech can only go

so far in helping Obama reassure the public of his national security stewardship. "The only way he regains ground is concrete victories where people can literally see progress made," Zelizer said. "This is an area where he has to have policy gains"

Realistic

As he closed out 2015, Obama promised he wouldn't fade into the background in his final year in office. But he's also realistic about the limited legislative opportunities for a Democratic president and Republican-led Congress in a presidential election year. His relatively modest congressional agenda includes final passage of the TPP trade pact, criminal justice reforms, dealing with Puerto Rico's debt crisis and funding programs to address the spike in opioid use.

At least some Republicans say they're willing to work with the president in his final year. "I think if you look at what we've been able to work with him on this year, it's a good, telling piece of the kinds of things we can do next year," said Sen. Cory Gardner, R-Colo. "We worked very well on education reform, the highway bill, on human trafficking legislation - so there were some significant bipartisan accomplishments that we have been able to achieve this year." Sen Roger Wicker, echoed that sentiment, saying "There are a lot of opportunities" to work with the president in his final year in office.

Of course, Obama's legacy will be determined far more by the outcome of the presidential campaign than his 2016 legislative agenda. Since many of his most prominent moves have been the result of executive actions, a Republican president could largely wipe them away, while a Democrat is more likely to keep them in place and perhaps even expand on them.

White House aides say the president is eager to be on the campaign trail for the party's nominee, as well as Democrats in other races. He chafed at being kept on the sidelines in the 2014 midterms, and advisers used Democrats' sweeping losses in that campaign as an I-told-you-so moment for party officials. This time, Obama isn't waiting for an invitation from the Democratic nominee to make his campaign plans. "I will have a Democratic successor, and I will campaign very hard to make that happen," he said. — AP

<u> Kuwait & Times</u>

FIGUEREDO BRIBES PAID 'FOR DECADES'

MONTEVIDEO: Former FIFA vice-president Eugenio Figueredo received millions of dollars in bribes throughout his career at the top of South American football, prosecutors claimed Friday. Figueredo, 83, was extradited from Switzerland and spent Christmas in jail pending a trial which could see him

imprisoned for up to 15 years. Late Friday, he was admitted to a Montevideo hospital with chest pain, but was expected to return to his cell in a matter of hours, said the prosecutor in his case, Juan Gomez. Gomez said evidence given by Figueredo showed clearly that the official was corrupted from the moment he joined the executive committee of CONMEBOL, the South American federation. "From the time he became a member of the executive committee, he received huge sums of money from plans hatched by various members of CONMEBOL with the objective of maintaining a twisted form of corruption," said Gomez in his initial report. As CONMEBOL president, the Uruguayan looked to distribute the money via "a network of corruption that hit South American football with impunity and persisted for decades."—AFP

KOOYONG TO HOST DAVIS CUP CLASH WITH US

SYDNEY: Australia's first-round Davis Cup World Group clash with the United States in March will be played on grass at Kooyong in Melbourne in a tie marking Lleyton Hewitt's debut as captain. The former home of the Australian Open Grand Slam will host its first Davis Cup showdown in 10 years from March 4-6 on a portable grass court, organisers said. "To play Davis Cup in Melbourne, the home of tennis in Australia, at a club like Kooyong with so much tennis history is a privilege," said Hewitt. "The tie against the United States is going to be tough," he added. "It will be my first tie as captain and I'll be looking to help the boys build on the momentum and progress of 2015." The United States and Australia are the two most successful nations in Davis Cup history. The Americans have won a record 32 times while Australia is second overall with 28 wins. Australia's most recent tie against their arch-rivals was in 1999 where Hewitt made his Davis Cup debut. Alongside Pat Rafter, he led his country to a 4-1 World Group quarter-finals victory over the United States, whose team included current captain Jim Courier.— AFP

BRYANT LEADS VOTING FOR ALL-STAR GAME

LOS ANGELES: Kobe Bryant, in his swan song season for the Los Angeles Lakers, is the early leader in voting for the 2016 NBA All-Star game, the NBA announced on Friday. Despite his mediocre form this season, Bryant has logged 719,235 votes, more than 200,000 ahead of Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (510,202).

LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers leads the Eastern Conference with 357,937 votes, followed by Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade (300,595). The 65th NBA All-Star game will be played in Toronto on Feb. 14. Voting runs until Jan. 19. Fans will select three frontcourt players and two guards from each conference. Bryant, 37, is listed as a frontcourt player. Bryant, who announced last month that the 2015-16 campaign will be his final season, is the all-time highest NBA All-Star scorer with 280 points. His 17 All-Star selections is second behind the 19 appearances by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the legendary Lakers center. —Reuters



SYDNEY: Ragamuffin 100 sails away from Wild Oats XI during the start of the Sydney Hobart yacht race in Sydney, yesterday. The 628-nautical-mile race started in Sydney Harbour and is expected to end two to three days later in Hobart, the capital of the island state of Tasmania. — AP

WILD OATS XI OUT OF SYDNEY TO HOBART AS SQUALL HITS

SYDNEY: Eight-time line honours winner Wild Oats XI pulled out of the Sydney to Hobart yesterday while American super-yacht Comanche was attempting repairs after fierce winds hit off Australia's east coast, officials said.

A 108-strong fleet set sail from Sydney Harbour earlier Saturday, but by late evening 10 boats had retired, including one with a broken mast, the organising Cruising Yacht Club of Australia said.

"Wild Oats XI has retired from the race after reporting a torn mainsail," the club confirmed in a statement. It said the Mark Richards skippered crew was returning to Sydney but no further details were available.

Early reports indicated the sail "tore in half when the yacht was hit by a 40 knot squall", the Wild Oats XI twitter feed stated. Organisers said the crew of the Comanche, which had been leading the race after bolting out of Sydney Harbour, "will try to effect repairs to a

the fleet in the gruelling 628 nautical mile (1,163 kilometre) race was enduring the brunt of the punishing weather as they sailed into 'southerly buster" gale force winds, the CYCA added. The navigator on one of the leading yachts, Ichi Ban's Will Oxley, had reported gusts of up to 43 knots while another boat, CEX Dolce, was returning to Sydney with a broken mast, it said. Officials had warned of thunderstorms and gales late yesterday as the fleet travelled down the east coast of Australia. Storms are not unknown to the race, with six people dying, five boats sinking and 55 sailors rescued on a fatal night in 1998 when a deep depression exploded over the fleet in the treacherous Bass Strait.

'WET AND WINDY'

been leading the race after bolting out of Sydney Harbour, "will try to effect repairs to a with three yachts retiring early after collisions

rudder and continue racing". The front half of the fleet in the gruelling 628 nautical mile (1,163 kilometre) race was enduring the brunt of the punishing weather as they sailed into "southerly buster" gale force winds, the CYCA

"Ark323, one of two Chinese entries, retired following a collision 300 metres after the start. All on board were safe," race organisers said in a statement. Australian boat Cougar II retired at about the same time with damage to her starboard quarter while the British entry Lupa of London also pulled out with a damaged bow after a collision.

Another boat, M3, withdrew after shattering its forestay, her crew deciding that the harsh weather forecast ruled out a possible repair and rejoining of the race.

Line honours contender supermaxi Perpetual Loyal and St Jude were later retirements, both understood to have sustained rudder damage from the rough weather in the evening, while Koa withdrew with steering damage. Last year's line honours winner Wild Oats XI had initially led in the moments after the starter's horn blew, but was overtaken by Perpetual Loyal before Comanche took the lead after unfurling her big spinnaker. Wild Oats holds the race record of one day, 18 hours, 23 minutes and 12 seconds set in 2012 and her retirement and Comanche's rudder damage open up the race for line honours.

Rambler was in the lead late Saturday, ahead of Comanche, Ragamuffin 100 and Maserati.

A brief update from Ragamuffin reported conditions as "wet and windy" as the leaders tracked down the New South Wales coast.

The winds are expected to ease today, and will be light off the coast of Tasmania as the boats head to Hobart's Constitution Dock, with the first boats not expected to cross the finish line until tomorrow. —AFP

WORLD CHAMPION LOVCHEV BACKED DESPITE DOPING BAN

MOSCOW: Russian sports minister Vitali Mutko on Friday threw his support behind world champion weightlifter Aleksey Lovchev who has been banned for suspected doping in the latest controversy to hit the country's sports authorities.

Lovchev, 26, who won gold in the +105kg category at the world championships in Houston last month, tested positive for the banned growth hormone Ipamorelin.

He claims he had permission to use a medicine to ease pain from a knee injury he was suffering at the time of the tournament where he broke the clean-and-jerk and total world records.

"We are going to give him all the support necessary since he has not been officially found guilty of doping and no decision has been taken," Mutko told a news conference.

On Thursday, the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) said that traces of Ipamorelin had been found in Lovchev's 'A' sample.

As this constituted a "violation of anti-doping regulations", he was provisionally suspended, the IWF said in a statement.

Mutko said that Lovchev suffered ruptured knee ligaments a month before the world championships and had authorisation to use a medicine to treat the injury.

Lovchev said he was innocent, telling Russian television station Match he was in a state of "absolute shock".

Friday's revelations came hot on the heels of Russian track and field competitors being banned after their athletics federation was accused of state-sponsored doping. The Russian anti-doping authority and Moscow's anti-doping laboratory were also suspended. — AFP

BRONCOS NEW CHAPLAIN OFFERS SPIRITUAL, FINANCIAL HELP

ENGLEWOOD: When Gary Kubiak was hired to coach the Denver Broncos, he wanted a full-time chaplain.

Kubiak went looking for someone players could really relate to, someone who had played the game and "had some stories to tell."

That led him to Luther Elliss, once the highest-paid defensive tackle in the NFL before losing it all and going bankrupt, then rebuilding his life and answering his second calling as a minister.

Elliss, who played nine seasons in Detroit and one in Denver after a standout career at the University of Utah, serves as both a cautionary tale and a sounding board at 13655 Broncos Parkway, where he delivers practical financial advice and spiritual guidance.

Elliss shepherds players on their faith journey and also warns them not to follow his path to financial ruin.

"He's been to the mountaintop and he's been humbled," linebacker Brandon Marshall said. "It's really nice to have a guy like that. I went to him when I had questions. He's very knowledgeable, he's wise, he's like a gentle giant." Cornerback Chris Harris Jr., said Elliss brings "cred" into the job because he played the game: "When you have a guy who's done it, it makes it easier to approach him."

Elliss, who has a family of 14, seven adopted, speaks from experience and the heart when he tells his tale of recovery from being broke and broken five years ago.

He didn't blow his \$12 million in earnings as a pro football player on the high life of drugs and drink; he just made bad business decisions. Elliss, who also serves as a transition coach for the NFL and speaks at the league's rookie symposiums, brings firsthand knowledge into the job of convincing players they'll one day lose their Midas touch.

"Everything they touch turns to gold. And usually they're pretty creative, hard workers, so they've been able to overcome things, any obstacle that comes to mind," Elliss said. "And even for myself, we had guys come over and talk to us about finances and gave us the statistics, it was like over 60 percent of the guys end up broke, divorced, homeless, without a job after you leave the game within three years. And I'm like, 'No, that's not me.""

SUPERMAN SYNDROME

Elliss calls it the Superman Syndrome, which serves athletes well, but not in life away from the game.

"I thought I could transition into business and do the exact same thing that I was doing on the football field. What I didn't realize is business is a different animal," Elliss said. He lost his businesses, a call center and a manufacturing company for the auto industry, even though he had promised not to go over budget and to listen to his accountants and attorneys.

"It ultimately came down to my decision and my decision was I'm unstoppable, we can make this work," Elliss said. "And ... it was just good money chasing bad money and before you knew it we were in trouble and you're trading second mortgages and doing just all sorts of silly things that you really shouldn't have been doing.

"But being that I'm not used to losing, I figured, hey, I just needed a little bit more, a little bit more time," said Ellis, who still rues hurting employees and business partners. "I just hope people understand I never meant to do anyone harm. But it was my own foolishness and pride that took me off the cliff."

Elliss relied on family, friends and his faith to

help him rebuild his life. His wife's family sold them a home at a good price and former teammates pitched in to help the Ellisses.

"You think of people that normally go through bankruptcy and everything else, rags to riches or riches to rags, you see that story so often end in divorce, separation and all those types of things," Elliss said. "But it was because my wife and I have such a strong faith. That's what carried us through and it allowed us to move on.—AP



DENVER: Denver Broncos head coach Gary Kubiak looks at his play chart during the first half of an NFL football game against the New England Patriots, Nov 29, 2015, in Denver. — AP

<u> Kuwait & Times</u>





WIMBLEDON: In this Friday July 10, 2015 file photo, Novak Djokovic of Serbia in action against France's Richard Gasquet at Wimbledon. — AP

JOKOVIC, FEDERER IN RACE TO BE FIRST \$100M MAN

PARIS: Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer are poised to become the first \$100 million men in tennis in 2016, in a gripping sub-plot to the new Grand Slam season.

No player in the history of the sport has broken through the \$100 million on-court earnings barrier but world number one Djokovic and Federer, the number three, should reach the landmark next year.

Djokovic, 28, has just over \$94 million in prize money while Federer, six years the Serb's senior, has banked \$97.3 million. With \$3.85 million on offer for the winner of January's Australian Open, the season's first major, the veteran Swiss would be the first man to the magical number even if the odds are heavily stacked against a player who won the last of his 17 Grand Slam titles in 2012.

The staggering rewards for the modern player, all boosted by lucrative off-court earnings through sponsorship and endorsements, are a far cry from the heavyweights of the sport who starred in earlier eras. Rod Laver, the last man to complete the calendar Grand Slam-something that eluded Djokovic courtesy of a French Open final loss in 2015 — ended his playing

career with \$1.5 million, still a huge sum by the standards of the late 1960s.

John McEnroe earned \$12.5 million while Federer's hero, Pete Sampras banked \$43 million before he retired in 2002. Djokovic earned a season record \$21.5 million in 2015, a year which saw him win three of the four majors-taking his total to 10 in total. "My season was the best of my career with many highlights. It inspires me even more to keep on going, and I hope to continue to play at this level in 2016," said Diokovic.

Despite his dominance of the sport,

Djokovic still has some catching up to do when it comes to matching Federer's overall personal fortune. According to Forbes' rich list, Federer was the fifth highest-earning sportsman in 2015 thanks to \$58 million in endorsements. Djokovic was 13th, his on-court wealth boosted by \$31 million worth of commercial riches.

But the Serb knows time-and the form which saw him win 82 matches and suffer just six losses last season-is on his side.

"I think I have a good chance. I'm 28 and I still don't feel like the end is anytime soon, that definitely excites me and motivates me to keep

going." The staggering wealth in the men's game dwarfs the women's tour. Serena Williams's on-court earnings stood at just over \$74 million after a 2015 season which saw the American also claim three of the the four Grand Slam titles. Rival Maria Sharapova, the world's richest sportswoman due to her lucrative offcourt portfolio, has earned less than half than Williams — \$36.4 million.

Back in the men's game, 14-time major winner Rafael Nadal has banked \$75 million on court while current world number two Andv Murray has earned \$42.5 million. — AFP

SERENA WILLIAMS WINS AP FEMALE ATHLETE OF YEAR FOR FOURTH TIME

NEW YORK: Serena Williams spent a good portion of 2015 deflecting questions about whether she could complete the Grand Slam. After coming oh-so-close, she can acknowledge how much she cared about the rare feat.

"I wanted it. But ... winning one (major title) is not easy. And then, (when) you have a 'bounty' on your head, it's even harder," she said with a laugh. "If you know anything about me, I hate to lose.

I've always said I hate losing more than I like winning, so that drives me to be the best that I can be."

Williams' will was on display time and gain, along with her best-in-the-game serve and other skills, fashioning comeback after comeback to nearly become the first tennis player in more than a quarter-century to win all four Grand Slam tournaments in a season. In a vote by US editors and news directors, Williams was chosen as The Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year for the fourth time.

was just unbelievable."

Williams won the Australian Open on hard courts in January, the French Open on red clav in June, and Wimbledon on grass in July, before losing in the US Open semifinals in September in one of the biggest upsets in the sport's history.

SERENA SLAM

Williams went 53-3 with a WTA tourleading five titles and was ranked No. 1 every week. She raised her Grand Slam singles trophy count to 21; only two women have won more.

It did not come easily this year for /illiams, who grew up in Compton California, and turned 34 in September.



Results were announced Friday.

Williams collected 50 first-place votes and 352 points. Carli Lloyd, whose hat trick in the final lifted the US women's soccer team to the World Cup title, was the runner-up, with 14 first-place votes and 243 points. UFC star Ronda Rousey finished third, one spot ahead of the woman she stunningly lost to last month, Holly Holm. UConn basketball player Breanna Stewart was fifth.

The AP Male Athlete of the Year will be announced later. Williams, who also won AP awards in 2002, 2009 and 2013, joined Chris Evert as a four-time honoree. The only woman with more AP selections is Babe Didrikson, with six - one for athletics in 1932, and five for golf from 1945-54.

"It's not even winning the Grand Slam titles as much as the way she got herself out of the deep holes that she dug, just repeatedly. It's not like she had two or three narrow escapes," Evert said about Williams. "It really was the year of the comeback. It

At the French Open, already dealing with a painful right elbow, Williams caught the flu. Four times in Paris, she lost the first set before rallying to win.

"My elbow was killing me. It's about fighting and just never giving up. You hear that and it sounds cliche," Williams said, "but it's really just about, 'OK, I'm going to at least try and see what happens."

At Wimbledon, she was two points from defeat in the third round but wound up completing a self-styled "Serena Slam" of four major championships in a row, a run that began in 2014. She also became the oldest woman to win a major title in the Open era, which began in 1968.

"I retired at 34, and I know that at 32, 33 and 34, I was struggling mentally to get psyched up for matches and to feel motivated," Evert said. "What impresses me even more than the physical prowess of Serena is the fact that she can still conjure up that hunger and that passion for these matches. ... Sometimes, (the motivation is) just not there. And the times when it wasn't there for her, she still created magic."

Only at the US Open, with the historic achievement of a calendar-year Grand Slam in the offing, did Williams stumble, losing a three-setter to 43rd-ranked Roberta Vinci of Italy. — AP

OAKLAND: Andrew Bogut #12 of the Golden State Warriors goes up to block the shot of Timofey Mozgov #20 of the Cleveland Cavaliers during their NBA basketball game at ORACLE Arena on Friday in Oakland, California. — AFP

WARRIORS THUMP CAVALIERS IN NBA FINALS REMATCH

OAKLAND: Draymond Green had 22 points and 15 rebounds and the Golden State Warriors got defensive in their NBA Finals rematch against Cleveland, beating the Cavaliers 89-83 on Friday. Stephen Curry added 19 points and Klay Thompson had 18 for the Warriors, who improved to 28-1 by winning their 32nd straight regularseason home game. Instead of doing it with 3pointers, defending champion Golden State maintained its edge over Cleveland by limiting the Cavaliers to 32 percent shooting. LeBron James scored 25 points to lead the Cavaliers. They had their six-game winning streak snapped. The Cavaliers were short-handed when they lost the final to the Warriors in six games, missing power forward Kevin Love the entire series with a shoulder injury and losing point guard Kyrie Irving to a knee injury late in the first game. Having both those players healthy for the rematch did little to help Cleveland. Love scored just 10 points on 5for-16 shooting, and Irving missed 11 of 15 shots in a 13-point game.

273 points on Christmas, one more than Shaquille O'Neal for No. 3, and Bosh followed that about a minute later with a three-point play. Anthony Davis led the Pelicans with 29 points and 15 rebounds. But he missed a contested jumper on New Orleans' final possession of regulation, and the Heat took control in the extra session.

tough jumper with 1:45 left in overtime gave him

ROCKETS 88, SPURS 84

James Harden had 20 points and the Houston Rockets slowed down the soaring San Antonio Spurs with an 88-84 victory Friday night. The improved Houston defense held the Spurs to a season low in points to snap their season-best seven-game winning streak. Houston used an 8-2 run to take a 78-71 lead with about 5 minutes left.

Heat, an NBA-best 10-2 on the holiday. Wade's Tim Duncan made a hook shot after that, but Harden hit a 3-pointer. After Duncan's layup, Harden brought the crowd to its feet with an offbalance 3-pointer from the corner that made it 84-75. Kawhi Leonard had 20 points to lead San Antonio.

BULLS 105, THUNDER 96

Jimmy Butler scored 23 points, and Pau Gasol had 21 points and 13 rebounds in Chicago's victory over Oklahoma City. Derrick Rose added 19 points, and Taj Gibson had 13 points and 10 rebounds to help the Bulls snap a three-game losing streak. Kevin Durant had 29 points, nine rebounds and seven assists for Oklahoma City, and Russell Westbrook added 26 points, eight assists and seven rebounds. The Thunder had won three straight and nine of 10. — AP

PARIS: In this June 6, 2015, file photo, Serena Williams, of the United States, holds the trophy after winning the final of the French Open tennis tournament against Lucie Safarova, of the Czech Republic, at the Roland Garros stadium, in Paris. For the fourth time, Williams has been named The Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year. — AP

CLIPPERS 94, LAKERS 84

Chris Paul scored 23 points and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Los Angeles Lakers to end a three-game skid. Kobe Bryant scored 12 points for the Lakers in his NBA-record 16th and final Christmas Day game. He played 26 minutes and sat out the entire fourth quarter. J.J. Redick had 14 points, and DeAndre Jordan added nine points and 14 rebounds for the Clippers. They have won eight straight against the Lakers and 12 of the last 13 meetings. Rookie D'Angelo Russell led the Lakers with 16 points.

HEAT 94, PELICANS 88, OT

Chris Bosh had 30 points and 10 rebounds, Dwyane Wade added 19 points to move into No. 3 on the NBA's Christmas Day list and Miami survived some shaky moments to beat New Orleans. Hassan Whiteside grabbed 17 rebounds for the

NBA Results/Standings

Miami 94, New Orleans 88 (OT); Chicago 105, Oklahoma City 96; Golden State 89, Cleveland 83; Houston 88, San Antonio 84; LA Clippers 94, LA Lakers 84.

	Eastern Co Atlantic D		e			Western Co Northwest		-	
	w	L	PCT	GB	Oklahoma City	20	10	.667	-
Toronto	18	12	.600	-	Utah	12	15	.444	6.5
Boston	16	13	.552	1.5	Denver	12	17	.414	7.5
NY Knicks	14	16	.467	4	Minnesota	11	18	.379	8.5
Brooklyn	8	21	.276	9.5	Portland	11	20	.355	9.5
Philadelphia	1	30	.032	17.5	i ortiaria	Pacific D		1000	210
	Central D	ivision			Golden State		1	066	
Cleveland	19	8	.704	-		28	1	.966	-
Chicago	16	11	.593	3	LA Clippers	17	13	.567	11.5
Indiana	16	12	.571	3.5	Sacramento	12	17	.414	16
Detroit	17	13	.567	3.5	Phoenix	12	19	.387	17
Milwaukee	12	18	.400	8.5	LA Lakers	5	25	.167	23.5
	Southeast	Divisio	า			Southwest	Divisio	n	
Atlanta	19	12	.613	-	San Antonio	25	6	.806	-
Miami	17	11	.607	0.5	Dallas	16	13	.552	8
Orlando	17	12	.586	1	Memphis	16	15	.516	9
Charlotte	15	13	.536	2.5	Houston	16	15	.516	9
Washington	13	14	.481	4	New Orleans	9	20	.310	15



PAKISTAN RESOLVES ROW OVER PACEMAN AMIR

LAHORE: Pakistan's cricket chief said yesterday that a row over the inclusion of tainted paceman Mohammad Amir in a training camp had been resolved and the two objecting players had returned. Former Twenty20 captain Mohammad Hafeez and current one-day captain Azhar Ali had boycotted the camp on Thursday, refusing to train alongside Amir, who was jailed in 2011 for spot-fixing. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman

Shaharyar Khan said Hafeez and Ali had now joined the camp.

"The matter has been resolved," Khan

told reporters. "Both listened to me and agreed to join the camp unconditionally and will have to support Amir when he returns to the team." The training camp is staged to select the squad for next month's tour of New Zealand where Pakistan play three one-day and as many Twenty20 internationals.

Hafeez, who in November spoke publicly against Amir, said he forgave him but was sticking to principle. "My stance was based on principle and it was portrayed in a wrong sense," Hafeez told reporters.

"My stance is the same against all

players who stained Pakistan's image through corruption. "It's my right to raise my voice, which I did, and I will do everything in my capacity to fight corruption," said Hafeez.

"My stance is that all corrupt players should not be given another chance to represent Pakistan." Amir, then Test captain Salman Butt and Mohammad Asif were charged with accepting money in exchange for arranging deliberate noballs during a Test match at Lord's in England in 2010.

The three players and their agent Mazhar Majeed were jailed by a British court in 2011. Amir, Butt and Asif were also banned from cricket for five years. But in September this year the International Cricket Council lifted sanctions against the three players. Amir's ban was relaxed in January this year and he was allowed to play domestic matches. At the time of the ban, Amir was tipped as one of the most talented fast bowlers in the world.

Since his return, he has taken 22 wickets in four non first-class games, while his tally of wickets in the qualifying rounds of the Quaid-e-Azam trophy stood at 34. He also took 14 wickets in 11 Bangladesh

premier league matches, forcing the selectors to chose him for the camp.

The Pakistan players are training ahead of the national side's upcoming tour of New Zealand, where they will play three one-day internationals and three Twenty20 matches.

Butt and Asif will feature in the national one-day tournament next month, their first appearance in domestic matches since their ban expired. PCB had given them a rehabilitation programme to undergo before qualifying for national selection-a process Amir has already completed. — AFP

HENRY, MCCULLUM LEAD NEW ZEALAND ROUT OF S LANKA

CHRISTCHURCH: Brendon McCullum launched his farewell tour in rollicking form yesterday with a whirlwind 55 to set up New Zealand's seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka in their opening one-day international in Christchurch.

In a 25-ball stay at the crease, McCullum smacked 11 fours and one six to have Sri Lanka on the ropes before he departed with New Zealand only needing a further 81 runs in 40 overs.

Martin Guptill posted his 26th halfcentury on his way to 79 off 56 deliveries while debutant Henry Nicholls was not out on 23 when the innings ended at the end of the 20th over.

New Zealand were set a modest 189 target after Matt Henry destroyed the cream of the Sri Lankan top order in a brief spell of 16 balls when he took four wickets for two runs. Sri Lanka were eventually all out for 188 in 47 overs on a wicket that promised runs galore, and New Zealand knocked off the target with ease. McCullum credited the quickfire victory to what he described as "a truly outstanding bowling performance" by Adam Milne and Matt Henry. "With the new ball in their bands, they were outstanding for us and that's where the winning of the game was when you're needing to chase 190 and know the wicket is going to be good," he said.

Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews regretted that his bowlers were not as threatening. "It's not easy to bowl at Brendon McCullum and Martin Guptill," he said. "They are power hitters and they go after the bowling from the very beginning. We just need to bowl in the right areas more often." The big-hitting McCullum, who announced before the five-match ODI series began that he will retire from international cricket in February, lived up to his pledge to bow out on top of his game.

RUN ONSLAUGHT

His whirlwind opening partnership with Guptill brought up the New Zealand 100 inside 10 overs. When New Zealand reached 53 without loss after six overs, Sri Lankan captain Mathews put himself on to try to arrest the run onslaught. McCullum had other ideas and took 16 off Mathews' over and 12 off Ajantha Mendis in the next to put Sri Lanka out of the game. Mathews said when he won the toss he wanted to bat to get first use of a pitch that "looks like a belter". But the wickets started falling early with a 98-run stand by Milinda Siriwardana and Nuwan Kulasekara for the seventh wicket their one partnership of note.

They fell from 13 without loss to 27-5 and then 65-6 before Siriwardana (66) and Kulasekara (58) stemmed the rot. Siriwardana's dismissal started the final slide in which the last four wickets fell for 25 runs. Dushmantha Chameera, who was not out 13, was the only other batsman to reach double figures.

Milne, having fully recovered from the heel injury that sidelined him in the World Cup, was bowling near the 150kph (93mph) mark and while he tied the batsman down at one end, Henry did the damage at the other. Inside three overs he removed Tillakaratne Dilshan, Lahiru Thirimanne, Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal. Dilshan (nine) top edged the ball to midwicket where Nicholls celebrated his international debut with a catch above the head, Thirimanne faced 19 deliveries for one run and Mathews went first ball. Chandimal was dropped on five off Milne's bowling, but Henry claimed the wicket four balls later without addition to the score to finish with four for 49

Doug Bracewell, who broke up the Siriwardana-Kulasekara partnership, had figures of three for 37. —AFP





MELBOURNE: Australian batsman Joe Burns (R) lofts the ball away to the boundary as West Indies wicketkeeper Denesh Ramdin (L) looks on, on the first day of the second cricket Test in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

KHAWAJA, BURNS TONS AS AUSSIES POUR ON MISERY FOR WINDIES

MELBOURNE: Usman Khawaja and Joe Burns hammered centuries as Australia again put the West Indies to the sword on the opening day of the second Test in Melbourne yesterday. Fitagain Khawaja hit 144 for his third ton in four Test innings and opener Burns cracked 128 for his second Test hundred of the season as the Australians reached 345 for three at stumps after

word when he snared Khawaja's wicket just two runs later when he was caught down leg-side by wicketkeeper Denesh Ramdin just under six overs from stumps.

Khawaja's runs came off 227 balls in 331 minutes with just six fours and a six. Khawaja has not been dismissed for less than 100 in any format of the game since October.

Brisbane. He batted for 312 minutes and hit 16 fours and a six.

The hapless Caribbean tourists again struggled to make any impression in the rain-delayed Boxing Day showpiece after losing by an innings and 212 runs in the first Hobart Test.

So far in the series, Australia have amassed 928 runs for the loss of just seven wickets. "I

SCOREBOARD

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand: Completed scoreboard in the first one-day international between New Zealand and Sri Lanka in Christchurch yesterday.

8

1

5

0

66

8

58

4

13

8

8

188

(Dilshan),

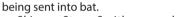
Sri Lanka

D. Gunathilaka c Ronchi b Milne
T. Dilshan c Nicholls b Henry
L. Thirimanne lbw Henry
D. Chandimal c Taylor b Henry
A. Mathews c Latham b Henry
M. Siriwardana c McCullum b Bracewell
C. Kapugedera c Santner b Bracewell
N. Kulasekera c Ronchi b McClenaghan
A. Mendis c Ronchi b McClenaghan
D. Chameera not out
S. Lakmal c Latham b Bracewell
Extras (w 8)
Total (10 wickets; 47 overs)
Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Gunathilaka), 2-20 (
3-23 (Thirimanne), 4-23 (Mathews
(Chandinal) 665 (Kanusadara)

s), 5-27 (Chandimal), 6-65 (Kapugedera), 7-163 (Siriwardana), 8-164 (Kulasekara), 9-167 (Mendis), 10-188 (Lakmal). Bowling: Milne 10-0-30-1 (w3), Henry 10-1-49-4

(w2), McClenaghan 10-2-40-2 (w3), Bracewell 9-1-37-3, Santner 8-0-32-0. **New Zealand** M. Guptill c Kulasekara b Siriwardana 79 B. McCullum c Lakmal b Siriwardana 55 T. Latham b Dilshan 18 R. Taylor not out 5 H. Nicholls not out 23 Extras (lb1, w10) 11 191 Total (3 wickets; 21 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-108 (McCullum), 2-162 (Latham), 3-164 (Guptill)

Did not bat: M. Santner, L. Ronchi, D. Bracewell, A. Milne, M. Henry, M. McClenaghan Bowling: Kulasekara 3-0-27-0, Lakmal 3-0-24-0 (w1), Mathews 1-0-17-0 (w1), Mendis 5-0-49-0 (w2), Siriwardana 5-0-45-2, Chameera 2-0-18-0 (w3), Dilshan 2-0-10-1 (w1).



Skipper Steve Smith was unbeaten on 32 with Hobart Test double centurion Adam Voges on 10. Before the lowest Boxing Day crowd of 53,389 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 16 years, Australia made Windies skipper Jason Holder pay dearly for sending the home side into bat after winning the toss.

It was another day of triumph for Pakistanborn Khawaja who returned from missing the last two Tests with a hamstring injury to take up where he left off. Khawaja scored 174 and 121 in the first two Tests against the Kiwis last month.

He shared in a stand of 258 runs with Burns in the third-highest partnership for the second wicket at the famous ground. Only two Australian partnerships for the second wicket at the MCG were higher-lan Chappell-Bill Lawry's 298 against the West Indies in 1968 and Don Bradman-Bill Woodfull's 274 against South Africa in 1931.

"I'll enjoy this moment, a hundred in my first Boxing Day Test, a 250-odd run partnership with Burnsy. I couldn't have asked for a lot more on day one," Khawaja said.

"I think we're both probably disappointed that we didn't get massive ones. But end of the day we've done what we needed to do to hopefully set up this first innings for Australia to get a big, big total and really drive this game."

Khawaja had a life on 142 when Marlon Samuels dropped a chest-high sitter in the covers off Jerome Taylor. But Taylor had the last

HAPLESS TOURISTS

Burns also made a personal statement with his ton amid concerns over his position in the side with the return of Khawaja.

Selectors ultimately decided to make the tough decision to drop Shaun Marsh to fit in Khawaja's return despite Marsh hitting his highest Test score of 182 against the Windies in Hobart. Burns was finally out when he was smartly stumped by Ramdin off part-time spinner Kraigg Brathwaite for 128. Burns reached the triple figures first, cracking spinner Jomel Warrican through point for three runs and Khawaja followed two balls later off a misfield at square leg for a single.

It was the second ton of the season for Burns, who scored 129 against New Zealand in

think it was a decent day for us. Showed some improvement bowling-wise," Kraigg Brathwaite said. "I think tomorrow it's key to come back and start well. Dot balls and try to build some pressure don't let them score as freely and work from there."

The Windies removed dangerous opener David Warner cheaply for 23 off 12 balls in the fifth over of the innings. Warner belted boundaries off Kemar Roach's first three balls before plundering 15 off his opening over.

But Warner was out three overs later when his attempted pull shot lobbed to Samuels, who took three snatches at the ball before holding the catch in the covers.

Australia are favoured to win the showpiece Boxing Day Test and retain the Frank Worrell trophy against the struggling tourists. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

MELBOURNE: Scores at the close on the opening day of the second Test between Australia and the West Indies at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday:

128

23

144

32

10

345

8

Australia 1st innings

J. Burns stp Ramdin b K. Brathwaite	
D. Warner c Samuels b Taylor	
U. Khawaja c Ramdin b Taylor	
S. Smith not out	
A. Voges not out	
Extras (lb3, w3, nb2)	
Total (3 wickets; 90 overs)	

Fall of wickets: 1-29 (Warner), 2-287 (Burns), 3-328 (Khawaja)

Bowling: Taylor 18-2-83-2, Roach 10-1-53-0, Holder 17-6-33-0 (2nb), C. Brathwaite 20-1-71-0 (3w), Warrican 16-1-

71-0, K. Brathwaite 9-1-31-1

To bat: M. Marsh, P. Nevill, P. Siddle, J. Hazlewood, J. Pattinson, N. Lyon.

STEYN STRIKES TO PUT BRAKES ON ENGLAND FIGHTBACK

DURBAN: Nick Compton and James Taylor hit half-centuries and dug England out of trouble on a rain-hit first day of the first Test against South Africa at Kingsmead yesterday. England were 179 for four at the close of play after being sent in to bat. Fast bowler Dale Steyn spoiled a good recovery by the tourists when he struck shortly before the close, having Taylor caught behind for 70. Compton and Taylor came together with England struggling on 49 for three and forged a partnership of 125 off 274 balls.

Taylor was dismissed in fading light, capping a fine comeback from injury by Steyn, who took three for 29. Steyn dismissed English opening batsmen Alastair Cook and Alex Hales cheaply, while off-spinner Dane Piedt took the wicket of Joe Root for 24 with his first ball of the match.

Compton and Taylor batted solidly on a slow pitch which did not offer the bowlers as much assistance as South African captain Hashim Amla might have hoped when he won the toss and sent England in to bat in overcast conditions. Compton, returning to the city of his birth and early upbringing, was resolute and almost strokeless at times as he made 63 not out off 179 balls, with four boundaries.

The diminutive Taylor was more enterprising, using his feet well, particularly against the spin bowlers, and made his runs off 137 balls with nine fours and a six off left-arm spinner Dean Elgar. After rain delayed the start, only 27

minutes of cricket was possible before rain brought an early lunch, while there was a 22minute rain break during an extended afternoon's play

Steyn, who had not played any cricket since suffering a groin injury on the first day of a series in India on November 5, found his rhythm almost immediately and had skipper Cook caught at second slip by Elgar for a duck off the fifth ball of his second over.

He did not concede a run in the 3.1 overs he bowled before lunch. England new cap Alex Hales got off the mark with a clip to leg for two off the first ball he faced from Kyle Abbott and looked comfortable at the crease, although the only ball he faced against Steyn during the morning was the last delivery before the rain.

When play resumed, he faced only four more balls without adding to his score of ten before edging a Steyn outswinger to wicketkeeper AB de Villiers. Root looked busy at the crease and made 24 off 37 balls, including a pulled six off Abbott.

But he went back on his stumps when Piedt came into the attack and was trapped leg before wicket by a ball which spun back at him. He asked for a review of umpire Aleem Dar's decision but replays showed the ball would have clipped the top of his stumps.

The breakthrough achieved, Amla took Piedt off and brought back Steyn. But Taylor looked confident from the start of his innings. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the first day in the first Test between South Africa and England yesterday in Durban, South Africa.

England 1st innings

-	-	
A. Cook c El	gar b Steyn	0
A. Hales c d	e Villiers b Steyn	10
N. Comptor	n not out	63
J. Root Ibw	b Piedt	24
J. Taylor c de	e Villiers b Steyn	70
B. Stokes no	ot out	5
Extras (b-1 l	b-2 nb-3 w-1)	7
Total (for 4 v	wickets, 65.1 overs)	179
Fall of wicke	ets: 1-3 A. Cook, 2-12	2 A. Hales, 3-49
J. Root, 4-17	74 J. Taylor	
To bat: J. Ba	airstow, C. Woakes, S	. Broad, M. Ali
S. Finn		

Bowling: D. Steyn 15.1-3-29-3, K. Abbott 16-2-40-0(nb-1), M. Morkel 15-1-44-0(nb-2 w-1), D. Piedt 11-2-39-1, S. van Zyl 2-1-2-0, D. Elgar 6-1-22-0.



CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand's Henry Nichols sweeps in front of Sri Lanka's Dinesh Chandimal in their first One Day International cricket match at Hagley Park Oval in Christchurch, New Zealand, yesterday. — AP

<u> Kuwait & Times</u>



NFL SEASON MARKED BY MEDIOCRITY, NOT PARITY IN 2015

NEW YORK: The NFL likes to call it parity. This season, it looks closer to mediocrity. From the porous offensive lines to the suspect quarterbacking and poor tackling, from the inconsistent officiating to the multitude of key injuries, the 2015 season has been filled with the unwatchable.

Yes, the playoff races, particularly for the AFC wild card, have been intriguing. Carolina's chase for perfection has been worthy of headlines. The performances by the league's top players - particularly the ones making substantial breakthroughs such as Cam Newton and Doug Baldwin on offense, Khalil Mack and Ziggy Ansah on defense - have been mesmerizing.

There's also the noteworthy, if maddening, race to relocate to Los Angeles involving the Rams, Raiders and Chargers. As for the rest, well, let's hope the playoffs and Super Bowl go in a different direction than we've witnessed since September.

One team not concerned with the postseason for the 16th straight time remarkable in itself that anyone could miss the playoffs that many years in a row - is Buffalo. The Bills under Rex Ryan

epitomize how disappointing the level of play has been in so many cities. They brought in a high-profile coach and upgraded their talent level. They paid huge salaries to hold on to some key players. And they flopped.

"I mean, I could tell you the common thread is this: that when you have high expectations and you don't reach those things, that obviously you're going to have a little more questioning," Ryan savs. Here's what has been most worth questioning through 15 of the 17 weeks on the schedule:

PARITY

If what the NFL wants is nearly every team in contention to win a division or grab a wild card when the calendar turns to December, it came close to that goal in 2015.

If what it wants is high-quality football from many of those teams, sorry.

It's worthwhile to praise the work of the Panthers and Patriots, Cardinals, Broncos and Bengals, who pretty much for the entire season have risen above the morass. Second-half surges by the Chiefs, Steelers and Seahawks have been impressive.

But also recall that Kansas City lost five in a row, going into a funk after blowing a game against Denver. Seattle wasted the best home-field advantage in the sport, falling twice at CenturyLink Field and basically being handed a win over Detroit by incorrect officiating. Pittsburgh was 4-4 and somehow lost to Baltimore at home.

Most disturbing, even laughable, has been the level of play and coaching throughout the NFC East and AFC South. It's still possible both wretched divisions will be won by teams without winning records, who then deservedly will be underdogs as hosts to a wild card in the playoffs.

The league can brag all it wants about how packed together so many clubs are. It's sort of like finding a slew of fast-food restaurants together along a busy roadway.

BLOCKING AND TACKLING Shield your eyes.

These basic skills appear to have gone the way of the chip shot extra point (one of the good things about this season, incidentally). One reason quarterbacking has been so spotty (see below) is the inability of linemen, tight ends and running backs to provide protection

No area requires bonding more than the O-line, but even some units that enjoy that continuity have underperformed. If the Broncos disappear quickly in the race to the Super Bowl, the lack of solid blocking could be the determining factor. On the other side, it might be difficult to find a dozen fundamentally strong tacklers in the entire NFL. In their, uh, defense, the rules about what's a legal hit have made some of them gunshy or confused. But the very basics of wrapping up and keeping the head out of the play have been lost.

QUARTERBACKING

Someone recently wondered why the league doesn't simply expand to get teams into Los Angeles - or the cities abandoned through relocation - and maybe even into London in the near future. One good reason: Where will NFL-quality quarterbacks come from?

And what is NFL-quality for the position today? It's seems fair to say that half of the 32 teams aren't sure what they have behind center, and a bunch of

those don't like what they have. There is hope with the likes of Jameis Winston, Marcus Mariota, Derek Carr, Teddy Bridgewater and Blake Bortles as the new wave, and with Newton and Russell Wilson in the MVP conversation. But future eliteness for QBs is unpredictable - see Matt Ryan - and when the aging crop of stars leaves, it's hard to see the college game producing an ample number of replacements.

OFFICIATING

For decades, it's been fashionable for fans to blame the officials for losses, while team owners, general managers and coaches have bitten their tongues and tried to shrug off officiating problems. Not anymore.

There's a growing sentiment that game officials have lost their way, and the NFL will need to look long and hard into how it handles who is blowing the whistles; how to simplify the rule book; and how to better use the ever-improving technology.

One thing the NFL must hope as this season of mediocrity winds down is that a wrong call doesn't decide that big game Feb. 7. — AP

CUE CARD PIPS VAUTOUR IN VINTAGE KING GEORGE BATTLE

LONDON: Cue Card pipped Vautour on the line to land a vintage King George VI Chase at the fourth attempt at Kempton yesterday.

Vautour (3-1) appeared to be set for victory, leading over the last fence and up the run-in only for Cue Card (9-2), under a determined ride by Paddy Brennan, to reel him in to edge the Boxing Day showcase by a head. Don Cossack, the 15-8 favourite, held every chance when falling at the second last

Cue Card's previous best showing in the three-mile Grade One was runner-up to Silviniaco Conti, winner of the last two runnings but who only played a bit role this time.

Leading early on, Paul Nicholls' runner lost his grip on the race down the back straight as Vautour jumped to the front, with Cue Card tracking. Don Cossack was getting ready to launch his bid for glory when crashing out of the picture two fences from home.

That left Cue Card as the only live danger to Vautour with Brennan conjuring up a final stride lunge on Colin Tizzard's rejuvenated nine-year-old to emerge triumphant after an epic battle.

'This is the best day of my life - it's truly unbelievable," said Brennan. "I won't lie and say that there was a lot more left in the tank, but if anyone can get this horse back to win the Gold Cup, it's going to be Colin Tizzard."

Mullins found defeat hard to take. ""We did everything right until the last 20 yards," the Irish trainer told Channel 4. "He probably didn't just jump the last as efficiently as he could have, but it was a very brave run and a very brave run by Cue Card - that's horse racing." Mullins didn't leave Kempton empty handed, as his Faugheen set himself up for a defence of his Champion Hurdle crown next March, justifying cramped odds of 1-4 in the Grade 1 Christmas Hurdle.

Bouncing back after surprise defeat on his seasonal return at Punchestown, Mullins' classy hurdler was too quick for The New One in second. Earlier, Lizzie Kelly became the first woman jockey to win a British Grade 1 chase on Tea For Two in the Kauto Star Novices Chase won 12 months ago by Coneygree who went on to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup. "Awesome! I thought two fences out I'm going to win," said the history-making rider.

Kelly's mother and assistant trainer Jane Williams said: "I'm thrilled for her.

"It's important for girls to make it in racing and we set out to try to prove girls can win Grade Ones." — AFP



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspurís Erik Lamela, left, is beaten to a cross by Norwich's Declan Rudd, right, and Norwich's Ryan Bennett, centre, during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Norwich City at White Hart Lane in London, vesterday.— AP

TOULOUSE AND TOULON LOCK HORNS AS TOP 14 RETURNS

Harry Kane in tune as

PARIS: French heavyweights Toulouse and levels of performance, especially given that Toulon lock horns as the Top 14 returns today, while leaders Clermont will bid to keep hold of top spot when they host Racing 92.

Home-and-away wins over fellow threetime champions Leinster revived Toulon's quest to land a fourth successive European crown, but Toulouse's Champions Cup hopes were shattered by a pair of defeats to Ulster.

With just domestic honours to play for, third-placed Toulouse are hoping to arrest their slide against a second-placed Toulon outfit that appears to have turned the corner after a sluggish start to the campaign.

Toulouse coach Jean-Baptiste Elissalde said his side's upcoming fixtures, which also include a January 3 trip to struggling champions Stade Francais, would be crucial but not necessarily decisive. "We suspected once we saw the calendar that it was going to be a turning point in the season," said Elissalde. "But it's not the only one because even if we lose things won't become irreversible.

"We experienced a run of defeats last season. But the players knew how to react and got themselves to within a few points of the (Top 14) final. It's up to the players to decide their future."

RARE HOME LOSS

Both Toulouse and Toulon, who dealt Clermont a rare home loss last month, are just a point off the pace and will be out to profit on any potential slip up when the leaders host Racing 92.

Racing enter the 11th round of fixtures unbeaten in five matches, including Friday's 9-9 European Champions Cup draw at Northampton which left them top of Pool 3, and just three points adrift of Clermont. Centre Henry Chavancy stressed the importance of maintaining their recent a poor result at Clermont could knock Racing out of the top six.

"In a league where everything is so tight and competitive, no one can afford to relax," said Chavancy, who has been tipped for a first France call-up ahead of the Six Nations.

"The Michelin is an almost impregnable stadium, how many defeats have there been in the past four or five seasons?

"In any case, I know that Racing have never won there. We know wherever we step foot that we'll be met, it's up to us to battle with the weapons we have." Clermont avenged an earlier defeat to Exeter with a crushing 42-10 victory over the English side at the weekend to reignite their European hopes.

Stade Francais have won just four of 10 domestic matches this term but the Parisbased side will look to build on resounding wins over Italians Treviso when they make the trip to bottom side Oyonnax.

Bordeaux, who resisted a late fightback to beat Welsh side Ospreys on Saturday, have a third straight Top 14 win in their sights when they take on Grenoble.

Fifth-placed Brive, who go to Castres, were in action in the Challenge Cup where they routed Russian debutants Enisei 33-3, making amends for a shock defeats to the same opposition a week earlier.

Pau are at home to La Rochelle, while Agen visit a Montpellier side aiming to break into the play-off places.

Fixtures (kick-off times 1500 GMT unless stated):

Sunday

Oyonnax v Stade Francais (1300 GMT), Pau v La Rochelle, Montpellier v Agen, Castres v Brive, Bordeaux-Begles v Grenoble, Clermont v Racing 92 (1700 GMT), Toulouse v Toulon (2000 GMT). — AFP



ST PETERSBURG: Marshall wide receiver Deandre Reaves (19) eludes a diving tackle by Connecticut safety Obi Melifonwu (20) during the first quarter of the St. Petersburg Bowl NCAA college football game yesterday, in St Petersburg, Florida. — AP

Tottenham 3 Norwich 0

LONDON: Harry Kane hit all the right notes as the Tottenham striker's double clinched a 3-0 win over Norwich that kept his side's top four bid on track vesterday.

Kane was inspired by some unorthodox prematch motivation from Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino, who quoted Britney Spears and Will.I.Am's song 'Scream and Shout' in an attempt to keep his players' minds focused on their own performances.

Pochettino had been asked if Arsenal's title challenge would overshadow Tottenham's bid for a top-four finish. "I think it's like what Britney Spears and Will.I.Am sing: 'Everybody in the club, all eyes on us, all eyes on us," the Argentine said. That odd soundbite seemed to have the desired effect on Kane and his teammates as they brushed aside the struggling Canaries thanks to a first-half brace from the England international and Tom Carroll's late strike at White Hart Lane.

Tottenham have now lost just one of their last 17 Premier League matches, keeping them in fourth place and firmly in the hunt for a Champions League berth next season. Norwich, unable to build on their shock 2-1 win at Manchester United last weekend, are hovering just above the relegation zone on goal difference. Tottenham goalkeeper Hugo Lloris was celebrating his 29th birthday and the French international was in no mood to hand out any gifts to Norwich as he turned away Vadis Odjidja's long-range strike in the early stages. Norwich should have taken the lead when Cameron Jerome headed over from close-range.

SPECTACULAR 'RABONA' STRIKE

But that narrow escape sparked Tottenham into life and Kane fired wide after Kyle Walker's initial effort was blocked. Kane was beginning to find space behind the Norwich rearguard with some astute runs and another well-timed break onto Dele Alli's clever pass ended with Canaries goalkeeper Declan Rudd forced to race off his line to foul the striker.

It was a clear penalty and Kane stepped up to send Rudd the wrong way with the spot-kick.

Pochettino's side almost doubled their lead when Toby Alderweireld's header from a corner forced Rudd to save and Alli followed up with a header of his own that the keeper tipped over.

Tottenham were rampant now and Kane struck again three minutes before half-time. Erik

TOTTENHAM DOWN NORWICH

Lamela launched a rapid break as he fed Alli, who picked out Kane on the right-hand side of the area. Kane took one touch and smashed it low and hard into the far corner past Rudd for his 13th club goal of the season. Rudd kept Norwich from going further behind after Tottenham carved through the visitors' defence. When Alli's shot was saved, Lamela pounced

on the rebound, but Rudd kicked away the Argentine's low shot. Another Kane shot was repelled by Rudd, who then denied Lamela a spectacular 'rabona' strike as he wrapped his kicking leg around the back of the standing leg to try the cheeky effort. With 10 minutes remaining, Carroll lashed his first Premier League goal for Tottenham low into the far corner. —AFP



LONDON: Tottenham's Harry Kane celebrates after scoring a penalty during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Norwich City. — AP

2 BROWNS PLAYERS ARRESTED AFTER CHRISTMAS TRAFFIC STOP

CLEVELAND: Browns linebacker Armonty Bryant will not play in today's game at Kansas City after he and safety De'Ante Saunders were arrested Christmas morning following a traffic stop.

Bryant, who has a history of legal troubles, is not traveling with the team so he can tend to the legal matter. Browns general manager Ray Farmer issued a statement on Saturday condemning the players' behavior.

"These are charges that we take very seriously," Farmer said. "The importance of responsible decision-making is something we continually stress to all members of our organization, which makes it extremely disappointing that these two individuals would put themselves in this situation by making such poor decisions." Farmer added the incident is subject to the NFL's personal conduct policy. There were no immediate details about the arrests. The state highway patrol said no information will be available until after 10 pm. Browns coach Mike Pettine gave his players the holiday off so they could be with their families. Bryant is second on the team with 5 1/2 sacks this season, his third with the Browns. The 25-year-old was drafted in the seventh round in 2013 from East Central Oklahoma, where he had some offfield problems. He was arrested for driving under the influence less than a week after Cleveland drafted him. He was also suspended for three games in college for selling marijuana to an undercover officer.

Saunders has been on Cleveland's practice squad. The Browns (3-11) will visit the Chiefs on Sunday before ending the regular season at home against Pittsburgh on Jan 3.—AP

Kuwait 🗠 Times

S P O R T S

EPL results/standings

AFC Bournemouth 0, Crystal Palace 0; Aston Villa 1, West Ham United 1; Chelsea 2, Watford 2; Liverpool 1, Leicester City 0; Manchester City 4, Sunderland 1; Stoke City 2, Manchester United 0; Swansea City 1, West Bromwich Albion 0; Tottenham Hotspur 3, Norwich City 0.

- 1																	
		Ρ	W	D	L	F	Α	Pts	Everton	17	5	8	4	31	24	23	
	Leicester	18	11	5	2	37	25	38	Southamptor	17	5	6	6	21	21	21	
	Arsenal	17	11	3	3	31	14	36	Bromwich	18	5	5	8	17	24	20	
	Man City	18	11	2	5	37	20	35	Bournemouth	18	5	5	8	22	32	20	
	Tottenham	18	8	8	2	31	14	32	Chelsea	18	5	4	9	23	29	19	
	Crystal Palace	18	9	3	6	23	16	30			-		-				
	Man United	18	8	5	5	22	16	29	Swansea City		4	6	8	16	24	18	
	Watford	18	8	5	5	23	18	29	Norwich City	18	4	5	9	20	32	17	
	Liverpool	18	7	6	5	21	22	27	Newcastle	17	4	5	8	19	32	17	
	West Ham	18	6	8	4	26	22	26	Sunderland	18	3	3	12	19	37	12	
	Stoke City	18	7	5	6	16	16	26	Aston Villa	18	1	5	12	15	32	8.	

TROUBLED VILLA HELD AT HOME BY WEST HAM



BIRMINGHAM: Aston Villa fought back to salvage a 1-1 draw at home to West Ham yesterday, but the Premier League strugglers remain in deep trouble at the foot of the table. Aaron Cresswell struck in firsthalf stoppage time at Villa Park to give West Ham the lead, but Jordan Ayew converted a penalty just after the hour to earn Villa a share of the points.

West Ham have now drawn their last five league matches and are without a win in eight, while Villa saw their club-record winless run in the league extended to 17 matches. Only three of the previous 23 teams who were bottom on Christmas Day have avoided relegation and Villa will go into Monday's trip to Norwich with just eight points from 18 games.

However, there is still a glimmer of hope for Remi Garde's side as the last two teams in the same position-Leicester in 2014 and Sunderland in 2013 — both went on to survive.

Garde has said that Villa need "at least 10 victories" from their remaining matches to save themselves from the drop and the hosts twice went close through Rudy Gestede to taking an early lead.

But Villa then needed an excellent stop from goalkeeper Brad Guzan to prevent Mauro Zarate from putting West Ham in front on 25 minutes. Hammers midfielder Cheikhou Kouyate sent a header against the crossbar late in the first period, before Guzan was beaten three minutes into injury time as Cresswell fired home from the edge of the area.

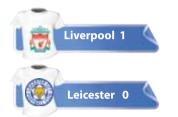
Gestede, who scored Villa's winner against Bournemouth in their lone victory back on the opening day of the season, drew a low save from Adrian just before the hour. The Benin striker then won his team a penalty moments later after he was brought down by Angelo Ogbonna, with Ayew dispatching the spot-kick for his fifth goal of the campaign to bring Villa level.

Villa went close to adding a second 15 minutes from time but Alan Hutton's header was cleared off the line by James Collins. — AFP



LIVERPOOL: Leicester City's Kasper Schmeichel, right, is beaten as Liverpool's Christian Benteke, bottom left, scores during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Leicester City at Anfield Stadium, Liverpool, England, yesterday. — AP

BENTEKE HANDS LIVERPOOL VICTORY OVER LEICESTER



LIVERPOOL: Christian Benteke's second-half strike made all the difference as Liverpool beat Premier League leaders Leicester City in a 1-0 victory at Anfield yesterday.

This was Leicester's second visit to Merseyside inside a week after last Saturday's 3-2 victory over Everton but they went home empty-handed this time around following an encounter that Liverpool dominated.

Liverpool went into this contest having picked up a solitary point from their last three matches and manager Jurgen Klopp was only too aware that a victory was needed if their resurgence since the German's arrival was to continue.

In a bright opening period, Liverpool went closest after just three minutes when Philippe Coutinho's curling effort from 25 yards just drifted wide of Kasper Schmeichel's far post.

Although Liverpool could not break down Leicester's defence early on, they appeared the

PALACE HIT TOP 5

AFTER HOLDING

BOURNEMOUTH

more composed side as Coutinho and Emre Can pulled the strings going forward.

However, Leicester's resolute defence has been a highlight of their season and Wes Morgan and Robert Huth, back in the side after a hamstring problem, both remained strong at the back.

After 15 minutes, Coutinho again had a decent opportunity but blasted over following impressive work from Divock Origi while Adam Lallana then thrashed wide just 60 seconds later as Liverpool surged forward.

Can was the next Liverpool player to threaten as Schmeichel had to be at his best to keep out his low curling effort before Origi also went close at the near post.

BEST CHANCE

Leicester barely had any possession and could not unleash Premier League top-scorer Jamie Vardy on the home side to any effect while Riyad Mahrez and Shinji Okazaki were equally as quiet.

Liverpool's quest for goals was not helped, however, when Origi had to come off with seven minutes of the first half remaining but the fact that £32.5m striker Benteke replaced him underlined the strength in depth Klopp has at his disposal.

Leicester's best chance in the opening 45 minutes fell towards half-time as Mahrez's trickery led him inside the Liverpool box but Simon Mignolet-back in the side after missing last weekend's 3-0 loss to Watford-did well to turn the shot over the crossbar.

In the second half, Benteke continued to be a nuisance to Huth and Morgan while Can and Coutinho also probed the away team's defence until, finally, Benteke gave Liverpool the lead after 63 minutes.

Roberto Firmino's low cross from the left was met by Benteke first time and he slid his effort past Schmeichel.

Leicester desperately pushed for an equaliser and Liverpool had Mignolet to thank for a brilliant point-blank save from Nathan Dyer with 16 minutes remaining.

Anfield became increasingly nervy as the end approached yet both teams, to their credit, continued to push forward whenever they could. Can smashed one effort high into the Kop from outside the box while Mahrez continued to run hard for Leicester in a bid to break down Liverpool at the back.

As the end approached, a long throw by Christian Fuchs caused confusion in the Liverpool box but Mignolet recovered well but that was as close as Leicester got.

Henderson then squandered one glorious chance late on as he opted to pass rather than shoot with the Leicester goal at his mercy before Benteke did the same in the dying seconds and although that enraged Anfield, Liverpool's fans ultimately went home happy. — AFP



BIRMINGHAM: West Ham United goalkeeper Adrian clears off the line during the English Premier League soccer match against Aston Villa at Villa Park, Birmingham, England, yesterday. — AP

KI GOAL STOPS ROT FOR SWANSEA





SWANSEA: South Korea international midfielder Ki Sung-Yueng scored after just nine minutes as Swansea defeated West Brom 1-0 yesterday, handing the struggling Welsh side a first win in eight matches.

Managerless Swansea had gone seven home games without a win before Saturday, failing to find the net in five of them and started the day third from bottom in the Premier League.

But Ki stopped the rot when he found the net from close range just moments after Angel Rangel had hit the post with a right footed shot after being teed-up by Wayne Routledge.

The goal was the 26-year-old Kiís first Premier League goal of the season.

Both Rangel and Routledge had been injury doubts before the game while West Brom, winless in four matches before Saturday, were always likely to be underpowered with James McClean and Salomon Rondon both serving threematch suspensions. Once a confident Swansea had taken the lead, West Brom were reduced to a series of half-chances but Lukasz Fabianski in the home goal comfortably kept out a Rickie Lambert header and a James Morrison shot. Even star striker Saido Berahino, starting again on the bench, was unable to find an equaliser when he came on after an hourís play as West Bromís worst run under manager Tony Pulis continued. — AFP



WALES: Swansea City's Ki Sung-yueng celebrates scoring the opening goal against West Bromwich Albion during the English Premier League soccer match at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea, Wales, yesterday. — AP

BOURNEMOUTH: Crystal Palace crept into the Premier League's top five after denying Bournemouth a fourth straight victory in a 0-0 Boxing Day draw at Dean Court yesterday.

Both teams were in form heading into their first meeting since March 1989, but had to settle for a point that tightened Palace's grip on a European place and kept Eddie Howe's Bournemouth in 14th place.

Alan Pardew's Palace, who started and finished the game strongly, are now unbeaten in five league games, while Bournemouth's improved form means they have not tasted defeat in six outings.

Manchester United's 2-0 defeat at Stoke City had moved Palace up to fifth place even before a ball had been kicked and Pardew's men made a purposeful start in the first ever top-flight encounter between the teams.

Scott Dann headed over from a first-minute corner and Fraizer Campbell-in for the injured Connor Wickham-saw a cross deflected onto the roof of the net and fired over from a Damien Delaney pass.

Delaney also had a half-volley scrambled off the line by Simon Francis, with a meek Harry Arter effort that was easily saved by Wayne Hennessey the best Bournemouth could offer in response.

But mid-way through the first half the hosts came to life, Matt Ritchie heading wide from a Junior Stanislas cross and then narrowly failing to pick out the stretching Glenn Murray with a rightwing cross.

Hennessey had to claw away a deflected attempt by Dan Gosling and Stanislas blazed over after Delaney had cut out Charlie Daniels's cross.

Both sides made changes at the interval, Yohan Cabaye replacing Jordon Mutch for Palace and Howe sending on Eunan O'Kane for Arter, who had been booked for a late challenge on Wilfried Zaha.

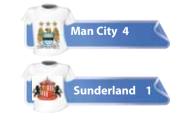
O'Kane almost made a stunning entrance, stinging Hennessey's palms with a rasping shot after Francis had picked his way around a pair of defenders.

South Africa international Tokelo Rantie also caught the eye after coming on for Murray, but it was Palace who came closest to netting a secondhalf winner, Artur Boruc repelling a flick from substitute Marouane Chamakh. —AFP



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Belgian midfielder Kevin De Bruyne (R) scores their fourth goal past Sunderland's Italian goalkeeper Vito Mannone (L) as Sunderland's Spanish midfielder Jordi Gomez (C) looks on during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Sunderland at The Etihad stadium in Manchester, north west England yesterday. — AFP

DE BRUYNE STARS, KOMPANY INJURED AS MAN CITY STROLL



MANCHESTER: Kevin De Bruyne starred with a goal and two assists as Manchester City closed to within three points of Premier League leaders Leicester City by overwhelming Sunderland 4-1 yesterday.

Three first-half goals put Manuel Pellegrini's side on course for the win at the Etihad Stadium, but it was overshadowed by an injury to Vincent Kompany. City's captain, returning as a second-half substitute after eight matches out with a calf injury, lasted only eight minutes before he had to come off.

Raheem Sterling, Yaya Toure and Wilfried Bony all scored in the first 25 minutes for Pellegrini's team, with De Bruyne adding a further goal in the second half. Bony then missed a penalty after Fabio Borini had pulled a goal back for Sunderland.

Pellegrini opted for a two-man attack, with Sterling working in partnership with Bony. The former Liverpool forward's first contribution was to pick up a yellow card for diving as he attempted unsuccessfully to convince the officials that he had been barged over by Sunderland right-back Billy Jones.

But the England international gave City the advantage moments later when he sneaked in behind Jones at the far post to head in De Bruyne's cross. City extended that lead moments later, with Toure collecting David Silva's short square pass and turning away from a weak Jordi Gomez challenge before planting a low shot into the net from 20 yards.

Danny Graham headed wide a great chance to pull Sunderland back into the match minutes later, having found space to connect with Borini's diagonal chip.

But City responded to that escape by scoring again, Bony climbing to head in De Bruyne's free-kick from 12 yards.

EXQUISITE BACK-HEEL

Goalkeeper Vito Mannone was far too slow to get down as the ball bounced inside his left-hand post. Sunderland's defence were fortunate not to concede a fourth in the 25th minute, when Eliaquim Mangala chested the ball wide after Bony had flicked on a free-kick with the visitors in disarray.

Sunderland struggled to create chances, lone striker Steven Fletcher lifting an angled shot over the bar after getting in front of Mangala to reach Patrick van Aanholt's leftwing cross, before Borini saw a shot beaten out at the near post by Joe Hart.

In between those two openings, though, they almost conceded a fourth goal, with Silva making a 30-yard forward burst before driving a shot just wide.

Sterling, meanwhile, was unfortunate to be judged offside as he slotted a shot into the net following a De Bruyne break. City continued to carve open their opponents after halftime, with Mannone diving to his right to push away a shot from Silva, who had been played in by an exquisite De Bruyne backheel.— AFP



STOKE-ON-TRENT: Stoke City's US defender Geoff Cameron (R) vies with Manchester United's English defender Chris Smalling during the English Premier League football match between Stoke City and Manchester United at the Britannia Stadium in Stoke-on-Trent, central England yesterday. — AFP

MAN UTD LOSES 4TH IN ROW AT STOKE



LONDON: Louis van Gaal hinted that he could vacate the Old Trafford hot seat after watching Stoke City swat aside his timid Manchester United team 2-0 in the Premier League yesterday.

Goals from Stoke forwards Bojan Krkic and Marko Arnautovic punished United for a dreadful start at a blustery Britannia Stadium and although the visitors improved

in the second half they could not repair the damage.

Dutchman Van Gaal has now overseen a seven-match winless run in which United have been eliminated from the Champions League and fallen out of the Premier League's top four after successive defeats by Bournemouth, Norwich City and Stoke.

Having criticised the media and stormed angrily out of his pre-match news conference on Wednesday, there was an air of resignation about Van Gaal's comments after the loss-United's fourth in a row in all competitions.

"The club doesn't have to fire or sack mesometimes I do it by myself," the former Barcelona and Bayern Munich manager told reporters.

Minutes earlier, he had been asked if he

still thought he was the man to turn around United's season and whether he had the support of United's hierarchy.

Van Gaal woes deepen

"It's more difficult because I'm also part of the four matches we have lost and so people are looking at me," Van Gaal told Sky Sports. "It's another situation, we have lost the fourth game, we will have to wait and see," he added with a lingering glare towards the reporter.

United, down to sixth in the Premier League, face struggling champions Chelsea at Old Trafford on Monday and few would be surprised if Van Gaal was no longer in charge.

Stoke manager Mark Hughes had spoken this week of his days as a marauding United striker under Alex Ferguson when the side approached every game expecting to win it

and he would have been surprised by his side's early dominance.

The 20-times English champions have traditionally been associated with swashbuckling attacking football, but apart from a brief flurry after the break when Van Gaal brought his captain Wayne Rooney off the bench, they were woefully short of belief or leadership.

Van Gaal looked powerless as he clutched his notes while sitting uneasily on the bench next to assistant Ryan Giggs.

The biggest indictment of the malaise afflicting England's biggest club was Van Gaal's belief that his expensively-assembled team "did not dare to play football in the first half."

Stoke's opener after 19 minutes summed up a truly awful first half for United.

Attempting to knock a bouncing ball back to his goalkeeper David de Gea with a diving header, Memphis Depay only succeeded in gifting the ball to Stoke right back Glen Johnson who crossed for Bojan to stab home.

It got even worse for United when Bojan's free kick was blocked and with no defender closing down Arnautovic he thundered a shot past De Gea.

England striker Rooney spiced up United's attack after the break but Marouane Fellaini wasted their best chance when he shot straight at Stoke keeper Jack Butland from close range.

At the final whistle Van Gaal gave a brief wave to United's travelling fans. The next few days will reveal whether it was his parting gesture. — Reuters

OSCAR SLIP DENIES HIDDINK OPENING CHELSEA VICTORY



LONDON: Diego Costa scored twice as Chelsea were held to a 2-2 draw by Watford at Stamford Bridge yesterday in Guus Hiddink's first game in charge as temporary manager.

Costa put his side ahead and his second goal mid-way through the second half rescued a point after a Troy Deeney penalty and an Odion Ighalo effort had put Watford ahead.

But had Oscar not skied a penalty high over the bar with 10 minutes remaining, Hiddink might have marked his return to west London with victory. Hiddink is back at the club after a previous stint in charge in 2009 as Chelsea attempt to recover from Jose Mourinho's departure. The early signs suggest that he intends to adopt a more adventurous approach than his predecessor, with Oscar, Willian and Pedro Rodriguez encouraged to get forward in support of lone striker Costa here. The proactive approach almost reaped dividends within four minutes when Pedro flashed in a cross from the right.

Costa, outjumping Allan Nyom, was first to the ball, but his header cleared the crossbar of Hornets goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes. Though much has been made of Chelsea's attacking struggles, their defensive frailities have been as much a factor in their slide towards the relegation places.

Twice the visitors had decent chances to open the scoring. Both efforts fell to live-wire Nigerian forward Ighalo, his first an instinctive volley that flashed wide and the second a delicate header that failed to trouble Thibaut Courtois.

Hiddink had suggested that he might turn to graduates from Chelsea's impressive youth academy to give the club an injection of vim, but he kept faith with the stalwarts against Watford and they combined for the opening goal in the 32nd minute.

HAZARD IMPACT

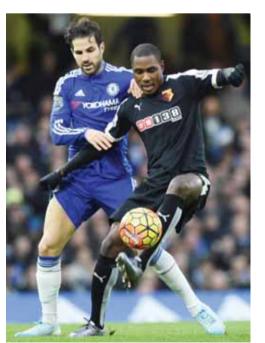
Willian's right-wing corner was knocked on by a combination of John Terry's head and Gary Cahill's shoulder to Costa, who volleyed home from close range. It was his first goal in over a month.

But the Blues managed to shoot themselves in the foot three minutes before the break when an innocuous corner from Ben Watson was misjudged by Nemanja Matic, who allowed the ball to bounce off his arm. It was a clear penalty and visiting captain Deeney despatched the spot-kick with consummate ease.

John Mikel Obi, one of three survivors from Hiddink's previous reign-the others being Terry and Branislav Ivanovic-replaced Cesc Fabregas at half-time.

But it was the visitors who restarted the game on the front foot and deservedly took the lead 11 minutes into the second period. Ivanovic, shorn of any confidence this season, was pulled out of position following the run of Deeney.

This allowed Ighalo the freedom to race into the vacated right-back position and he left fly, his



LONDON: Chelsea's Spanish midfielder Cesc Fabregas (L) vies with Watford's Nigerian striker Odion Ighalo during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Watford at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. — AFP

left-footer clipping Cahill and zipping past a slightly embarrassed Courtois.

England's festive games have a habit of producing goals and this one did not disappoint as the Blues restored parity within nine minutes. Willian bisected the Watford rearguard and Costa steamed through, taking a touch and lofting the ball over Gomes.

Eden Hazard entered the fray with 16 minutes to play and was immediately in the action when he was hauled down by Watford substitute Valon Behrami in the penalty area. — AFP

EVERTON STUN NEWCASTLE WITH LATE CLEVERLEY GOAL



NEWCASTLE: Everton midfielder Tom Cleverley headed a dramatic stoppagetime winner to seal a 1-0 victory at Newcastle that left the hosts languishing in the relegation zone yesterday.

Roberto Martinez's side looked to have squandered their dominant display with a series of missed chances until Cleverley popped up with his perfectly timed intervention to stun St James' Park.

Cleverley's first goal of the season gave Everton their first win in five league matches and shattered Newcastle's three match unbeaten run.

Newcastle are third bottom, behind Norwich on goal difference. The only Everton player who left frustrated was Romelu Lukaku, who would have entered the Goodison Park history books if he had scored for a ninth successive match.

Belgian striker Lukaku would have joined Everton legend Dixie Dean on that milestone mark he set in 1924, but he drew a disappointing blank. With torrential rain having lashed Tyneside all day, Everton made the more positive start on a slick surface.

They threatened for the first time when ne

Kevin Mirallas's powerful strike was kept out by Newcastle goalkeeper Rob Elliot. Martinez's men enjoyed total dominance of possession in the early stages, but Newcastle almost went in front against the run of play through Aleksandar Mitrovic, who should have done better than head tamely wide from Daryl Janmaat's cross.

As the game began to open up Everton winger Aaron Lennon drilled a low effort at Elliot, while Newcastle came close at the other end when Georginio Wijnaldum's header flew wide from Moussa Sissoko's cross.

Lukaku was well policed by the Newcastle defence in the first half. But he nearly reached the landmark three minutes after the interval when Seamus Coleman's cross flew across goal and just past the former Chelsea forward.

That close shave was followed by an even better chance for Lukaku, who turned Chancel Mbemba and saw his strike turned away by Elliot. Elliot was working overtime now and he made another good stop to deny Lennon. Penned into their own half for long periods, Mitrovic wasted a rare Newcastle chance when he headed Sissoko's cross wide from six yards.

Ramiro Funes Mori saw his header pushed away by Elliot, but Everton's pressure was finally rewarded in the most dramatic fashion.

With just seconds left in the third minute of stoppage-time, Newcastle couldn't deal with a cross and Cleverley looped a header over the stranded Elliot and into the net. — AFP



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HK apartment sells for a record \$76.7 million

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KURDISTAN REGION TAKES SMALL STEP TOWARDS ECONOMIC REFORM

Series Gran Coupe



RUSSIAN FIRMS TONE DOWN HOLIDAY CHEER Holiday excesses can land businesses in hot water

MOSCOW: Forget corporate holiday bashes where glitterati are treated to fine champagne and French delicacies: Russia's economic crisis has taken the glow off the holiday season this year. Many companies are now forced to scrimp on once lavish New Year's parties or celebrate the country's most beloved holiday in the office - with simple snacks on offer and employees bringing their own drinks. On a recent afternoon servers were arranging Chianti bottles on white tablecloths for a holiday party for 500 employees of an international firm in Roll Hall, a venue just south of the Moscow city centre.

Yelena Vetrova, deputy director of the entertainment and shopping complex, said that business was mostly good although some clients waited until the last minute to book their parties, while others scaled theirs down. "For the first time ever this year we were taking reservations in December," said Vetrova, noting that clients used to make bookings as early as May. She added that some clients had cancelled, while others toned down the festivities: The average price tag this year is 25 to 30 percent lower than last December. "People don't go away hungry but they don't eat foie gras," she said with a wry smile. "Many firms ask us whether they can bring their own alcohol, and we agree."

Modesty in Voque

Corporate New Year's parties became a huge industry in Russia during the years of high oil prices, with some companies booking lodges in the Alps, splurging on chocolate fondue fountains and paying singers hundreds of thousands of dollars for a performance. But if it was once trendy to show off, the opposite appears to be true amid a shrinking economy, with prices rising and real incomes falling by more than nine percent in the first 11 months of 2015.

This year, holiday excesses can land businesses in hot water. The government is looking into what many believe is a suspiciously lavish banquet laid on recently by the state corporation Rosnano, a leader in Russia's nanotechnology industry. Some 400 people attended the New Year's party, which reportedly cost more than \$30,000. "We have a huge amount of money. Simply a lot," Rosnano head Anatoly Chubais told his staff at the event held at a Moscow club, according to a leaked video that caused a scandal. "We will have a second bonus," he said, to cries of "hooray!"

Chubais, one of a handful of figures who oversaw liberal reforms in the government of Boris Yeltsin and who managed to hold on to a top post under President Vladimir Putin, was forced to explain himself. "About the New Year's corporate party," he wrote on Twitter on Wednesday. "I confirm that all expenses were paid from the personal funds of board members." The scandal prompted Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich to order a check into whether the Rosnano employees' bonuses were justified.

Partying in the Office

For most companies in the private sector, New Year's habits are hard to break, with three quarters planning to have a party. But 41 percent said they have cut their budgets and 21 percent plan to party in the office, according to a study by the Russian executive search website HeadHunter.ru. "The situation is not good," said Yegor Dobrogorsky, the head of event agency Communicator Creative Events, according to which the hard-hit construction and auto sectors appear to be scrimping the most.

Dobrogorsky added that companies can save by having employees host and participate in entertainment programmes, opting for buffet-style meals or axing the traditional celebrations altogether. Buying Russian wines instead of imported alcohol can reduce the bill by half or more, he added. Restaurateurs for whom New Year's parties have always been a gold mine are taking a hit. Igor Bukharov, president of the Russian Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers, said the market for holiday catering is down by a further 20 percent after last year's decline. The parties "have always been an important source of revenue to compensate for a slow January," he said. — AFP

US JOBLESS CLAIMS NEAR 42-YEAR LOW AS LABOR MARKET TIGHTENS

WASHINGTON: The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits fell more than expected last week, nearing a 42-year low as labor market conditions continued to tighten in a boost to the economy. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 5,000 to a seasonally adjusted 267,000 for the week ended Dec 19, not far from levels last seen in late 1973, the Labor Department said.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims dipping to 270,000 in the latest week. Claims have been below 300,000, a threshold associated with a buoyant labor market, for 42 consecutive weeks. That is the longest stretch since the early 1970s. However, some of the decline last week could be attributed to difficulties adjusting the figures during the holidays. Still, labor market strength is helping to underpin consumer spending, supporting the economy as it deals with the headwinds of a strong dollar, slowing global growth, spending cuts by energy firms and an inventory overhang.

The four-week moving average of claims, considered a better measure of labor market trends as it strips out weekto-week volatility, rose 1,750 to 272,500 last week. Prices of longer-dated US government debt rose after the data, while the dollar pared some losses. US stock index futures were slightly higher. A Labor Department analyst said there were no special factors influencing the data and that no states had been estimated.

The claims report showed the number of people still receiving benefits after an initial week of aid declined 47,000 to 2.20 million in the week ended Dec 12. The fourweek moving average of the so-called continuing claims rose 10,000 to 2.21 million. The continuing claims data covered the period during which the government surveyed households for December's unemployment rate. —Reuters

MACRI TRIES TO FIX ECONOMY INFLATION CASTS LONG SHADOW

BUENOS AIRES: Days into his presidency, Mauricio Macri faces his first big threats as he seeks to fix Argentina's ailing economy: inflation and recession. In his first policy moves since taking office on Dec 10, the free markets advocate made good on his promises to eliminate capital controls and cut hefty export taxes. But floating the peso triggered an immediate 26.5 percent devaluation and by making imported goods more expensive it will put further pressure on inflation, which already stands at well above 20 percent.

Economists expect inflation to accelerate to 35 percent in 2016, eating into Argentines purchasing power and dampening spending. They predict the economy will contract in the first months of the year, although it could then pick up again if new investment kicks in and a cheaper peso helps exporters. Argentines knew the peso was being held artificially strong and many believe the measures are needed, but even Macri's own supporters are worried. "It is going to hurt us all," said Cristina Lopez, 70, who works as a secretary to supplement a pension that she says is not enough to get by on. "I went to get medicine yesterday

and it had gone up 30-40 percent already." Lopez voted for Macri's center-right "Let's Change" alliance and blames the poor economy on 12 years of populist policies.

"They left us in a bad situation," she said of the previous government of leftist Cristina Fernandez, who imposed currency and trade controls in Latin America's No 3 economy in a bid to boost domestic consumption and foster national industries. As Macri dismantles those policies, he risks tipping the economy into recession and stirring unrest from labor unions linked to the Peronist party he has just turfed out of power.

"The contractive exchange, fiscal and monetary policies at the same time will generate a decline in economic activity in the first half of the year," said a research note from Buenos Aires brokerage Allaria Ledesma and Co. Macri believes a mix of pro-business policies and government austerity will bring inflation under control and encourage the investment that Argentina needs to grow rapidly and create jobs. But in the short-term he has a problem, and little space to maneuver. Interest rates are already high, discouraging investment. And austerity means reducing utility subsidies and restraining public sector wage hikes, both of which are unpopular.

Macri will be helped if exports start to grow quickly, and some businesses are already hopeful. "The devaluation is an opportunity rather than a problem," said Pedro Cascales, whose company Tradefin makes machinery such as units for backup supply of gas.

He mainly sells products in Argentina but with a cheaper peso and no more industry export taxes, he is on the hunt for foreign markets. "In the last years it was tough because the peso was strong," he said, adding that he expects his revenue will jump from 30 million pesos this year to 50 million in 2016. Yet he is still wary that rampant inflation could kill those ambitions. "The big challenge will be the rate of inflation because if inflation goes up at the same rate or even more than the devaluation this advantage might only last a few months."

The devaluation pushed up the price of imported wares, including consumer goods like televisions and refrigerators but also those used lower down the production chain like auto parts. Businesses have been quick to hike prices in anticipation of increased costs and some are accused of moving too quickly, using the devaluation as an excuse to increase profits. "The government has to control the decisions by those who determine prices, the big monopolies and oligopolies as well as the supermarket chains," said the Confederation of Medium-Sized Enterprises (CAME), which represents more than 450,000 companies. "In the last few weeks, these actors increased prices in anticipation in an abusive way."-Reuters

RBI SOUNDS WARNING ON **INDEBTED FIRMS**

NEW DELHI: A high proportion of Indian corporations have weak balance sheets, posing a threat to the financial system of the world's fastestgrowing major economy, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said. Almost one in six of the 2,711 listed companies surveyed by the RBI is rated as weak based on its level of debt and ability to service that debt, the central bank said in its Financial Stability Report.

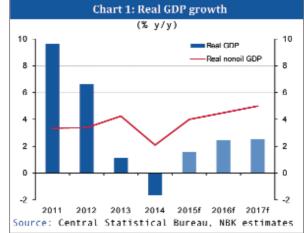
Declining profitability together with high borrowing rates and a poor capacity to pay back loans "continue to cause concern" in the corporate sector, the half-yearly report said.

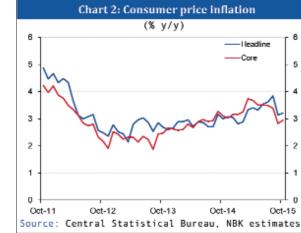
"Corporate sector vulnerabilities and the impact of their weak balance sheets on the financial system need closer monitoring, RBI governor Raghuram Rajan wrote in the foreword to the report. Among the most stressed sectors are construction, power and steel-where a slowdown in China has led to a flood of cheap imports. Asia's third-largest economy expanded 7.4 percent in the second quarter of the financial year, figures released at the end of November showed, outperforming China. —AFP

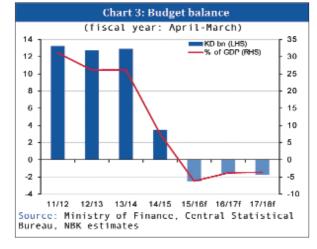
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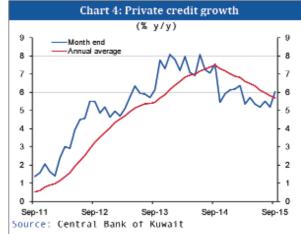
BUSINESS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2015









KUWAIT NONOIL GROWTH SEEN AT 4-5% AS FISCAL STANCE REMAINS SUPPORTIVE

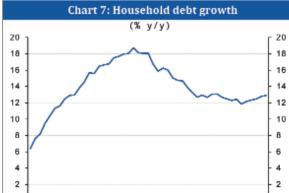
KUWAIT: Economic activity is expected to improve in 2016 and 2017, boosted by an increase in public investment and steady growth in consumption. This is happening despite the large decline in oil prices seen since the middle of 2014, and which has put some pressure on the government's fiscal position. While the government has already taken some measures to rationalize current spending, some of which are incorporated in the current budget, the impact on the domestic economy is expected to be limited. We have revised our growth outlook slightly downwards, though we still see growth improving.

The pressure on the country's fiscal and external positions remains contained and manageable. The fiscal deficit should not exceed 6.2% of GDP in FY15/16 and is seen narrowing to under 4% in the following two years. Thanks to large fiscal and external buffers, the government is expected to maintain a relatively supportive fiscal stance despite the decline in oil revenues. The sovereign wealth fund is estimated at over 400% of GDP (\$550 billion).

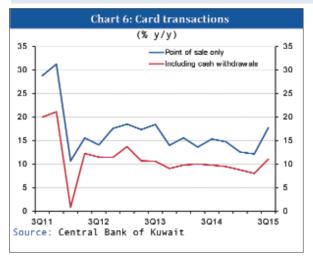
The main downside risk to this outlook is if oil prices remain lower for longer or if they see further declines from current levels. Our baseline view is that Brent will gradually improve towards an average of \$55 a barrel in 2016 and perhaps \$60 in 2017. A weaker oil price scenario would put added pressure on the fiscal and external positions of Kuwait and could result in more significant expenditure cuts and possibly even some reductions or delays in capital spending. Nonetheless, we think this is a risk and not our baseline at this point.

Nonoil growth to accelerate

Activity in the nonoil sector has remained resilient, with growth accelerating to 4% in 2015 in our view. We also see



NBK ECONOMIC UPDATE



driven in large part by the outlook for government capital spending. Plans involve spending around KD 34 billion between 2015 and 2020. Since late 2013, there has been a marked improvement in the implementation of the government development plan. The plan calls for both government and private investment in a host of large infrastructure projects (PPPs in some cases). Following some delay in prior years, we have seen a pickup in the pace of implementation. More than KD 7.5 billion in projects were awarded in 2014 and another KD 12 billion during 2015.

Consumer is healthy

The consumer sector has been a solid source of growth in nonoil activity and is expected to remain so in 2016 and 2017. This is supported by steady growth in employment and salaries, particularly in the government sector and among Kuwaiti households. As a result, growth in consumer spending and household borrowing has been robust. With no expectations of cuts in government wages and salaries and with subsidy reforms expected to be delayed and gradual, we see support for this sector remaining strong.

A number of consumer indicators show that the sector remains relatively resilient. Estimates of household income growth based on data from the Public Institute for Social Security have shown resilience, growing by 4.4% y/y through June 2015. Data on consumer's spending using credit and debit cards shows that growth has remained relatively robust, at 17.8% y/y in 3Q15. Household borrowing has also been

Inflation picked up

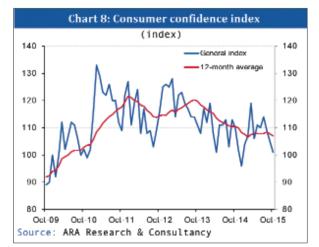
Inflation picked up in 2015 on higher inflation in housing rent and food prices. Average (12-month) inflation reached 3.2% y/y in October2015, up from 2.8% a year before. (Chart 2.) Most of the inflationary pressures have come from domestic sources, with our own estimate of core inflation (excluding food)showing a similar trend. Offsetting these pressures have been a stronger dinar and weak international inflation. We expect inflation to average around 3.4% by the end of 2015and to cool off in 2016 and 2017 to around 3%.

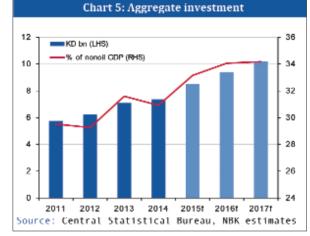
Deficits expected

With the Brent oil price likely to remain in the \$40-50 range and to improve only gradually in the coming two years, Kuwait is expected to post moderate sized deficits at least through 2017. Substantial fiscal buffers, in the form of a sovereign wealth fund estimated at over 400% of GDP, should help Kuwait pull through relatively easily, without making deep spending cuts. While the government is expected to tap into its liquid assets to finance part of the deficit, debt issuance is also expected. Even with the government already taking some measures to rationalize spending, revenues are expected to fall short to the tune of 6.2% of GDP in FY15/16. This could narrow to 3.8% of GDP in FY16/17 on some improvement in oil prices. In FY17/18, we expect oil prices to recover further towards \$60, which should help narrow the deficit to around 3.6% of GDP.

The government's first response to lower oil prices was to rationalize spending. This initiative started late in 2014 and was reflected in the FY15/16 budget. The latter sought to reduce government expenditures by 17%. Around half of these cuts came from the reduced cost of fuel subsidies due to lower oil prices and were little more than an accounting change; the rest came from cuts in non-essential spending and reducing inefficiencies and waste. Importantly, there were no reductions in wages and salaries or in capital expenditures.

In the medium term, the government is keen on tackling subsidy reform, starting with fuel subsidies, in an effort to fur-





the process of salary increases.

Beyond efforts to reduce spending, the government is taking some steps to address the long term sustainability challenges facing Kuwait by bolstering nonoil revenues. Steps include efforts to introduce a comprehensive corporate income tax at a proposed rate of 10%. This would replace existing taxes imposed on foreign corporates and a number of smaller levies on domestic companies. Another measure being proposed is a value added tax (VAT), which is being tackled in a coordinated fashion with other GCC countries. Neither of the two tax initiatives is expected to take effect before 2019 at the earliest.

We estimate that the government will require around KD 10-15 billion in deficit financing in the coming five years. The government has sufficient liquid funds to easily finance the deficits in the medium term without resorting to debt, including KD 34 billion in mostly liquid overseas assets in the General Reserve Fund (managed by KIA, the Kuwait Investment Authority). Nonetheless, the Ministry of Finance has indicated an intention to finance some of this requirement through bond issuance in an effort to reduce the burden on KIA assets, to take advantage of low interest rates and to deepen domestic capital markets.

Liquidity tightening

With the government running a deficit and the current account seeing its surplus narrow considerably, there is a concern that system liquidity could be under pressure. Indeed, we have already seen a slowdown in M2 growth, which has fallen from around 8% in the middle of 2014 to 5.3% in September 2015. Still, levels of liquidity remain relatively healthy. For example, M2 to nonoil GDP stood at 138% in 3Q15, compared to an average of 140% since the financial crisis. However, banks have seen some tightening in liquidity, with interbank rate spreads to Libor starting to climb.

0 				
Sep-11	Sep-12	Sep-13	Sep-14	Sep-19
Source:	Ministry of	Justice		

growth accelerating further towards 4.5-5% in 2016 and 2017. And, though the most recent available official data on nonoil GDP growth shows slower growth of 2.1% in 2014, we think this will be revised upwards towards 3-3.5%. In our view, the pace of growth started to show some pick up back in 2014, supported by accelerating project implementation and a robust consumer sector. This momentum is expected to have carried over into 2015.

While growth is expected to accelerate, there are signs that nonoil activity is cooler than it would have been, had oil prices remained above \$100. Private credit growth eased to around 6% by the end of 2014 and is expected to remain relatively steady at that pace at the close of 2015. However, a large part of this slowdown in credit growth was due to a slowdown in lending to the real estate sector. Also, the credit figures have been dampened by a number of corporates resolving legacy debts predating the financial crisis.

Government capital spending

The somewhat robust outlook for the nonoil sector is being

healthy growing by 12.9% y/y in September 2015.

Nonetheless, there have been signs that consumers have not been unscathed by the current low oil price environment. Consumer confidence has taken a hit. The average ARA general consumer confidence index has retreated by around 3% between 2014 and 2015 year-to-date through October 2015. Most of this decline was in the durable goods component, which dropped by 11%. Indeed, car sales retreated significantly in 2015. Data on the number of car registrations through October 2015 show that new car sales have fallen by 13% y/y in 3Q15.

Real estate market cools off

The real estate market cooled significantly in 2015 following a strong showing in 2014. Total sales during the first ten months of 2015 decreased by 29% compared to the previous year. Growth in 2014 had topped 21%. (Chart 9.) Sales activity in all sectors was down in 2015, including residential, investment and commercial. The impact on prices has been mixed. According to NBK estimates, prices of investment buildings continue to see positive growth, though that pace has eased significantly from a 43% y/y in early 2014 to about 8% in 3Q2015. Meanwhile, prices of residential plots and homes are little changed or have retreated y/y.

ther rationalize spending and reduce economic inefficiencies. Subsidies in Kuwait amount to 9% of GDP according to the IMF. The cabinet is expected to issue a petrol subsidy reform package in the coming months. This is expected to include a phaseout of subsidies on petrol in 2016. It is thought that this will include a cash transfer to low income Kuwaiti households. The cabinet will likely make a similar proposal for electricity and water subsidies sometime in 2016 but this will require legislative changes.

The parliament is also currently deliberating on an ambitious wage bill reform initiative, which could result in substantial savings for the government on its wage bill. The legislation aims to standardize pay across the public sector and to increase control over the government's wage bill. It will also put limits on wage and salary growth in the public sector by streamlining

Dinar strengthened

The Kuwaiti dinar (KWD) continued to appreciate in 2015, pulled up by a stronger US dollar; the currency rose by 2.7% in trade-weighted-terms through the end of November 2015 following an increase of 3.2% in 2014. The dinar, which is pegged to a basket of major currencies, with the US dollar having the largest weight, depreciated against the US currency by 3.9% year-to-date (ytd) through November 2015 following a similar decline in 2014.

2015 a tough year

Kuwait'sstock market retreated during 2015, as low oil prices continued to weigh on investor sentiment but also pulled down by a large correction in emerging market equities. Following an initial but short-lived recovery earlier in 2015, the Kuwait Stock Exchange's value-weighted index (IXW) was down by 10.5% ytd through November. The MSCI total return index was down by 10.6% ytd.

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Ex	(CHANGE CO.	20 Gram	GOLD 219.280	Saudi Riyals Jordanian Dinar	81.920 429.160		US Dollars Mint		0.304800
	OUNTRIES	10 Gram	112.340	Egyptian Pound	38.795			Asia	
	2.516	5 Gram	56.850	Sri Lankan Rupees	2.124		Bangladesh Taka		0.004048
	4.602			Indian Rupees	4.597		Chinese Yuan	0.045440	
	2.903			Pakistani Rupees	2.904		Hong Kong Dollar		0.039924
	2.903	UAE EXC.	hange Centre WLL	Bangladesh Taka	3.870		Indian Rupee		0.004691
	2.881			Philippines Pesso	6.445		Indonesian Rupiah		0.000024
	217.428	CURRENCIES	TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000	Cyprus pound	580.265		Japanese Yen		
	39.270	Australian Dollar	211.78	Japanese Yen	3.509		Kenyan Shilling		0.003164
	3.869	Canadian Dollar	222.01	Syrian Pound	2.380		Korean Won		0.000265
	5.437	Swiss Franc	311.03	Nepalese Rupees	3.870		Malaysian Ringgit	0.066958	0.072958
	8.452	Euro	335.60	Malaysian Ringgit	71.785		Nepalese Rupee	0.002886	0.003056
Thai Baht	5.452	US Dollar	304.60	Chinese Yuan Renminbi	47.505		Pakistan Rupee	0.002701	0.002981
		Sterling Pound	465.02	Thai Bhat	9.425		Philippine Peso	0.006405	
	UNTRIES	Japanese Yen	2.55	Turkish Lira	104.490		Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
	81.217	Bangladesh Taka	3.866				Singapore Dollar	0.213449	0.219449
	83.661	Indian Rupee	4.597	RALIDAINI EV	CHANGE CON	ADANIV	South African Rand	0.014971	0.022471
	791.060	Sri Lankan Rupee	2.124	DARKAIN LA	CHANGE COM	MI'AN I	Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001766	0.002346
	808.820	Nepali Rupee	2.872				Taiwan	0.009202	0.009382
UAE Dirham	32.920	Pakistani Rupee	2.904	CURRENCY	BUY S	ELL	Thai Baht	0.008126	0.008676
		UAE Dirhams	0.08289		Europe				
	DUNTRIES	Bahraini Dinar	0.8095	British Pound	0.448791 0	.457791		Arab	
	37.770	Egyptian Pound Jordanian Dinar	0.03881	Czech Korune	0.004353 0	.016353	Bahraini Dinar	0.800536	0.808536
571	38.942		0.4332	Danish Krone	0.040657 0	.045657	Egyptian Pound	0.034557	0.037683
	1.421	Omani Riyal Qatari Riyal	0.7910 0.08398	Euro	0.329222 0	.337222	Iranian Rival		
	150.693	Saudi Rival	0.08398	Norwegian Krone	0.030984 0	.036184	Iragi Dinar	0.000201	0.000261
	428.823	Saudi Riyal	0.08119	Romanian Leu	0.087320 0	.087320	Jordanian Dinar		0.432843
	2.029			Slovakia	0.009099 0	.019099	Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	
	2.170	DOLLARCO	Exchange Co. Ltd	Swedish Krona	0.032246 0	.037246	Lebanese Pound		0.000253
Morocco Dirham	31.221			Swiss Franc	0.302325 0	.312525	Moroccan Dirhams		0.046124
		Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate	Turkish Lira	0.098924 0	.109224	Nigerian Naira		0.001894
	ERICAN COUNTRIES	US Dollar	304.650				Omani Riyal		0.789909
	304.400	Canadian Dollar	220.425		Australasia		Qatar Riyal	0.082900	
	334.840	Sterling Pound	455.111	Australian Dollar	0.212638 0	.224138	Saudi Riyal	0.082200	0.081237
Sterling Pound	452.947	Euro	335.260	New Zealand Dollar	0.202490 0	.211990	Syrian Pound		0.001237
Canadian dollar	219.545	Swiss Frank	302.035				Tunisian Dinar		0.155231
Turkish lira	103.855	Bahrain Dinar	805.970		America		Turkish Lira		0.109224
Swiss Franc	309.350	UAE Dirhams	83.185	Canadian Dollar	0.215072 0	.223572	UAE Dirhams		0.083045
Australian Dollar`221.907		Qatari Riyals	84.405	US Dollars		.304800	Yemeni Riyal		0.083045
US Dollar Buying	303.200	Qatan Nyais	01.100	05 Donars	0.300300 0	.50 1000	remeni kiyai	0.001376	0.001456

<u> Kuwait & Times</u>



KURDISTAN REGION TAKES SMALL STEP TOWARDS ECONOMIC REFORM **REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES SPENDING CUTS**

ERBIL: The government of Iraq's Kurdistan region has unveiled spending cuts in a tentative step towards tackling an economic crisis that officials say poses a greater threat than Islamic State. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), which is three months in arrears and deeply in debt, has been struggling since early 2014 when the Baghdad government slashed its funding, halting a boom fuelled by Iraq's growing oil revenues. Then Islamic State overran a third of Iraq, scaring off foreign investors and driving more than one million refugees into Kurdistan.

Unveiled earlier this week, the spending cuts will include cutting allowances of ministers and other officials by as much as 50 percent, and eliminating perks such as paying the rent and electricity bills of senior civil servants. But two Kurdish lawmakers, Farsat Sofi and Goran Azad, who presented a report on the economy to the cabinet earlier this month, said the reforms, which are due to come into force at the start of next year, needed to go much further. "Those decisions should have been made sooner and they concern reducing expenses rather than real economic and administrative reform," said lawmaker Goran Azad. "The government has only two options: either to reform or cease to function."

Both Sofi and Azad said the amount

saved through the measures would be negligible compared to the scale of the problem, and expected more changes to be introduced in the coming weeks. The lawmakers said the KRG has now racked up roughly \$18 billion in debt and is unable to meet a bloated public payroll costing 870 billion dinar (\$793 million) per month, including the salaries of its armed forces, the peshmerga. The peshmerga have emerged as a key component of the US-led coalition's strategy to "degrade and destroy" Islamic State, driving the insurgents back in northern Iraq with the help of airstrikes.

Speaking of the multiple challenges facing Kurdistan, Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani said earlier this month: "But of all of these crises, the one that poses the most significant threat to the long-term future of Kurdistan ... is the economic crisis." The autonomous region ran a budget deficit of nearly 8 trillion dinars in 2014, Talabani said, predicting a smaller but still considerable shortfall of 2-3 trillion dinars this year. Dependent on oil revenue, Kurdistan has increased independent exports to more than 600,000 barrels per day in an effort to cover the gap, but the price of crude has fallen below \$40 per barrel, on top of which the KRG sells at a discount.

Talabani also said the first priority was to "restructure" the region's salary and

pensions scheme, which currently consumes 70 percent of Kurdistan's entire budget. The second and third priorities are to reduce subsidies for petroleum products and electricity sector, he said. Lawmaker Sofi said the KRG should also root out thousands of "ghost employees"people who are on the public payroll but do not go to work. The new measures will be a major test for the KRG as true reform will have to take on corruption, Azad said. "It won't be easy because reform harms the interests of a group of people in positions of power and influence, so they will create obstacles," Azad said. "If they don't reform, it will harm their own interests and those of the nation." — Reuters



OHIO: Jordan Peterson, of Bellefontaine, works on an Airstream travel trailer at the Airstream factory in Jackson Center, Ohio. US factory orders rebounded in October 2015 after two prior monthly declines, helped by rising demand for aircraft, computers and machinery. — AP

US MANUFACTURING STRUGGLES AS RISING INCOME BRIGHTENS OUTLOOK

Personal income rises 0.3%; wages up 0.5%

WASHINGTON: New orders for US manufactured global demand, which has curtailed new orders attitudes towards purchases of long-lasting manucapital goods fell in November and the prior growth. The dollar has gained almost 20 percent factured goods such as motor vehicles and other month's increase was revised sharply lower as the against the currencies of the United States' main big-ticket items hit their highest level since 2005.

VIETNAM ECONOMY GROWS AT HIGHEST RATE IN 5 YEARS

HANOI: Vietnam's economy in 2015 grew at its fastest pace in five years, official figures showed yesterday, shaking off regional economic worries with strong exports, record foreign investment and buoyant domestic consumption. The communist nation recorded a GDP growth rate of 6.68 percent, easily surpassing the government's 6.2 percent target with a figure that looks set to be one of Southeast Asia's strongest showings for the year.

"This growth rate is very important for the Vietnamese economy in the coming years in the context of falling world oil prices and instabilities in the international financial markets," Nguyen Bich Lam, director of the General Statistics Office, told reporters in Hanoi. Many Asian economies have been rattled by troubles in China, where the world's second largest economy has suffered with its worst annual growth rates in a quarter of a century.

While regional neighbors like Thailand have suffered, Vietnam has proved resistant to the slowdown of its giant northern neighbor, partly through state intervention. The State Bank of Vietnam weakened the dong three times this year to spur exports after China depreciated the yuan, dragging exchange rates lower across Asia. Exports rose 8.1 percent in the 12 months through December while imports climbed 12 percent. Much of the growth has been fuelled by a flurry of international interest with disbursed foreign investment surging 17.4 percent compared to last year with a record-high of \$14.5 billion.

The strong showing is a significant jump on the last two years. In 2014 Vietnam's GDP growth was just under six percent, while that of 2013 was only 5.42 percent. Senior economist Le Dang Doanh said that strong industrial growth also helped boost the economy as well as "lower oil prices in the world market which has greatly reduced the cost of imported raw materials for Vietnam". On Wednesday, Vietnam released data showing an annual inflation rate of just 0.63 percent in 2015, the lowest in 14 years. Vietnam is now party to the recently sealed Trans-Pacific Partnership, the world's largest free trade deal between 12 nations, including the US and Japan.

As the poorest of the TPP nations, the pact is something of a coup for the country's Communist rulers, who will meet in January for a major gathering of senior officials to chose new leaders and decide the country's five-year economic plan. In a report earlier this month the World Bank said the TPP deal could add "as much as eight percent to Vietnam's GDP... over the next 20 years" if it goes ahead. But many analysts still say Vietnam's economic progress is vulnerable due to high public debts, inefficient operation of huge stateowned enterprises and rampant official corruption. For decades, the country suffered from runaway inflation-with triple digit increases in the 1980s and rates as high as 28.3 percent as recently as August 2008. — AFP



drag on manufacturing from a strong dollar and spending cuts in the energy sector showed little sign of abating. But the outlook for the economy remains encouraging, with other data showing consumer sentiment at a five-month high in December and personal income rising for an eighth straight month in November.

That should support consumer spending and generate enough economic growth for the Federal Reserve to steadily raise interest rates next year. "The economy is not too cold, and not too hot, it is just right. The Fed can stay the course ... no need to depart from a gradual pace given what we know currently about the economy," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFG Union Bank in New York.

The Commerce Department said non-defense capital goods orders excluding aircraft, a closely watched proxy for business spending plans, dropped 0.4 percent last month. October's increase in orders for these so-called core capital goods was revised down to 0.6 percent from 1.3 percent. Manufacturing, which accounts for 12 percent of the economy, is also buckling under businesses' efforts to reduce an inventory bloat and sluggish

trading partners over the last 18 months.

At the same time, plunging crude oil prices, which on Monday plumbed their lowest levels since 2004, have put pressure on oilfield services firms like Schlumberger and Halliburton, forcing them to slash capital spending budgets. A survey early this month showed manufacturing contracted in November for the first time in three years. Core capital goods shipments fell 0.5 percent last month after declining 1.0 percent in October. Shipments of these goods are used to calculate equipment spending in the government's gross domestic product measurement.

"Unless we see a big rebound in December or upward revisions, it appears that investment in equipment contracted in the fourth quarter," said Paul Ashworth, chief US economist at Capital Economics in Toronto. A separate report showed the University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index increased to 92.6 this month, the highest reading since July, from 91.3 in November. Low inflation, characterized by deep discounts at shopping malls, accounted for the rise in sentiment this month. The report also showed that consumers'

Wages rising

Prospects for consumer spending next year also got a boost from another report from the Commerce Department showing income increased 0.3 percent last month after gaining 0.4 percent in October. Wages and salaries advanced 0.5 percent, adding to a 0.6 percent gain in October. US stocks rose on the mixed data, with sentiment also buoyed by a rebound in oil prices. The dollar firmed against a basket of currencies, while U.S. Treasuries fell

A tightening labor market, marked by an unemployment rate that is in a range some Fed officials consider consistent with full employment, is starting to lift wages. While that could generate price pressures, inflation will likely remain below the US central bank's 2 percent target because of the oil price rout. "The Fed understands that the competing factors will be with us for a while and that is why it is easy for the members to say that rates will be increased gradually," said Joel Naroff, chief economist at Naroff Economic Advisors in Holland, Pennsylvania. — Reuters

HK APARTMENT SELLS FOR A RECORD \$76.7 MILLION

in Hong Kong sold for a record HK\$594.7 million (\$76.7 million), days before Christmas, making it the most expensive flat in the city and possibly in Asia, reports said Friday. An unidentified buyer paid more than HK\$103,700 per-square-foot for the 5,732 square-foot (532 square-metre) unit at the luxury 39

HONG KONG: A luxury apartment Conduit Road apartment tower in the southern Chinese city's upmarket Mid-Levels residential area, The Apple Daily and The Standard reported.

The condominium, on the 46th floor with a view of the iconic Victoria Harbor and a 1,754 squarefeet rooftop, had a list price of HK\$646.48 million on developer Henderson Land Properties' website. The price beats the previous record HK\$470 million paid for a luxury unit which takes up the entire eighth floor of the Opus Hong Kong, a 12storey residential building designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Frank Gehry, in 2012.

Henderson Land was not available for comment Friday, a public



HONG KONG: Tourists look at the city skyline and Victoria harbour while visiting the Peak in Hong Kong vesterday. — AFP

holiday. This comes as analysts said a US interest rate hike could put an end to the housing boom in the Chinese city which maintains a decades old peg with the US dollar. Hong Kong-based brokerage CLSA warned the residential market was at a "turning point", with prices possibly dropping 17 percent by 2017, while other firms have tipped falls of up to 30 percent. Hong Kong's de facto central bank last Thursday raised its base interest rate by 25 points to 0.75 percent after the US

Federal Reserve announced its first

rate increase in more than nine years. But chief analyst for Midland Realty Buggle Lau said the recordbreaking purchase does not reflect the bigger picture of the overall property market in the city. "The super-rich, I don't think the small increase in the interest rates have any impact on their purchasing power," Lau said. "This is exceptional, it can't reflect the whole market," which he described overall as "sluggish". Property prices in Hong Kong, famous for its sky-high rent and super-rich tycoons, have more than doubled in six years due to record low interest rates and a flood of wealthy buyers from mainland China. Many residents complain they can no longer afford decent accommodation in the city of seven million people, and analysts say property ownership is out of reach even for the upper middle class. — AFP

TOKYO: Shoppers select fish at a market in Tokyo. Japanese consumer prices rose 0.1 percent in November year-on-year, official data showed, as the government continues to battle years of deflation. — AFP

JAPAN'S LEADERS URGE HIGHER WAGES, BUT BUSINESSES GIVE MUTED SUPPORT ABE SAYS WAGE HIKES, CAPEX CRITICAL TO END DEFLATION

TOKYO: Japan's prime minister and central bank governor have applied fresh pressure on companies to do their part in putting a sustained end to deflation by boosting wages and investment. The head of Japan's biggest business lobby, however, offered only conditional support, underscoring the difficulty policymakers face in convincing risk-shy Japanese companies to divert more of their record profits to innovation and human resources.

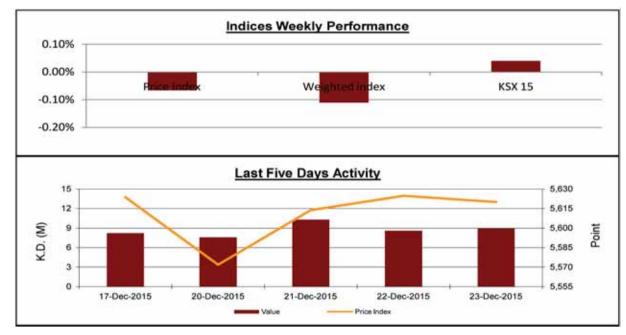
At an annual meeting of the business lobby Keidanren, Abe voiced hope that companies raise wages next year at a faster pace than this year, saying that boosting salaries and capital expenditure was critical for Japan to exit deflation. Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda also waded in, telling the same meeting that companies who invest now are the ones to be rewarded when the central bank's aggressive money printing succeeds in accelerating inflation to its 2 percent target.

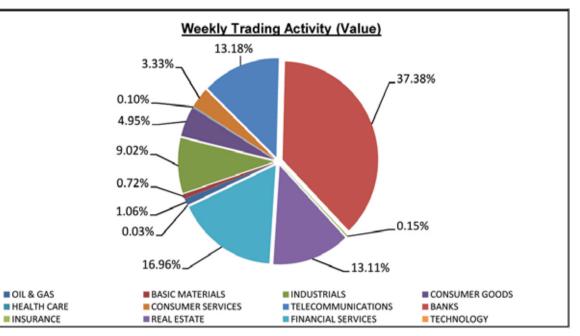
"Fortune favors the bold," Kuroda said, citing a famous proverb and stressing that more companies needed to be spending further on new innovation and raising salaries to lure talent in a tightening job market. Kuroda also said the BOJ remains "unwavering" in its determination to do whatever it takes to hit its 2 percent inflation target, suggesting his readiness to expand monetary stimulus if risks threaten a broad uptrend in prices. Despite assurances by Kuroda that Japan's economic prospects are bright, many companies still sit on a huge pile of cash because of uncertainties over the external outlook and a shrinking domestic market as the country's population ages rapidly.

In the meeting, Keidanren chairman Sadayuki Sakakibara praised Abe's efforts to reflate growth and his pro-business policies such as a pledge to cut Japan's corporate tax rate. But he said companies had the flexibility to decide to what degree and how employees should be compensated, signaling that smaller and less-profitable firms may opt to pay one-off bonuses rather than increase base salary. "Each company faces a different business environment," Sakakibara said. "I'd like to urge companies to take measures that best suit their needs," he said, adding that companies did not necessarily need to persist in raising regular pay. — Reuters

<u>Kuwait Times</u>

BUSINESS





KSE PRICE INDEX CLOSES AT 5,619.98 POINTS

OIL & GAS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) ended last week with mixed performance. The Price Index closed at 5,619.98 points, down by 0.07% from the week before closing, the Weighted Index decreased by 0.11% after closing at 380.98 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 902.52 points up by 0.04%. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 28.80%, compared to the preceding week, reaching K.D 8.85 million, whereas trading volume average was 86.97 million shares, recording a loss of 8.50 %.

The stock market indicators ended the last week's trading with mixed closings for the three indicators, whereas the Price and Weighted indices continued its decline for the fourth consecutive week, whilst the KSX-15 index was able to realize small gain due to the purchasing operations that targeted some heavy stocks. The market overall performance was negative, despite the fluctuation was witnessed throughout the week, which came among a continued presence of the negative factors and lack of supportive motivators for purchase, especially in light of the oil prices declines witnessed for a relatively long time, which pushed many investors towards selling fearing aggregation of the situation.

The market trading activity was limited to four sessions last week, whereas the first session witnessed a clear decrease for the three indicators, especially the Price Index which recorded big losses that pushed it to close at its lowest level since July 2004, in parallel with the noticeable slowing down of the trading activity during the session, as the volume reached its lowest level in four years, recording a drop of 31.83% compared to the previous session. whilst the value recorded a decline of 7.70% to reach its lowest level since last July.

However on the next session, the market was able to record various gains for the three indices, especially the Price Index which was able to compen-

BAYAN INVESTMENT REPORT

(SE INDICES				
	-22	Price Index	Weighted index	KSX 15
	Last week	5,619.98	380.98	902.52
Weekly	Previous week	5,623.69	381.40	902.16
weekiy	Change (Point)	-3.71	-0.42	0.36
	Change (%)	-0.07%	-0.11%	0.04%
	Last year	6,535.72	438.88	1,059.95
Annual	Change (Point)	-915.74	-57.90	-157.43
	Change (%)	-14.01%	-13.19%	-14.85%

sate a small portion of the previous session's losses, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices were able to compensate all its losses ; and such performance came in light of the purchasing activities that were strongly present during that session, and concentrated on the stocks that declined and its prices reached low levels in previous sessions, and became tempting to buy.

On Tuesday's session, the market witnessed mixed performance for the closing of its three indicators, whereas the Price Index continued to increase in light of the purchasing activity on the small-cap stocks which enabled it to compensate all of its losses made earlier in the week, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices dropped as a result to the profit collection operations that included heavy stocks, to return once again to the red zone.

The market continued its mixed performance at the end of week session, which witnessed the return of the Price Index to drop and the Weighted and KSX-15 indices to increase once again, which came in light of the quick speculation and profit collection operations executed on the small-cap stocks, where the cosmetic purchasing operations witnessed during the session enabled the Weighted and KSX-15 indices to record limited gain by the end of the session.

The market capitalization for KSE reached by the end of last week KD 25.28 billion, declining by 0.51%, compared to its level in a week earlier, which was KD 25.40 billion. On an annual level, the market cap for the listed companies in KSE declined by 9.67% from its value at end of 2004, where it was KD 27.98. As far as KSE annual performance, the Price Index ended last week recording 14.01% annual loss compared to its closing in 2014, while the Weighted Index decreased by 13.19%, and the KSX-15 contracted by 14.85%.

Sectors' Indices

Seven of KSE's sectors ended last week in the green zone, while the other five recorded declines. Last week's highest gainer was the Consumer Goods sector, achieving 2.49% growth rate as its index closed at 1,078.31 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Basic Materials sector's index closed at 982.78 points recording 2.38% increase. The Oil & Gas sector came in third as its index achieved 2.22% growth, ending the week at 808.60 points. On the other hand, the Health Care sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 1.28% to end the week's activity at 955.98 points. The Industrial sector was

MARKET	ACTIVITY			
	Las	t Week	Previous Weel	k Ch. %
Volume	347	,892,798	475,248,593	-26.80%
Value (K.D)	35,	412,846	62,170,571	-43.04%
Deals	9	9,923	13,787	-28.03%
MARKET	CAPITALISAT	ION (K.D.)		
	eek	Previous Week		kly Ch. Annual Ch. % %
25,275,	749,306	25,404,309,3	308	-0.51% -9.67%
TOP GAIN	ERS OF THE	WEEK		
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
SOKOUK	47.00	40.50	6.5	16.05%
ALMUDON	34.00	30.00	4.0	13.33%
GFH	38.50	34.00	4.5	13.24%
ZIMAH	126.00	114.00	12.0	10.53%
NAPESCO	650.00	600.00	50.0	8.33%
TOP LOOS	ERS OF THE	WEEK		
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
GFC	34.50	37.50	-3.0	-8.00%
КРАК	360.00	390.00	-30.0	-7.69%
GGMC	490.00	530.00	-40.0	-7.55%
PCEM	1,040.00	1,120.00	-80.0	-7.14%
YIACO	158.00	170.00	-12.0	-7.06%

SECTORS' WEEKLY TRA	DING ACTIVITY				SECTORS INDICES PERF	ORMANCE			
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %	Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	8,605,894	2.47%	376,520	1.06%	OIL & GAS	808.60	791.04	2.22%	-23.93%
BASIC MATERIALS	908,704	0.26%	254,366	0.72%	BASIC MATERIALS	982.78	959.96	2.38%	-13.13%
INDUSTRIALS	24,707,858	7.10%	3,192,610	9.02%	INDUSTRIALS	1,048.02	1,060.26	-1.15%	-2.09%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,691,512	0.49%	1,753,877	4.95%	CONSUMER GOODS	1,078.31	1,052.09	2.49%	-12.04%
HEALTH CARE	216,195	0.06%	35,320	0.10%	HEALTH CARE	955.98	968.40	-1.28%	1.67%
CONSUMER SERVICES	6,916,999	1.99%	1,180,853	3.33%	CONSUMER SERVICES	1,022.78	1,009.97	1.27%	-5.43%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	16,484,423	4.74%	4,667,324	13.18%	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	598.02	589.05	1.52%	4.84%
BANKS	31,273,948	8.99%	13,238,848	37.38%	BANKS	900.91	906.49	-0.62%	-10.37%
INSURANCE	122,610	0.04%	52,208	0.15%	INSURANCE	1,097.05	1,089.26	0.72%	-6.83%
REAL ESTATE	96,177,698	27.65%	4,643,506	13.11%	REAL ESTATE	942.63	941.33	0.14%	-16.58%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	160,593,866	46.16%	6,005,113	16.96%	FINANCIAL SERVICES	595.23	600.58	-0.89%	-28.47%
TECHNOLOGY	193,091	0.06%	12,301	0.03%	TECHNOLOGY	851.47	859.48	-0.93%	-7.07%

second on the losers' list, which index declined by .15%, closing at 1,048.02 points, followed by the Fechnology sector, as its index closed at 851.47 points at a loss of 0.93%.

Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total rade volume of around 160.59 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 46.16% of the total market trading volume. The Real Estate sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 27.65% of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 96.18 million shares. On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 13.24 million or 37.38% of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 6.01 million representing 16.96% of the total market tradng value.

INFINITI INTRODUCES 3.0-LITER V6 TWIN-TURBO ENGINE: THE MOST ADVANCED V6 FOR INFINITI

DUBAI: At a special media preview ahead of the North American International Auto Show in Detroit next month, Infiniti has previewed an allnew engine; the 3.0-liter V6 twin-turbo from the new and exclusive 'VR' powertrain family. The new compact and lightweight 3.0-liter V6 twinturbo engine is the most advanced V6 engine that Infiniti has ever offered, striking an ideal balance between drivability, efficiency, and performance.

The engine's reduced weight and contained size is credited, in part, to lighter and more compact cylinder blocks. The result is greater mechanical efficiency, while a series of new features and in-house innovations secure superior performance. "The all-new engine from Infiniti reaffirms our commitment to expanding our powertrain and product portfolio," said Juergen Schmitz, Managing Director, Infiniti Middle East. "Both versions of the all-new engine will make its Middle East debut in the Infiniti Q50 later in 2016. Since launch the Infiniti Q50 has performed exceptionally well - with a sales growth of 124% for the first eleven months of 2015.





We are confident that with the addition of the new powertrains, it will help Infiniti to further increase its footprint in the region." The allnew 3.0-liter V6 twin-turbo engine has been developed to deliver optimal power and torque for an engine of its size, together with optimized fuel efficiency. The high-output version of the power unit delivers 400hp (298kW) at 6400 rpm and 475Nm (350lb-ft) maximum torque at 1600-5200 rpm; while the 300hp (224kW) version (at 6400 rpm) produces 400Nm (295lb-ft) torque at 1600-5200 rpm.

These outputs have been achieved while ensuring an improvement in fuel efficiency of up to 6.7% and this represents a best-in-class power-to-efficiency ratio for the 400hp power unit. This power-to-efficiency performance was made possible thanks to a set of newly-developed features. Advanced timing control ensures improved responsiveness, enabling quicker reactions to driver inputs. Power delivery is enhanced through an advanced new twin-turbo system enabling smooth and immediate responses under acceleration, while aiding efficiency

An optimized turbine blade design helps the engine generate greater overall performance, with faster turbine revolution speeds allowing for an immediate response from the twin-turbo system.In addition, the V6 engine features a newturbine speed sensor, which allows for the twin-turbo system to perform at up to 220,000 rpm - at steady condition and 240,000 rpm at transient condition- higher than ever before for a V6 power unit. Selected Infiniti models, among them the upgraded Q50, will be equipped with the all-new 3.0-liter V6 twin-turbo from 2016 onwards, with the engine being manufactured at the powertrain plant in lwaki, Fukushima, Japan.

بنك الخليج **GULF BANK** GROWING WITH YOU **GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS** OF THE AL DANAH DAILY DRAWS

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its Al Danah daily draws on 20 December 2015 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 13 December - 17 December 2015. The Al Danah daily draws include draws each and every working day for two prizes of KD1,000 per winner. The winners were: (Sunday 13/12): Hamad Salem Farhan Al-Salem, Bilal Hijab Shalash Salim; (Monday 14/12): Hessah Fahad Aner Al-Mutairi, Yaqoub Abdulreda Hussain Kabli; (Tuesday 15/12): Abdullatif Salem Ali Al-Wahaib, Ibrahim Khalil Saied Al-Qalaf; (Wednesday 16/12): Qadeer Abdulrazaq Qadeer Al-Qadeery, Essam Mohammed Abdullah Al-Rasheed; (Thursday 17/12): Fereshteh Hoshang Pirelahi, Yousef Khalaf Jabraan Al-Shemrry.

Gulf Bank's Al Danah 2015 draw lineup includes daily draws (2 winners per working day each receive KD1,000). The final AI Danah draw for One Million Dinars will be held on 7 January 2016. The Al Danah Millionaire will be announced alongside winners of KD250,000 and KD50,000 cash prizes.

Five reasons why the Al Danah account is the Best: (1) Kuwait's single biggest yearly cash prize of KD 1 Million. (2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD500,000. (3) Two winners of KD1,000 every working day. (4) The most opportunities to win (64 draws a year, and up to 532 winners). (5) Only Bank that transfers your chances to win from year to year.

Win Big, Live Big, with Al Danah 2015. Al Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al Danah winner.

Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is open to Kuwaitis and all residents of Kuwait. Customers who open an account and/ or deposit more will enter the draw within two days. To take part in the Al Danah 2015 upcoming yearly draw, customers must have an Al Danah account containing at least KD 200. To be part of the Al Danah draws, customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, transfer on line, or call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance. Customers can also log on to www.egulfbank.com/aldanahwinners, to find out more about Al Danah and its winners.



RISE IN THE REAL ESTATE MARKET LIQUIDITY

AL-SHALL WEEKLY ECONOMIC REPORT

Warba Bank Financial Results

KUWAIT: The latest available data at the Ministry of Justice -the Real Estate Registration and Authentications Department- excluding crafts activity, parking lots and the coastal strip indicate rise in the real estate market liquidity during November 2015 by 63.1% vis-a-vis October 2015 liquidity. Total value of contracts and agencies trading scored KD 305.4 million versus KD 187.2 million but it dropped by -30.8% compared with November 2014 trading.

November 2015 trading was distributed between KD 298.5 million for contracts and about KD 6.9 million for agencies. Number of real estate deals struck in the month was 479 deals distributed between 459 contracts and 20 agencies. The highest share went to Ahmadi Governorate with real estate deals (218 deals) representing about 45.5% of the total number of deals, followed by Hawalli Governorate by 80 deals, representing approximately 16.7%, while the lowest share went to Jahra Governorate by 25 deals representing about 5.2%.

Value of private residential trading scored KD 99.5 million, up by about 30.4%, compared with KD 76.3 million for October 2015. Its contribution dropped to 32.6% of total value of real estate trading compared with 40.7% in October 2015. The monthly average value for private residence trading in 12 months scored about KD 129.7 million. This means that trading value in this month is lower by 23.3% compared with the average. Number of deals for this activity rose to 325 deals (245 deals in October 2015). Therefore, the average value per deal of private residence activity scored about KD 306.1 thousand.

Value of investment residence activity increased to KD 123.4 million, an increase by 73.4%, compared with KD 71.2 million in October 2015. Its percentage share out of total liquidity rose to about 40.4% versus 38% in October 2015. The average value for investment residence activity trading during 12 months scored KD 115.2 million, making value of this month trading higher by 7.1% than the 12 months average. Its deals scored 147 deals (94 deals in October 2015). As such, the average value per deal for the investment residence was about KD 839.6 thousand; higher by 10.9% than October 2015 average.

Commercial activity trading value rose to about KD 81.2 million, a rise by 135.7% compared with KD 34.5 million for October 2015. Its percentage share out of total real estate trading value increased to about 26.6% (18.4% in October 2015). Average value of commercial activity transactions in 12 months scored KD 37.6 million which means that trading value during this month was higher by about 116.2% than the 12 months' average. Its transactions were 6 deals (9 deals in October 2015). Therefore, the average value of the commercial deal was at approximately KD 13.5 million. Value of warehousing trading activity was at approximately KD 1.25 million (one deal during November 2015).

When we compare November 2015 trading with November 2014, we note decline in the real estate market liquidity from about KD 441

KUWAIT: The latest available data at the Ministry of Justice -the Real Estate Registration and Authentications Department- excluding crafts activity, parking lots and the coastal strip indicate rise in the real estate market liquidity world.

The unfair legislations do not stabilize and are not respected. Once they become in force, they cause unwarranted anger in the present circumstances and will drive people to search for means to by pass them. In addition to their political seriousness, they will be added to the growing number of loose laws, while the situation and circumstances require return to dedicating the rule of law. But that will not be achieved unless they are fair laws. Time is still available for amendment as long as the talk is about a bill of regulation.

The bank announced results of its business for the first nine months of the current year ending on 30 September 2015, which indicate that the net bank profit -after tax deductions- scored KD 1.3 million vis-‡-vis KD 318 thousand in the same period of 2014. The reason for this profit is due to the rise in total operational incomes by a higher value than the rise in total operational expenses. In details, total operations incomes increased by about KD 3.4 million and scored KD 13.3 million (KD 9.9 million in the same period 2014), due to a rise in the item of net financing incomes by KD 2.2 million to KD 8.6 million (KD 6.4 million). Likewise, item of net fees and commissions rose by KD 1.7 million to KD 2 million (KD 355 thousand). While the item of net investment income declined by KD 524 thousand and scored KD 2.5 million (KD 3 million).

Total operations expenditures rose by less value than the rise in total operations incomes. They increased by KD 1.7 million, or by 21.1%, to KD 10 million (KD 8.2 million in September 2014), due to the rise in all operational expenses components. Percentage of total operations expenditures to total operational incomes scored 75.1% (83.3%). Item of provision for impairment increased by KD 686 thousand, or by 51.8%, and scored KD 2 million (KD 1.3 million the same period last year). This explains the rise in net profit margin before discounting the total provision for impairment to 24.9% (16.7% for the same period last year).

The bank's financial statements indicate that the bank's total assets increased by KD 88 million, or by 14.8%, and scored about KD 682.8 million (KD 594.8 million in the end of 2014). And increased by about KD 175.6 million, or by 34.6%, when compared with KD 507.1 million in the same period of 2014. Item of financing receivables increased by KD 104.2 million, or by 26.9%, to KD 492.4 million (72.1% of total assets) compared with KD 388.2 million (65.3% of total assets) in the end of 2014.

It however increased by 42%, or by KD 145.6 million, compared with KD 346.7 million (68.4% of total assets) in the same period 2014. Item of placements with banks decreased by KD 31 million, or by 25.3%, to KD 91.5 million (13.4% of total assets) compared with KD 122.6 million (20.6% of total assets) in the end of 2014. It increased by 13%, i.e. KD 10.6 million compared with KD 81 million (16% of total assets) in the same period of 2014.

Figures indicate that the bank's liabilities (without calculating total equities) increased by KD 87 million, or by 17.3%, and scored KD 590 million (KD 502.9 million in the end of 2014) and increased by KD 174.9 million, or by 42.2%, compared with the total in the same period last year. Percentage of financing receivables to total deposits scored 84.1% (84.2%). The ratio of the bank's total liabilities to total assets scored 86.4% (81.8% in the same period last year).

Results of analyzing the bank's financial statements calculated on annual basis indicate that all profitability indexes increased compared with the same period 2014. The return on average equities (ROE) increased to 1.8% (0.5%). The return on average capital (ROC) increased to 1.7% (0.4%). Likewise, return on average bank assets (ROA) increased to 0.3% (0.1%). (EPS) scored 1.3 fils versus 0.3 fils. (P/B) index scored 2.3 times (2.9 times).

Boubyan Bank Financial Results

Boubyan Bank announced its results for the first nine months of the current year ending on 30 September 2015, which indicate that the Bank's profits -after tax deductions- scored about KD 25.2 million, a rise by KD 4.9 million, or by 24.1%, compared with KD 20.3 million for the same period 2014. The rise in net profits is attributed to the rise in total operating incomes by a higher value than the rise in total expenses.

In details, total operating incomes of the bank increased by KD 8.7 million, or by 14.9%, and scored about KD 67.1 million vis-a-vis KD 58.4 million for the same period 2014. This resulted from the rise in most of operations incomes components. Item of net financing incomes increased by KD 8.9 million to KD 57.9 million compared with KD 49 million. Likewise, item of net fees and commission income increased by KD 1.8 million to KD 6.3 million (KD 4.5 million). While the item of share in the results of associates decreased by KD 1.3 million to KD 509 thousand (KD 1.8 million). Total operating expenses increased by less value than the rise in total operating incomes, ie by KD 3.1 million, to KD 29.5 million(KD 26.4 million

The following tables summarize last week's performance of KSE

Description	Week 51	Week 50	Diff
Description	23/12/2015	17/12/2015	%
Working days	4	5	
AlShall index (38 Companies)	365.4	366.6	-0.3%
KSE index	5,620.0	5,623.7	-0.1%
Value Trade (KD)	35,412,846	62,182,615	
Daily average (KD)	8,853,211	12,436,523	-28.8%
Volume Trade (Shares)	347,892,798	477,049,696	
Daily average (Shares)	86,973,200	95,409,939	-8.8%
Transactions	9,923	13,813	
Daily average (Transactions)	2,481	2,763	-10.2%

Most Active Sectors & Companies

Description	Value Traded	% of Total
Sectors	KD	Market
NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT	8,685,537	24.5%
MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY K.S.C (ZAIN)	2,410,909	6.8%
KUWAIT TELECOMMUNICATIONS CO. (VIVA)	2,014,763	5.7%
KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE	1,548,163	4.4%
Mezzan Holding Co. (K.S.C.C)	1,542,226	4.4%
Total	16,201,598	45.8%
Description	Value Traded	% of Total
Sectors	KD	Market
BANKS SECTOR	13,238,848	37.4%
FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR	6,005,113	17.0%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR	4,667,324	13.2%
REAL ESTATE SECTOR	4,643,506	13.1%
INDUSTRIALS SECTOR	3,192,610	9.0%

ALSHALL INDEX	Week 51	Week 50
	23/12/2015	17/12/2015
Increased Value (# of Companies)	10	6
Decreased Value (# of Companies)	15	21
Unchanged Value (# of Companies)	13	11

million to KD 305.4 million, ie 30.8%, as we mentioned. The drop involved the private residential activity by 47.5% and the commercial activity liquidity by -39.4% while the investment residence activity rose by 5%. If liquidity rate continues at the same average rate in the past 11 months of 2015 total liquidity will score about KD 3.3 billion, which is less by -33.9% than 2014 which means sustained drop in the real estate market's liquidity.

Bill to regulate agencies

In what seems to be completion of connected series of incomplete legislation, and the revoked ones, the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee in the National Assembly finalized a draft law to regulate commercial agencies. The project in our opinion is one step backward. Legislation originally tends to enhance the majority gains while the proposed project dedicates a monopolistic approach which impairs its legal legitimacy and contradicts the prevailing economic trend in the world calling for trade liberalization to the degree of globalizing of all its components.

In the past, the world passed through a legislation revolution to ensure alignment of legislation to the interests of the majority during which the social security network was established such as the adoption of the minimum wage limit, encouragement of establishing trade unions to defend the interests of the least privileged in their share in the decision-making power. This was achieved after the crisis of the Great Depression in 1929. Reform began in the most capitalist stronghold states, i.e. the United States the origin of the crisis.

The declared goal was to protect the society from the savage capitalism approach and its call to abolish legislation and to leaving the "invisible hand" to regulate the rights and obligations of business partners. The same approach has become prevalent in the world since its financial crisis in 2008. All capitalist countries have become more inclined to reduce the monopoly and imposed high governance controls on major institutions departments in a preventive protection to the vast majority affected by the crisis.

The proposed legislation by the Committee of Finance and Economic Affairs tends to overpower the interests of the agent on the client's or consumer's interests or the majority which will add an undue margin on prices at a time when the consumer income should be protected from erosion due to inflation coinciding with an era where the potentials to increase wages are scant. Articles such as limiting the import of goods to the country of origin only, or exempting the agent of their maintenance unless they are in accordance with its specifications, or limiting the agency to one company or one dealer, are just examples of consecration of the monopoly power to the agent. Other examples are plentiful.

	changed Value (# of Companies)		13	11			
Tot	al Companies			38	38		
1	Bad Iddaes	WED	THU	DIFF	CLOSE	DIFF	
	Company Name	23/12/2015	17/12/2015	%	2014	%	
1	The National Bank Of Kuwait	401.1	406.3	(1.3)	435.9	(8.0)	
2	The Gulf Bank	211.3	215.3	(1.9)	224.4	(5.8)	
3	Commercial Bank Of Kuwait	402.3	402.3	0.0	506.9	(20.6)	
4	Al-Ahli Bank Of Kuwait	242.2	242.2	0.0	268.4	(9.8)	
5	Kuwait International Bank	229.3	229.3	0.0	258.4	(11.3)	
6	Ahli United Bank	416.2	424.2	(1.9)	465.7	(10.6)	
7	Burgan Bank	354.8	359.6	(1.3)	428.3	(17.2)	
8	Kuwait Finance House	1096.5	1096.5	0.0	1,306.8	(16.1)	
	Banking Sector	411.4	415.4	(1.0)	464.5	(11.4)	
9	Commercial Facilities Co	125.6	129.9	(3.3)	198.5	(36.7)	
10	International Financial Advisors	235.1	243.2	(3.3)	332.3	(29.3)	
11	National Investments	110.7	118.3	(6.4)	191.3	(42.1)	
12	Kuwait Investment Projects	1292.5	1270.2	1.8	1,559.9	(17.1)	
13	Coast Investment & Development	44.4	45.1	(1.6)	79.3	(44.0)	
	Investment Sector	347.6	346.8	0.2	455.4	(23.7)	
14	Kuwait Insurance Company	67.3	67.3	0.0	64.0	5.2	
15	Gulf Insurance Company	427.7	427.7	0.0	342.2	25.0	
16	Al-Ahleia Insurance Company	172.7	169.0	2.2	185.9	(7.1)	
17	Warba Insurance Company	86.9	83.6	3.9	95.0	(8.5)	
	Insurance Sector	156.4	155.2	0.8	143.8	8.8	
18	Kuwait Real Estate Company	91.9	93.6	(1.8)	116.5	(21.1)	
19	United Realty Company	187.6	191.7	(2.1)	203.9	(8.0)	
20	National Real Estate Company	200.9	196.6	2.2	274.6	(26.8)	
21	Salhiah Real Estate Company	1413.2	1413.2	0.0	1,514.2	(6.7)	
	Real Estate Sector	183.0	183.1	(0.1)	216.7	(15.6)	
22	The National Industries	112.6	112.6	0.0	169.8	(33.7)	
	Kuwait Cement Co	580.4	595.5	(2.5)	603.0	(3.7)	
	Refrigeration Industries Co	104.9	104.9	0.0	109.8	(4.5)	
25	Gulf Cable & Electrical Industries	149.9	145.9	2.7	275.8	(45.6)	
26	Contracting & Marine Services Co	69.7	69.7	0.0	72.1	(3.3)	
	Industrial Sector	170.7	172.1	(0.8)	219.7	(22.3)	
	Kuwait National Cinemas	552.4	577.5	(4.3)	615.2	(10.2)	
28	Kuwait Hotels Company	107.8	107.8	0.0	97.9	10.1	
29	The Public Warehousing Co	1882.2	1862.8	1.0	2,735.1	(31.2)	
30	Mobile Telecommunications Co - ZAIN	338.2	322.6	4.8	915.7	(63.1)	
31	Safat Energy Co	12.6	13.1	(3.8)	22.8	(44.7)	
	Services Sector	590.1	580.4	1.7	1,074.4	(45.1)	
	Livestock Transport & Trading Co	108.3	103.3	4.8	121.7	(11.0)	
33	Danah Aalsafat Foodstuff Company	85.9	84.9	1.2	76.7	12.0	
34	Kuwait United Poultry Co	58.7	58.7	0.0	60.0	(2.2)	
35	Kuwait Food Co	1951.0	1872.2	4.2	2,759.0	(29.3)	
	Food Sector	673.9	647.6	4.1	932.7	(27.7)	
36	Sharjah Cement Co	341.6	350.0	(2.4)	371.7	(8.1)	
37	Gulf Cement Co	314.5	314.5	0.0	387.1	(18.8)	
38	Umm Al-Qaiwain Cement Industries	551.8	588.6	(6.3)	750.5	(26.5)	
	Non Kuwaiti Companies	222.6	225.5	(1.3)	249.2	(10.7)	
	General Index	365.4	366.6	(0.3)	444.0	(17.7)	

in September 2014), or by 11.7%. Due to the rise in all operational expenses components.

Percentage of total operational expenses to total operational incomes scored 44% (45.3% in the same period 2014). Total provision for impairment increased by KD 471 thousand to KD 11.3 million (KD 10.8 million), a rise by 4.4%. This explains the rise in the net profit margin to 37.5% (34.8% in the same period 2014). The bank's financial statements indicate that total assets increased by KD 330.8 million, or by 12.5%, and scored KD 2.979 billion (KD 2.648 billion in the end of 2014). Also total assets increased by KD 467.9 million, or by 18.6%, compared with KD 2.511 billion in the same period 2014. Item of Islamic financing to customers increased by KD 302.4 million, or by 16.8%, to KD 2.108 billion (70.8% of total assets), compared to KD 1.805 billion (68.2% of total assets) in the end of 2014.

The item increased by 20.9%, ie about KD 363.9 million, compared with KD 1.744 billion (69.4% of total assets) in the same period of 2014. Figures indicate that the Bank's liabilities (without calculating total equity) increased by KD 319.4 million to KD 2.666 billion (KD 2.347 billion in the end of 2014). These figures would be bigger if we compared total liabilities with the same period of last year as they would be increased by KD 447.3 million, or by 20.2%. When they scored KD 2.219 billion. Therefore, the ratio of the bank's total liabilities to total assets rose to 89.5% up from 88.4% in of the same period last year. Percentage of Islamic financing to customers to total deposits scored 79.9% (79.6%).

Results of analyzing financial statements calculated on annual basis indicate that all the bank's profitability indexes increased compared with same period 2014. The return on average equities relevant to the bank shareholder (ROE) increased to 11.1% (9.8%). Return on average capital (ROC) increased to 16.7% (14.2%). Likewise, the return on average assets (ROA) increased slightly to 1.19% (1.15%). (EPS) scored 12.2 fils (9.8 fils). (P/E) scored 24.9 times -improved- compared with 38.9 times, as a result of increased earning per share by about 24.5% and a drop in the market price of the share by 20.6% of its price level on 30 September 2014. (P/B) scored about 2.7 times, compared with about 3.4 times in the same period last year.

KSE Weekly Performance

The performance of Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) for the last week (4 working days due to Birthday Of Prophet Mohammad Holiday) was less active compared to the previous one, where all indexes showed a decrease, the traded value index, the traded volume index, the number of transactions index, and the general index also showed a decrease, AlShall Index (value weighted) closed at 365.4 points at the closing of last Wednesday, showing a decrease of about 1.2 points or about 0.3% compared with its level last week and it decreased by 78.6 points or about 17.7% compared with the end of 2014.

BUSINESS



THE NEW BMW 6 SERIES GRAN COUPE

KUWAIT: The arrival of the new BMW 6 Series Gran Coupe - continues BMW's promise to bring the latest and most innovative models to Kuwait. Conjuring up a new balance of dynamic excellence, elegance and luxury, the enhanced addition to the BMW 6 Series range blends the sports performance and aesthetics of a coupe with the extended functionality of a four-door car. Its distinctive proportions and longer wheelbase accentuate the exterior's irresistible radiance.

The interior of the BMW 6 Series Gran Coupe delivers luxurious longdistance comfort for the driver and passengers in four full-size seats and offers a third seat in the rear that is suitable for shorter journeys. Detail refinements showcase both the elegance of the body design and the exclusive ambience of the interior. The 6 Series Gran Coupe is a great of example of the varied and premium line up we offer our customers, in addition to offering exceptional service and low cost of ownership, we are sure the car will make an impact in the market.

The BMW TwinPower Turbo engines available for the BMW 6 Series Gran Coupe stand for sportiness with efficiency. The twin turbo 3.0 litre V6 of the 640i produces 320 horsepower and 450 Nm of torque which translates



to a 0 - 100 km/h time of just 5.4 seconds. Meanwhile, under the bonnet of the BMW 6 Series Gran Coupe is a V8 petrol engine of the 650i with BMW TwinPower Turbo technology that has two turbochargers, direct injection and VALVETRONIC. This results in 450hp at 5,500 rpm, with an acceleration from 0 to 100 km at 4.6 seconds reaching top speeds of 50 km/h.

BMW ConnectedDrive in the new BMW 6 Series Gran Coupe come as standard with a hands-free facility and a SIM card embedded in the car. Enabling ConnectedDrive Services and Real Time Traffic Information for the

navigation system. The BMW Head-Up Display projects relevant driving data, information and navigation directions into the driver's direct field of view using 3D graphics to promote concentration on the road ahead. Other technologies include Stop & Go function, the Lane Departure Warning system and Pedestrian and Collision Warning system. Exclusively available at Ali Alghanim & Sons Automotive. The BMW 6 Series Gran Coupe is exclusively available at Ali Alghanim & Sons Automotive, the exclusive importer for BMW Group automobiles in Kuwait.







TURKEY'S SIMSEK SEES 2016 GROWTH ABOVE 4%

BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES SPECIAL DISCOUNTS AT RESTAURANTS, CAFES

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank has announced its partnership with different restaurants and cafes in Kuwait. The bank's customers will avail discount when using any of Burgan Bank's cards while dining in Suits Turkish Restaurant, Khaneen Kuwaiti Restaurant, Espressamante cafe, Haagen Dazs cafe, Dilmah Tea Lounge cafe, Nino restaurant and Leila from Lebanon restaurant. This ongoing offer comes to provide customers with a superb experience when dining at fabulous restaurants

and cafes, while saving money with an exclusive discount from Burgan Bank. Burgan Bank's customer-centric approach aims at providing customers with rewarding opportunities. To find out more about Burgan Bank services as well as its latest promotions, customers are required to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch or contact the call center on 1804080. For more information, customers can visit the bank's website on www.burgan.com.

Russia's impact limited

ANKARA: Deputy Turkish Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek said he expected faster economic growth this year than official forecasts, and an even stronger expansion next year, and he played down tensions with Moscow over Ankara's downing of a Russian jet. Simsek also told Reuters in an interview that the central bank had been "very clear" in its statement explaining its surprise decision to leave interest rates steady this week, in comments that may do little to quell investors' concerns about the bank's independence.

The "positive surprise" of third-quarter GDP growth of 4 percent pointed to full-year growth of 3.5 to 4 percent and more than 4 percent growth in 2016, said Simsek, who is responsible for the performance of the economy. In October, the government cut its growth forecasts to 3 from 4 percent in 2015 and to 4 from 5 percent in 2016. "This growth is a rather good outcome given the serious political instability due to elections. troubles in the Middle East and surrounding countries and the narrowing demand due to the collapse in commodity prices," he said late on Wednesday.

Commenting on those problems, Simsek said souring relations with Moscow after Turkey shot down a Russian warplane last month had not had a serious impact on trade and was unlikely to do so. "We do not anticipate a lasting, significant impact on foreign trade. If there is one, it will be limited," he said. "We will be able to find alternative markets for our products." Simsek, a former finance minister, took up his new post last month after an election that handed oneparty rule back to the AK Party, which oversaw an economy that has grown around 5 percent annually on average since it first came to power in 2002.

The deputy prime minister also said he expected the current account deficit, resourcepoor Turkey's biggest economic weakness, to narrow to about 4.5 percent of GDP this year and then to 4 percent next year. "We think the narrowing in the current account deficit will continue next year despite developments in Russia and the region," he said.

Bank on track

Simsek said the central bank, which stunned the markets by not hiking interest rates as widely expected, was acting in line with its "road map" towards a simpler policy framework aimed at narrowing its corridor of interest rates. "(The central bank) has taken many steps required by this road map and said that the next step would be a process of narrowing the corridor. It linked this to market volatility," he said, avoiding further comment. Analysts have been urging an interest rate hike to rein in inflation and boost the lira

currency, but the bank has faced political pressure to keep monetary policy loose.

President Tayyip Erdogan has called for rate cuts and even equated high interest rates with treason. The lira, which weakened to 2.96 to the dollar after Tuesday's rate decision, has since recovered and stood at 2.9232 on Thursday. The main share index was up 0.1 percent and the 10year benchmark bond yield was steady at 10.78 percent. "In the short term, naturally, inflationary pressures will continue to be strong," Simsek said. "The decline in global commodity prices will be somewhat supportive in the period ahead," he added, suggesting the inflationary pressure the central bank faces may ease.

"To lower (inflation) we have to raise productivity, securing this with structural reforms. We must strengthen monetary policy's hand by keeping fiscal policy tight," he said. He added that the 2016 budget would give the signal that fiscal discipline will be maintained and forecast faster growth next year as political uncertainty wanes and European economies recover. "The reform agenda, serious real increases in wages, domestic investment and consumption will boost demand," he said. He added that a delay in Turkey's implementation of the Basel III set of global banking regulations, expected to take place in March, was not currently on the agenda.—Reuters

AAFAQ ISLAMIC FINANCE CONFERRED TWO PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS BY IFM

DUBAI: Aafaq Islamic Finance, a leading provider of Islamic finance products and egovernment services in the UAE, received two eminent awards from London-based International Finance Magazine (IFM) during the 2015 IFM Awards held recently at the Landmark Hotel, London. Mujtaba Naseem, DCEO & CFO at aafag Islamic Finance, accepted the award for the 'Fastest Growing Finance Company - GCC 2015,' while Nihad Shahin, Secretary of the Boards of Directors at aafaq Islamic Finance, was given the trophy for the 'Best Smart Service Provider - GCC 2015' during a glittering ceremony that was attended by high profile guests, industry leaders, and representatives from the world's leading banking and financial institutions.

The IFM Awards celebrates excellence and honors individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the international finance industry. It heralds the highest standards of innovation and performance in four different categories, including Financial, Brokerage, Leadership,

and Technology. Apart from recognizing the key performers in the industry, the IFM Awards makes a concerted effort to shine the spotlight on organizations in niche segments and those that exhibit brilliance in the unsung corners of the finance industry.

HE Dr Abduljaleel Alblouki, Deputy Chairman of aafag Islamic Finance, said; "We thank the Awarding Committee of IFM Awards 2015 for bestowing aafaq Islamic Finance with the two prestigious awards. It is a tremendous achievement to be recognized at a global platform for making outstanding contributions to the international banking and finance industry. They demonstrate aafaq's continued commitment to embrace innovation and technology to offer smart banking solutions designed to meet its patron's requirements and expectations. We have outlined strategic policies to expand our services to a wider geographical area to reach out to a larger customer base, and these awards serve as strong motivations for us to further intensify our efforts."





TURKISH INTERNET SERVERS UNDER SUSTAINED CYBERATTACK

which kind of group or single individual

may be behind it," said Artturi Lehtio of

Finland-based internet security compa-

It is not the first time that Turkish

ISTANBUL/OXFORD: Turkish Internet a flood of traffic to Turkish internet servers have suffered one of the most intense cyberattacks ever seen in the country over the last week, according to an Internet management body, raising fears Ankara may be a target of political hackers.

Internet experts said it was not clear who was behind the attacks that began on Monday. But Nic.tr, a non-government body that administers addresses for websites using the ".tr" domain, including ministries, the military, banks and many commercial sites, said they originated from "organised sources" outside Turkey.

Local media reports have suggested

servers handling more than 300,000 websites, could be coming from Russia. They cited Turkey's soured relations with Moscow after the downing of a Russian warplane last month on the Syrian border. The disruptive traffic, known as a DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) attacks - in which thousands of computers targeted at specific Internet targets resulted in web speeds plummeting at some sites, Nic.tr said.

"While both the size and duration of the attack are notable, neither is unheard of. We don't have enough information to start speculating on whether this is related to specific countries or

websites have come under attack. The so-called Syrian Electronic Army, hackers loyal to the Syrian government, said earlier this year it had successfully broken

ny F-secure.

into government e-mail accounts. Nor would it be out of the question for political hackers to target Turkey over a variety of domestic or international issues.

ANONYMOUS The Anonymous hacking group post-

ed a video over the weekend on YouTube, that has since been removed, saying attacks would continue if Turkey "doesn't stop supporting" Islamic State.

Some critics, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, accuse Turkey of supporting Islamic State militants, something the government denies.

The Ankara government has in the past taken a tough stance on social media sites under Turkish leader Tayyip Erdogan. Twitter, for instance, was temporarily restricted in 2014 after wiretaps of government officials were leaked.

Some observers invoked parallels to Estonia, which was hit by cyber attacks on private and government Internet sites in 2007. They peaked after a decision to move a Soviet-era statue from a square in the capital, Tallinn, provoked street protests by Russian nationals and a diplomatic spat with Moscow.

The sites of the Estonian parliament and the country's banks, ministries, newspapers and broadcasters were brought to a crawl and an online banking site was closed.

Estonia at first blamed Russia for the attack, but the Kremlin denied involvement. Western military experts consider the incident an act of low-intensity cyber war and say subsequent attacks against Georgia, Crimea and Ukraine follow a similar pattern. — Reuters

SANTA TRACKED BY GOOGLE, MICROSOFT

SAN FRANCISCO: Google and Microsoft had their virtual eyes on Santa Claus and his gift-laden sleigh. Each of the rival technology giants continued their separate Internet holiday traditions that allow children, no matter how grown up they might be, to track Santa online as he makes his way around the world on Christmas Eve. "Google's Santa Tracker launches today-And it's time to follow the jolly man's sleigh," the California-based Internet firm said in a blog post playfully penned in rhyme.

"The elves have been working hard for this night, Santa's village is abuzz tonight's the big flight." The santatracker.google.com website includes an animated map and a running tally of the number of gifts delivered.

Microsoft once again partnered with the North American Aerospace Defense Command on an interactive website at

noradsanta.org where Santa's reindeerdrawn sleigh can be seen making its way over countries around the world.

NORAD's involvement began 60 years ago when a wrong telephone number printed in a newspaper advertisement resulted in children calling for Santa. The commander on duty that day had staff provide callers with updates on Santa's location and the tradition evolved into the NORAD Santa-tracking website.

"Throughout the year, we can be pretty cynical," Matthew Quinlan, marketing director for Bing, Microsoft's search engine, said in a blog post. "But this is one moment where we can see things again through a child's eyes, and it gives us a fresh sense of wonder."

The NORAD Santa-tracking website includes games and allows people to ask Cortana, Microsoft's virtual assistant software, where Santa is at any given moment. —AFP



GUAM STUDENTS BUILD UNDERWATER ROBOTS

HAGATNA: A group of students in of designing and building, they test-Guam is learning about the connection between marine robotics and environmental sustainability by creating their own underwater robots.

The group of 20 students, ages 15 to 17, is participating in a two-week sustainable technologies clinic put on by Guam Community College. The students tested their homemade robots Wednesday at an aquarium in Tumon, The Pacific Daily News

ed their models in a swimming pool. On Wednesday, the students headed to Underwater World to put their creations to the test in an underwater obstacle course at the tunnel aquarium.

One team, called H20, used a three-blade propeller, motor and floats to keep their robot buoyant enough to move along the course.

"The simplicity really helped the reported (http://bit.ly/1JuRNs0). buoyancy," said Fredlyn Rose "I'm teaching them about marine Lumogda, a member of the team and sustainability and not just teaching senior at Tiyan High School. "If it them why corals are important, but were any more complex, it would teaching them, 'Hey, there's a job out have just sunk." there," said the program's director Each team was timed as they guided their robots between small A.J. Sunga, a science professor at the yellow buoys at varying depths. A college. "You could build robots to survey the land. You can build robots few teams made it through the to search and rescue someone. You entire course, but design flaws precan build robots to do the science vented some robots from getting and help in sustainability." past the first few obstacles. The robotics course is part of a Lumogda and Ann Aleise Kealihek, a home-educated eighthsix-day clinic on sustainable technologies. Students learn about susgrader, said they were proud of their tainable design concepts for fossil team's robot for completing the fuels, photovoltaics and wind enercourse. Linda Usita, a parent who attended the underwater course, gy. Sunga led students as they drew up their own blueprints, cut PVC said she is happy her daughter could pipe and worked with a motor and participate in the clinic. "It's nice to control to make the robots. be able to be with a group and do "All I did was give them motors something meaningful and open and a control, and I gave them uncut their minds to what type of jobs and PVC pipe," Sunga said. "Then I said, careers are there," Usita said. "In 'OK, let's go and start cutting." Guam, we just depend on the ocean Students worked on the robots in so much so I think it's a great opporgroups of four and after one full day tunity." — AP RRROW

NEW YORK: Four kids' tablets are displayed, Monday, Dec. 21, 2015, in New York. Clockwise, from upper left, are LeapFrog's Epic, a Nabi Elev-8, Kurio's Xtreme 2, and an Amazon Fire Kids Edition. As competition has increased, kids' tablets have come a long way from bad graphics, slow processors, chunky exteriors and child-like operating systems. —AP

Some of the newest kids' TABLETS ON THE MARKET

NEW YORK: Want to get your child a tablet computer? Here's a look at some models designed for kids. All of them feature parental controls and can toggle back and forth between kid and adult modes, so parents can use them to check their email or post on Twitter after their little ones go to bed.

LEAPFROG EPIC



TALLINN: In this photo taken on Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2015, Taavi Salumae, designer of the U-CAT robot and researcher at the Biorobotics Centre at the Tallinn University of Technology, prepares the U-CAT robot for testing in an aquarium in Tallinn, Estonia. This underwater turtle robot is breaking ground in maritime archeology by using fins instead of propellers. —AP

This is LeapFrog's first Android tablet. Like its toy-like predecessor, the LeapPad, this tablet has an educational focus. Content is based on a child's age. Various apps communicate with each other as they track a child's progress, helping to create a more customized experience. Each day, kids are presented with a new vocabulary word when they sign on. A connected stylus, familiar to LeapPad users, helps with writing practice.

Web surfing is limited to a 10,000 kid-safe sites. Online: http://www.leapfrog.com/enus/products/leapfrog-epic

KURIO XTREME 2

Similar to the Epic, the Extreme 2 has a sharp screen, fast processor and a decent amount of storage. It comes with games and apps, including a handful of motion games that are controlled by your child's movements as they pretend to do things like ski or swim. Kids can access the Internet, which can be filtered as much or as little as their parent desires.

Online: http://www.kurioworld.com/k/us/parents/products/tab/

KURIO SMART

Geared toward older kids, this is something that they can type book reports on or do online research for a school project. It is the first kids tablet to run on Windows 10 and includes a free year of Microsoft Office. Parents can filter the Internet and set time limits on use. The device comes with a slew of games and apps, including the same motion games on the Xtreme 2. The device is a laptop whose keyboard detaches to become a tablet. When closed, the keyboard acts as a hard, protective case.

Online: http://www.kurioworld.com/k/us/parents/products/smart/

NEW YORK: Fuhu's Nabi Elev-8 slim kids tablet is displayed with a protective red bumper, Monday, Dec. 21, 2015, in New York. Fuhu ran into financial and inventory problems early in the holiday season and recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, announcing plans to sell its tablet business to toy maker Mattel.— AP

AMAZON FIRE KIDS EDITION

This is Amazon's bare-bones \$50 Fire tablet packaged with a colorful protective bumper (pink or blue), a year's subscription to kids' content through Amazon's FreeTime Unlimited and free replacements for two years if the tablet breaks. FreeTime Unlimited, which normally starts at \$3 per month, is what really shines. Kids have unlimited access to 10,000 kid-friendly books, videos and games. Ads and in-app purchases are disabled.

Online: http://www.amazon.com/Fire-Edition-Display-Wi-Fi-Kid-Proof/dp/B00YYZEQ1G

VTECH INNOTAB MAX

Yes, VTech is the company that got hacked in November, exposing personal information on more than 6 million children. Nonetheless, the Innotab Max is a decent product, particularly for younger children. The tablet folds to close, creating a hard, protective case with a handle for on-

the-go use. Little kids may like this, but older children will likely be turned off by the look. Because this tablet uses Google's Android, it has access to a variety of content made for that system. But it also features content designed by VTech. However, VTech's app store remains shut because of the data breach.

Online: http://www.vtechkids.com/brands/brand_view/innotab_max

FUHU NABI ELEV-8

Its sharp screen and fast processor give it the look and feel of a premium product. And while it comes with a hefty amount of built-in games and apps, kids can get more through Nabi Pass, a \$5-per-month subscription service similar to FreeTime Unlimited. But the company has run into financial problems, so its Elev-8 tablets have been tough to find.

Online: https://www.nabitablet.com/elev-8. — AP

HYATT WARNS OF MALWARE ON ITS PAYMENT-PROCESSING SYSTEM

SAN FRANCISCO: Hyatt Hotels revealed that it recently discovered malicious computer code on computers used for processing payments at locations it manages.

In a short statement, Hyatt did not disclose what, if anything, the cyber attack accomplished but said that the company immediately "launched an investigation and engaged leading third-party cyber security experts."

Hyatt also said it strengthened the security of its systems and that "customers can feel confident using payment cards at Hyatt hotels worldwide."

The hotel group advised customers, as a precaution, to watch payment card account statements for unauthorized charges.

Cyber threats blogger Brian Krebs at KrebsonSecurity.com said in an online post that "Hyatt joins a crowded list of other hotel

chains similarly breached in the past year."

Hyatt competitors Hilton, and Starwood Hotels which operates the Sheraton and Westin chains, last month separately announced that payment systems had been targeted by hackers.

US hotel chain Hilton said that hackers infected some of its point-of-sale computer systems with malware crafted to steal credit card information.

Malicious code that infected registers at hotels had the potential to take cardholders' names along with card numbers, security codes and expiration dates, Hilton said in an online post.

Starwood Hotels said that hackers had infected payment systems in some of its establishments, potentially leaking customer credit card data. The hack occurred at a "limited

number" of its hotels in North America. according to Starwood, whose other wellknown chains include St Regis and W Hotels.

The cyber attacks on Hilton and Starwood sounded similar to one disclosed earlier in the year by Trump Hotel Collection. "We believe that there may have been unauthorized malware access to some of the computers that host our front desk terminals and payment card terminals in our restaurants, gift shops and other point-of-sale purchase locations at some hotels," Trump Hotel Collection said at a website devoted to details of the incident.

Locations affected were listed as Trump SoHo New York, Trump National Doral, Trump International New York, Trump International Chicago, Trump International Waikiki, Trump International Hotel & Tower Las Vegas, and Trump International Toronto.— AFP

HEALTH & SCIENCE

NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING CELL RESEARCHER DIES AGED 74

AUSTIN: Dr Alfred Gilman, who won a Nobel Prize for his breakthrough research into the inner workings of cells and later left Texas' much-ballyhooed \$3 billion cancer-fighting initiative, citing a lack of oversight that led to a scandal, has died. He was 74.

<u> Kuwait & Times</u>

Gilman was the former dean of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, where colleagues said he was dedicated to solid science and an outspoken critic of subpar work. Spokesman Russell Rian said Thursday that the school learned of Gilman's death from his family. The scientist had been fighting pancreatic cancer.

Gilman shared a 1994 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine with Dr Martin Rodbell of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences for their discovery of G proteins. The proteins help in the process of receiving signals from outside the cell and activating responses.

"The mechanism that he found explains how many drugs act, it explains how many hormones act and it basically explains how the body responds to its environment," said Dr Michael Brown, himself a Nobel laureate in 1985, who 35 years ago had the Brown said Thursday that, back then, he and Gilman "were drawn together not only by our love of Tanqueray and cigarettes, but because we both shared a passion for rigorous science."

Cancer research funding

Gilman was born July 1, 1941, in New Haven, Connecticut, and discovered G proteins while at the University of Virginia in 1977. He became chairman of pharmacology at UT Southwestern in 1981. In 2009, Gilman became chief scientific officer for the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, whose creation was approved by voters two years earlier. It later became the country's second-largest pot of cancer research funding.

But Gilman resigned in 2012 and revealed some internal concerns over funding, suggesting there was not enough scrutiny of grants that won approval. He also worried the initiative, known as CPRIT, was more focused on marketable research than sound science. Prosecutors indicted a top state executive the next year on charges related to \$11

laboratory next to Gilman's at UT Southwestern. million in taxpayer funds that the agency awarded to a private company without review, though the executive was later acquitted. "Al Gilman hated sloppy or phony science and he was compelled to speak out whenever he saw it," Brown said. "Sometimes it was very inconvenient for him, but his conscience made him do it." Daniel Podolsky, president of the UT Southwestern Medical Center, called the resignation "an extremely painful period for Al."

"Here's someone who had lived his entire life adhering to the integrity of what he did, and that being implicitly questioned by some, when there was nothing about it in terms of self-aggrandizement or self-service," Podolsky said Thursday. "I never doubted he would do anything less than defend what he thought was right in terms of how CPRIT was going to invest in research to really have an impact." Podolsky said Gilman was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer more than two years ago and 'was absolutely staunch and courageous in fighting it." Gilman is survived by his wife, Kathryn; daughters Amy Ariagno and Anne Sincovec; and a son, Edward Gilman. — AP

DALLAS: In this Oct10, 1994, file photo, Alfred G Gilman, 53, poses in a lab at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School. — AP



POCO FUNDO: Solange Ferreira bathes her son Jose Wesley in a bucket at their house. — AP

BRAZIL FEARS BIRTH DEFECTS LINKED TO MOSQUITO VIRUS RARE MICROCEPHALY OFTEN RESULTS IN MENTAL RETARDATION

Pereira's pregnancy, a mosquito bite began bother- we are. It's a virus we don't know that much about," there's never before been a detected link between ing her. At first it seemed a small thing. But the next said Rodrigo Stabeli, vice president of the Rio de the virus and microcephaly, "there has never been an

RIO DE JANEIRO: In the early weeks of Angelica 300,000 births per year, which shows how worried mations elsewhere related to cases of Zika. While day she awoke with a rash a headache a fever and a laneiro-based Fiocruz research institute "We are enidemic of Zika in the proportions that we are looking at now in Brazil," said Pedro Fernando Vasconcelos, a researcher at Evandro Chagas Institute who found the virus in the newborn child.

CLIMATE DEAL: A LONG QUEST FOR UN CHIEF

UNITED NATIONS: When international negotiators reached a first-of-its kind climate change agreement in Paris this month, the United Nations' normally low-key leader, Ban Ki-moon, celebrated onstage, arms raised in victory and more exuberant than many had ever seen him before.

Nearly nine years had passed since, in his first days as secretary-general, Ban surprised world leaders by making global warming a top item on his agenda. Now, on the eve of his final year in office, the cheers in Paris marked the culmination of his nonstop campaign, pressed at summit after summit, with every world leader and from melting glaciers to islands at risk of disappearing.

It was an emotional moment, and looking back at the road to Paris in an interview with The Associated Press, Ban paid tribute to many people, including the leaders of the United States, China, India and France. He also spoke proudly of his own role. No other leader in the world "has been raising, without fail, all the time, climate change," Ban said. "I have spent real passion ... and most of my time and energy on this issue." It was quite a shift for the former South Korean foreign minister, whose main focus before becoming the eighth UN secretary-general in 2007 was his country's standoff with North Korea

Yearlong campaign

Ban traced his interest in climate change to his yearlong campaign to lead the United Nations, which took him to many countries and broadened his vision of global issues. Two weeks before he was sworn in as secretarygeneral, Ban told Tim Wirth, then president of the United Nations Foundation, that one of his two highest priorities would be climate

memorable moments in climate change diplomacy, tiny Papua New Guinea implored America to lead or get out of the way.

An isolated United States capitulated, and the first roadmap for addressing climate change was adopted. "Miraculously, I was able to save this one, but I didn't know why," Ban said. In early 2009, he finally found out. Ban and his wife were invited to dinner at the White House in last of the last days of the Bush presidency. Bush told the UN chief that when the Bali meeting reached a difficult moment, he got a call from the head of the US delegation asking for instructions.

Ban said Bush told him: "Suddenly, you came to my mind. Then I told the delegation head, 'Do what the secretary-general of the UN wants to do," The secretary-general said he still feels "very much grateful" to Bush. "That was the beginning of our success," Ban said. But then came the disappointment of the 2009 Copenhagen climate change negotiations.

In Copenhagen, a newly elected President Barack Obama showed "great commitment," even working on proposed global text from his laptop, Ban said. But there were too many differences and negotiations ended with no agreement. "From the failure of Copenhagen, we learned a great lesson," Ban said. One was to have every country provide its own national action plan to combat climate change. Another was to get countries to agree to have a universal climate change agreement by 2015.

Placing the spotlight

Meanwhile, Ban was traveling the world to spotlight the impacts of climate change. His visits to Antarctica and the Arctic showcased

burning in her eyes. The symptoms disappeared within four days, but she fears the virus has left lasting consequences.

Pereira's daughter Luiza was born in October with a head more than an inch below the range defined as healthy by doctors, a rare condition known as microcephaly that often results in mental retardation. A neurologist soon gave Pereira and her husband more bad news: The brain damage had caused cerebral palsy. "My heart stopped. All I kept thinking about was all the struggles and discrimination my baby will suffer," said Pereira, a 20-year-old seamstress who lives in Santa Cruz do Capibaribe, a small, garment-manufacturing city in northeast Brazil.

More than 2,700 babies have been born in Brazil with microcephaly this year, up from fewer than 150 in 2014. Brazil's health officials say they're convinced the jump is linked to a sudden outbreak of the Zika virus that infected Pereira, though international experts caution it's far too early to be sure and note the condition can have many other causes.

Spreading rapidly

Brazil alone estimates it's already had between 440,000 and 1.3 million cases of Zika since the first local transmission of the virus was detected in May. The mosquito-borne disease was first identified in the Americas less than two years ago and has spread rapidly across South and Central America.

"We are looking at the beginning of an epidemic in a country that has in between 200,000 and preparing for the unknown."

Brazilians are so concerned that some obstetricians, such as Helga Monaco at Sao Paulo's Samaritano Hospital, recommend women avoid becoming pregnant during the rainy season when mosquitoes are most prevalent. "All the women I see at the hospital or in my office who are pregnant or wanting to get pregnant are very alarmed, almost panicky," she said.

The Zika virus, first detected in humans about 40 years ago in Uganda, has long seen as a less-painful cousin to dengue and chikunguya, which are spread by the same Aedes mosquito. Until a few months ago, investigators had no reported evidence it might be related to microcephaly.

Suspicion arose after officials recorded 17 cases of central nervous system malformations among fetuses and newborns after a Zika outbreak began last year in French Polynesia, according to the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control.

And in November, Brazilian researchers reported the Zika virus genome had been found in amniotic fluid samples from two women whose fetuses were been diagnosed with microcephaly by ultrasound exams. Brazil announced on Nov. 28 that researchers had found the Zika virus present in brain tissue of a newborn with microcephaly who died.

As more evidence arose from further Brazilian tests, PAHO and the World Health Organization recently urged officials in the Americas to watch for possible neurological problems or congenital malfor-

'Under investigation'

International health officials say the link isn't yet proven. A recent message from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said "the association of Zika virus infection and microcephaly and is still under investigation" and added, "It will take time to determine the cause of the microcephaly for the cases being reported in Brazil." It noted there are numerous causes of microcephaly, including genetic abnormalities, infections or exposure to toxic substances during pregnancy.

"One shouldn't just jump to the conclusion that just because it's associated, it is causing it," said Sanjaya Senanayake, an associate professor of infectious diseases at the Australian National University who has studied the virus for decades. "At the end of the day, it certainly could cause it," he said. "But they need to run more epidemiology studies looking at various groups of pregnant women."

Brazilian officials aren't waiting. Claudio Maierovitch, the director of Brazil's equivalent of the CDC, told a news conference on Tuesday "there is no doubt that the majority of the microcephaly cases (in Brazil) are related to the Zika virus." The Health Ministry announced it would send an army of 266,000 people to inspect every house, farm and business in the country and warn about the risks of Zika. — AP

change, along with empowering women.

"You could have blown me away," Wirth said of Ban's choice of tackling global warming. "He had a deep commitment then, and he has stayed with it, and stayed with it, and stayed with it." At the time, climate change was not a popular topic. The 1997 Kyoto treaty, which required only rich countries to limit emissions blamed for global warming, was set to expire in 2012. Negotiations on a new agreement had almost collapsed, Ban said.

"I thought that I needed to revive this one," he said. His first high-level meeting as U.N. chief was with then-President George W Bush. The original agenda for their January 2007 meeting didn't include climate change, Ban said, and Bush "seemed to be a little bit surprised" when he raised it.

Undeterred, Ban decided to hold the firstever climate change summit at the United Nations in July 2007. He invited Bush and told him that the success of the summit would depend his participation. Bush came, though he didn't address the summit.

That connection paid off at a UN conference in Bali in December 2007.

The United States, the lone major industrial nation to reject Kyoto, was opposing India's proposal to strengthen requirements for richer nations to help poorer countries with technology to limit emissions. In one of the most

melting ice, and his visits to the Aral Sea in central Asia and Lake Chad in West Africa warned of their disappearance. He visited the low-lying Pacific island nation of Kiribati. where he found a life jacket in his room in case of inundation.

He also asked to attend annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund - a first for a UN secretary-general - to talk to finance ministers on the need to mobilize \$100 billion in climate financing annually by 2020.

As the summit in Paris approached, Ban participated in monthly strategy videoconferences with the leaders of France and Peru and later, Germany. One key decision was to reverse the usual negotiations process and have country leaders attend the start of the summit to give impetus and clear direction to negotiators. The Paris opening was the largest-ever gathering of country leaders, with 150 assembled, the secretary-general said.

But there were about half a dozen "spoilers," countries ready to block consensus on an agreement. Nicaragua refused to submit its national plan, arguing that rich nations should be compelled to make deeper emission cuts. Ban recalled the moment the Nicaraguan delegation said "we will not block" a deal. The French foreign minister immediately gaveled approval of the agreement, which was later adopted unanimously. — AP

TRANSGENDER MAN MAKES HISTORY WITH PREGNANCY

BOGOTA: A couple in Ecuador is making history with a unique pregnancy: The father-to-be is carrying the baby of his transgender partner. Fernando Machado and Diane Rodriguez announced their pregnancy, believed to be the first of its kind in South America, on social media earlier this month and it's received widespread attention in a continent that has seen a sudden explosion in the rights and visibility of trans people.

Rodriguez, who was born Luis, is one of Ecuador's most-prominent LGBT activists and says she and her Venezuelan-born partner, whose birth name was Maria, decided to publicize the pregnancy to help change attitudes in the staunchly Roman Catholic society. Although both take hormones, neither has undergone gender-reassignment surgery, so the child-to-be was conceived the oldfashioned way with no known medical complications to date. "We're trying to break the myths about transsexuality," Rodriguez told The Associated Press.

So far, church leaders have

remained silent, something that Rodriguez says both surprises and pleases here. "The church is always criticizing gays and homosexuals for adopting children, so it would be a contradiction to criticize us for giving birth naturally," she said from her home in Guayaquil.

The trans community has made major advances across South America. About six months ago, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos issued a decree allowing individuals to change their gender on the national ID cards with little more than a trip to a public notary. To date, at least 340 people have made the switch. Argentina has gone even further with legislation guaranteeing free hormone treatment and gender reassignment surgery.

However, trans people still face widespread discrimination in the region. Between 2008 and 2011, 79 percent of the murders of transgender people reported throughout the world took place in Latin America, with a total of 664 cases, according to a study by the International AIDS Alliance. — AP

CHICAGO CLINIC PRESCRIBES LEGAL HELP FOR HOUSING

CHICAGO: She didn't look sick, but Mahoghny Walker struggled to learn. Blood tests showed high levels of lead from old, chipping paint in her Chicago home. She had lead poisoning. So did her eight siblings. That much was clear to nurse practitioner Martha Glynn, the family's primary care provider. What wasn't: How to help their mother, Lanice Walker, navigate the Chicago Housing Authority's system to move her kids to a safer home.

Glynn turned to the Health Justice Project, a joint effort of Erie Family Health Center and Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Since 2010, project attorneys have received more than 2,000 referrals about patients with legal issues such as housing, education, disability and family law. Nationally, the medical-legal movement, rooted in AIDS patient activism, now boasts nearly 300 hospitals and health centers in more than 30 states with partnerships helping vulnerable, low-income patients. In Philadelphia, a medical-legal partnership prevented utility shut-offs for hundreds of families with medical needs. In Atlanta, a partnership attorney helped with custody issues that cleared the way for a child to get a needed heart transplant. In Nashville, attorneys assisted patients facing evictions.

"Medical providers realize that sometimes these issues are more important for health and well-being than cholesterol and blood pressure problems," said Dr



CHICAGO: In this Wednesday, Dec 16, 2015, photo, Emaurie Walker, 4, has her height and weight checked during a physical test at an Erie Family Health Center clinic. — AP

David Buchanan, Erie's chief clinical officer. "It also helps our care teams, by allowing our medical providers to focus on what they're best trained to do."

Fix the hazards

Homes built before 1978 usually have some leadbased paint. When it flakes, the dust can cause attention problems and harm school performance in children. Landlords with public housing contracts are supposed to fix the hazards. Led by Loyola law professor Emily Benfer, Health Justice Project attorneys are urging the CHA to increase protections for residents by lowering the blood levels of lead that trigger a risk assessment or repairs.

Currently, the CHA conducts a risk assessment when a child under age 6 has a blood level of 20 micrograms per deciliter, a level set in US Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. Going to 5 micrograms per deciliter of blood for children of any age would align the program with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's definition of lead poisoning.

CHA officials plan to meet with the project and review the proposed standards, agency spokeswoman Wendy Parks said. "Our aim is to promote good health and reduce risk-factors, especially those associated with lead-based paint hazards," Parks said. Glynn sees lead poisoning frequently. — AP

<u> Kuwait & Times</u>

HEALTH & SCIENCE

FUNGUS KILLING TREE CRITICAL TO HAWAII'S NATIVE FORESTS

HONOLULU: A newly discovered fungus is killing a tree that's critical to Hawaii's water supply, endangered native birds and Hawaiian cultural traditions like hula. The disease called rapid ohia death has hit hundreds of thousands of ohia lehua trees on the Big Island. As of last year, it was found to have affected 50 percent of the ohia trees across 6,000 acres of forest, but it's believed to have spread further since then. To date, it's been found primarily in Puna but also in Kona and Kau. It hasn't been seen anywhere else in the world.

Robert Hauff, the forest health coordinator at the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, said the state is planning aerial surveys next month to learn how many acres are affected by the fungus. A world expert in similar diseases is also expected to visit the islands



PAHOA: This Dec. 17, 2015 photo provided by the Hawaii State Department of Land and Natural Resources shows ohia lehua trees hit by the rapid ohia death fungus. — AP

to advise the state on how to control the outbreak. "Worst case scenario is that it spreads statewide and it decimates all of our ohia forests. It's a pretty bleak picture," Hauff told reporters at a news conference in Honolulu.

Ohia is important to the water supply because it's so effective at soaking water into the ground and replenishing the watershed. It's critical for native birds because the animals feed on its nectar. It provides a canopy to native plants growing underneath it in the forests. The state Department of Agriculture has created rules prohibiting moving wood, flowers and other parts of the ohia tree between islands. The state is also encouraging people to clean tools used on ohia and clean shoes and clothes used near ohia.

Christy Martin, a spokeswoman for the Hawaii Coordinating Group on Alien

Pest Species, said the fungus is "sneaky" because it can infect a tree for months before showing any symptoms. "So somebody could think they're walking through a healthy forest, picking up wood and doing whatever they're doing collecting for lei and not know they're dealing with an infected tree," Martin said after the news conference.

Sam Ohu Gon III, senior scientist and cultural adviser at the Nature Conservancy of Hawaii, said ohia wood was used for weapons, hula instruments, homes and temples in ancient Hawaii. Many Hawaiian proverbs and sayings reference the tree. "It's a fundamental blow to the natural foundations of Hawaiian culture as far as I'm concerned," Gon said. "It's very important thing, therefore, for anyone who has any love at all for those elements of where we live." — AP

WOMAN WRITES BOOK About laughing Through cancer

CEDAR RAPIDS: Kathy Lariviere always has found life funny. Finding a lump in her breast in 2012 was anything but. Yet over the next 15 months of diagnosis with breast cancer, surgeries, chemotherapy and radiation, she managed to keep laughing.

She wrote her struggles and her jokes down on a blog, "Laugh With Kathy." In October, Lariviere, 56, of Urbana, published a book of the same name, with the subtitle, "Finding Humor in the Journey Through Breast Cancer." She had looked on Amazon for a humorous breast cancer book but couldn't find one. On its face, its not a humorous topic, but she said there were so many times she couldn't help but laugh. "When my doctor is talking to me seriously about nipple tattoos, my mind is going somewhere else," she said.

She used humor to get her through the awkward and absurd moments she saw all around, from the fire safety guide inside a hyperbaric chamber to the sheer number of people she had to show her bare chest to. She would stand with her hands on her hips and pretend she was Super Woman, looking over the doctor's and nurse's shoulders as they examined her. "I always decided I had the power of flight," she said.

Didn't come easy

Laughing didn't always come easily."One day I was so mad I wanted to break something," she said. She spent the day painting eggs with the targets of her ire - syringes, breasts. She went outside and heaved an egg as hard as she could at a tree. "I missed, and I was so mad I started laughing," she said. That led to blowing up pumpkins, which became a ritual for she and her husband after treatment milestones. They set them up in the woods behind their house, surrounded with explosive Tannerite, and shot them with rifles. "I thought, if I can laugh at this, I can make it through this," she said.

Her treatment was long, 14 months. She saw other patients come and go. Not all survived. On the treatment floor at the Hall-Perrine Cancer Center in Cedar Rapids, she could talk with other patients about their struggles in a way that was hard in the outside world. "A friend told me he wasn't going to survive. We could talk about it calmly," she said. The blog struck a nerve for a lot of other patients, as well as their friends and family, nurses and doctors. People all over the world started sharing her posts and started writing her emails. Eventually the blog had over 5,000 followers.

"I felt like whether I survived or not, I'd given people hope,"



WARE: In this Saturday, Dec 12, 2015 photo, Dennis Volz-Benoit (right) embraces his son Tyler as Eric Volz-Benoit (left) holds Zachary during a family outing at the Quabbin Reservoir observation tower. — AP

SPECIAL HELP FOR FAMILY OF SPECIAL-NEEDS KIDS

SPRINGFIELD: It takes a strict routine and a lot of help to raise a family of specialneeds children. Few know this better than Eric and Dennis Volz-Benoit, who have five. Typical days involve feeding tubes, breathing treatments, medications and assembly-line showers, not to mention taking kids to school, making dinner and dren. Families are paired with a team of helpers, including a nurse care coordinator and a social worker who can make home visits. A child's medical information is loaded into a central site, or "cloud," so any specialists needed to check or treat any given condition can get what they need quickly and easily. The program is a



she said. She said looking for the funny moments helped her cope, but every one has to face their diagnosis in their own way. "I think every cancer patient is entitled to get through it however they need to," she said. "If you want sympathy, if you want to be surrounded by friends, if you want to hide in the house, if you want to laugh at the world, you get to do whatever you need."

She started the blog initially to keep family and friends informed about her treatment. A professional website designer, Lariviere always has enjoyed writing, and the blog also became a way to process what was happening. Not everything made it online. Some things are private, and she didn't always share the daily pain and struggles of treatment.

"I think you don't get a lot of choices when you're diagnosed with cancer. The only choice I had left was how I let friends and family see me go through it," she said. "I wanted to do it with grace and humor and compassion." — AP washing clothes. "It's just kind of like a well-oiled machine," said Eric Volz-Benoit. "The key for us is routine. Everything is routine."

But routine only goes so far for the Springfield couple and their children, Zachary, 8, who has epilepsy and cerebral palsy; Tyler, 7, who has brain damage and autism; Jayden, 5, who has post-traumatic stress disorder and borderline behavior problems; and biological siblings Ryan and Mandie, 7 and 6, who both have PTSD. That's where the Collaborative Consultative Care Coordinator Program known as 4C, and where Eric Volz-Benoit works as a nurse - comes in.

The program helps parents and pediatricians manage medically complex chilpartnership between Boston Medical Center and Baystate Medical Center, funded in September 2014 by a three-year, \$6 million federal grant under the Affordable Care Act.

Zachary is the only one who qualifies for the coordinated care at 4C. He uses a wheelchair and requires a feeding tube and oxygen; early on after coming to live with the couple in 2008, he was frequently in and out of the hospital. Volz-Benoit credits Zachary with helping him "grow up a lot" and become a father to his brood of special children. "No matter how cruddy of a day I've had, all I have to do is come home and get a kiss and see that child," he said. "He balances my life. I can't imagine not having him around." — AP

WARE: Eric Volz-Benoit, a registered nurse who works with children afflicted with complex medical disabilities, attends to his adopted son Zachary (right) who is wheelchair-bound after being born with cerebral palsy, while Eric's partner Dennis, left rear, trims the Christmas tree at their family home.



Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368

<u> Kuwait & Times</u>

WHAT'S ON

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2015













LAIF CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS; HOLDS 'ALL NATIONS NIGHT'

s part of its Christmas celebration, Life Abundant International Fountain Church (LAIF) organized 'All Nations Night' at the NECK premises Kuwait City. The anointing power-packed service featured high praise from different nationalities. The guest speaker Pastor Maduako urged Christians across the globe to be good ambassadors of Christ. He lauded the efforts of Kuwait government in promoting religious tolerance and peace in the region. The event also featured an international guest artist Racheal Rena who thrilled the congregation and exalted the Almighty God with her praise and worship songs.







DR GHALIB AL-MASHOOR GETS WARM SEND OFF RECEPTION

Happy birthday to our dear sister Racheal Rena. May God guide and protect you as to continue to be a blessing to your family. We just want to tell you that 'we love you.' Greetings from LAIF family, friends and well-wishers.

The bond between you and I will forever be my most cherished possession. Happy birthday to my dear husband. May the Almighty God continue to shower you with his blessings Amen. Greetings from wife, daughter, son, friends and well-wishers.

fter 13 years of service with United Arab Shipping Company (6 Government owned GCC Shipping Giant), Dr Ghalib Al-Mashoor was given warm sent off reception by UASC staff. Dr Ghalib was appoint-ed as a Senior Financial Analyst followed by couple of promotions such as an Assistant Investment Manager, then as an Investment Manager, who managed a portfolio of about \$182 million UASC assets from the year 2001 to 2014.

Dr Mashoor is having rich experience in the Economic and Financial instruments who attended more than 200 International economic, financial and investment seminars and visited 21 Arab, American and European countries.

Earlier, Dr Mashoor has worked about 13 years for ARAB LEAGUE's Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation, (owned by 22 Arab Governments) in the capacity of "Chief Dealer for Investments and Securities". Dr Ghalib was instrumental to bring a permanent solution and to sort out IAIGC's several financial assets in order and he has used high caliber to sort out the settlement issues during the invasion of Kuwait in the year 1990.

After the delegated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kuwait in 1991, he was assigned to take up position in Jordan, and Egypt. where he worked almost 2 years. Dr Mashoor now joined with 'Rakomesko Group'as Financial Advisor and Investment Consultant.



Greetings

Rasha Moneim celebrated her birthday recently with family and friends.



BANGLADESH VICTORY DAY OBSERVED BY AWAMI LEAGUE CENTRAL COMMITTEE



n 16th of December, 44th Bangladesh victory day, a discussion meeting was arranged by Bangladesh Awami League Central Committee Kuwait, on December 24th at Guishan Restaurant in Kuwait city The discussion meeting was presided by Mohamed Abdur Rouf Mowla, President of Bangladesh Awami League Central Committee, Kuwait The special guest was Mohd Foez Kamal the senior vice president of BALK, Hazrat Ali Mollik, General secretary of Jatia Party Kuwait, Bir Muktijudda Delwar Hossain, Vice president of BALK, Morshed Alam Badal, the General Secretary of BALK, Mohammad Alimuddin, the convener of Sylhet Awami league Convener Committee, Kuwait

The Function was conducted by Zahidul Islam, The co-organizing secretary of BALK, Speeches on the occasion of significance of victory day were delivered by the Shechasebak League General Secretary Mohammed Shamsul Haq, Jobo League coconvener secretary Aklakul Ambeya Basar, Mohammad Shamsul Haque the organizing secretary of BALK, Mohammed Liaqat Bishas, the vice president of BALK, Abdur Rahman the vice President of BALK, Special guests and the president of the Committee.

Poet and the editor of Magazine Mrittka Salim Reza recited heart rendering poem. The program started with recitation of verses from the Holy Quran and Du'a Mahfil Conducted by Mowlana Abdul Ahad and followed by one minutes silence in honor of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mojubur Rahman who was assassinated by a handful of ambitious and treacherous military officers on Aug 15, 1975 and martyrs of war of liberation in 1971.

<u> Kuwait – Times</u>

WHAT'S ON

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2015





-Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat









'TOP OF' HOLDS ROOFTOP MARKET

By Faten Omar

op Of' held its third rooftop market yesterday at the Arraya Center parking lot. 'Top Of' is a popup rooftop space boasting excellent food, entertainment and community activities with the Kuwait City skyline as a backdrop. These outings aim to reclaim urban space and add a new dimension to life in the city. Outings either start at sunrise or sunset with packed entertainment schedules including a unique array of food vendors, live music and performances, fitness activities, local film screenings and art shows.

Top Of is also a fundraiser event for proteges and there are more than 40 volunteers from ages 15 to 23 in this project, and

all profits made from the events go directly to The Proteges program to support youth mentorship and development. "Top Of is a fun market outing that includes different activities for families, children and teens. It also acts as a fundraiser for The ProtÈgÈs program that is designed to positively influence Kuwait's youth," said Basma Al-Abduljaleel, Manager of the 'Top Of' project.

Abduljaleel noted 40 companies and organizations are participating in the 'Top Of' market at the Arraya parking lot's rooftop. "This is our third Top Of market, and we will hold another one on January 16 in the same location. We are trying to encourage small businesses to persevere by giving them booths at the Top Of market, and we have booths for food, art and

accessories. I invite all people to support our project and have fun and enjoy the moment. We have many activities for all ages," she added.

The event was held from 10 am to 8 pm, with bikers, Mini Cooper show, a live blues music performance and photo booth. The Proteges program is part of a social enterprise that is designed to positively influence the youth of Kuwait through an inclusive program that combines travel, lectures, group activities, challenges, games and fun. Guided by a team of mentors, The ProtÈgÈs are encouraged to discover their passions and are given the necessary tools to assist them to excel in their future careers and contribute positively to society.

CELEBRATE THE FESTIVE SEASON AT SHERATON

last days of the year 2015, Sheraton Kuwait and Four

elegant marbled filled walls of Sheraton Kuwait.



to welcome all of their distinguished guests to celebrate the festive season and New Year in a family atmosphere full of fun and superb luxurious hospitality through its diverse restaurants that have been extensively preparing for a remarkable New Year's Eve dining experience and start your 2016 with the most delicious cuisines.

restaurants operating in a wide range from Sheraton Kuwait to the Avenues, one of the largest and most prestigious shopping malls in Kuwait and the region. Enjoy the delicious flavors from all over the world through the international buffet served in Al-

The cultural committee of the Jordanian community in Kuwait hosted a 'cultural open day' at Al-Shaab Park recently, which was attended by a large number of Jordanian families. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

<u>Kuwait & Times</u>



00:20 Shocking Survival Videos 00:45 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown 01:35 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown 06:00 Ice Cold Gold 06:50 Kindig Customs 07:40 Fast N' Loud 08:30 Auction Hunters 08:55 Property Wars 09:20 Storage Wars Canada 09:45 Americarna 10:10 How It's Made 10:35 Auction Hunters Impossible Engineering 11:00 11:50 Impossible Engineering 12:40 Impossible Engineering 13:30 Impossible Engineering 14:20 Impossible Engineering 15:10 Extreme Car Hoarders 16:00 Extreme Car Hoarders 16:50 Extreme Car Hoarders 17:40 Extreme Car Hoarders 18:30 Extreme Car Hoarders 19:20 Fire In The Hole 20:10 Property Wars 20:35 Storage Wars Canada 21:00 Valley Uprising 22:40 Wheeler Dealers 23:30 Junkyard Empire



00:35 Stephen Hawking's Grand Design 01:20 Stephen Hawking's Grand Design 02:08 Investigation X 02:55 Investigation X 03:42 Investigation X 04:29 Alien Mysteries 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 Curiosity: Is There A Parallel Universe? 11:23 Curiosity: Can You Live Forever? 12:08 How It's Made 12:30 How It's Made 12:53 How It's Made 13:15 How It's Made How Do They Do It? 15:57 16:20 How Do They Do It? 16:44 Mythbusters 17:31 Food Factory 17:54 Food Factory 18:18 Strip The Cosmos 19:05 How The Universe Works 19:50 Stephen Hawking's Grand Design 20:40 Stephen Hawking's Grand Design 21:25 Stephen Hawking's Grand Design 22:15 Storm Chasers 23:00 Storm Chasers 23:45 Storm Chasers



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 Hank Zipzer 06:50 Girl Meets World 07:15 H2O: Just Add Water 07:40 Wizards Of Waverly Place Wizards Of Waverly Place 08:30 Wizards Of Waverly Place 08:55 Wizards Of Waverly Place 09:20 Wizards Of Waverly Place 09:45 Good Luck Charlie 10:10 Best Friends Whenever Girl Meets World 10:35 11:00 Mako Mermaids 11:25 Dog With A Blog 11:50 Gravity Falls 12:20 Get Frozen 12:33 Violetta Recipes 12:45 Mako Mermaids 13:10 Mako Mermaids 13:35 Mako Mermaids Mako Mermaids 14:00 14:30 I Didn't Do It 14:55 Lolirock 15:20 Liv And Maddie 15:45 Jessie

16:10 Best Friends Whenever 16:35 Austin & Ally 17:00 Gravity Falls 17:25 Girl Meets World 17:50 The Good Dinosaur Movie Special 18:00 Go Figure 19:30 | Didn't Do It 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 Binny And The Ghost 22:25 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch 22:50 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch 23:10 Wolfblood

DISNEPY

00:20 Calimero

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01:05 Art Attack

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02:30 Art Attack

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06:00 Loopdidoo

06:15 Art Attack

06:50 Calimero

07:20 Loopdidoo

07:35 Art Attack

08:25 Loopdidoo

12:45 Limon And Oli

12:55 Loopdidoo

Pirates

Pirates

Fairies

Bears

Pirates

17:25 Aladdin

08:00 Calimero

07:00 Zou

08:10 Zou

Pirates

05:50 Zou

04:35 Zou

03:20 Zou

02:00 Zou

00:35 Zou



Kardashians

Kardashians

Kardashians

Kardashians

Kardashians

15:00 Dash Dolls

17:00 New Money

17:30 New Money

18:00 Pop Innovators

19:00 Fashion Bloggers

19:30 Fashion Bloggers

20:00 Keeping Up With The

21:00 Keeping Up With The

22:00 Christina Milian Turned Up

13:05 Keeping Up With The

14:05 Keeping Up With The

16:00 Christina Milian Turned Up

00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster 01:00 Guy's Grocery Games 02:00 The Pioneer Woman Trisha's Southern Kitchen 02:30 03:00 Chopped 04:00 Iron Chef America 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster 05:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives Guy's Big Bite 06:00 06:30 Guy's Big Bite 07:00 Cooking Christmas With Matt And Lisa 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster 07:30 Cooking Christmas With Matt And Lisa 08:00 Chopped 09:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes 10:00 The Kitchen 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster 11:00 The Kitchen 12:00 Chopped 13:00 Guy's Big Bite Guy's Big Bite 13:30 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 15:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 15:30 16:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 16:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 17:00 Chopped 18:00 Siba's Table 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster 18:30 Siba's Table 19:00 Siba's Table 19:30 Siba's Table 20:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers Rev Run's Sunday Suppers 20:30 21:00 Chopped South Africa 22:00 Follow Donal... To Vietnam 08:40 Henry Hugglemonster 08:55 Jake And The Never Land Follow Donal... To Vietnam 22:30 23:00 Girl Eat World 09:20 Sofia The First 09:45 Miles From Tomorrow 23:30 Girl Eat World 10:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse ity@ 10:35 Doc McStuffins 11:00 Sofia The First CHOICE 11:30 Captain Jake And The Never Land Pirates 11:55 Miles From Tomorrow 00:15 Coronation Street 00:40 Coronation Street 12:20 Henry Hugglemonster 01:05 Midsomer Murders **Christmas Special** 02:55 Coronation Street 13:10 Sheriff Callie's Wild West 03:20 Coronation Street 13:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse 03:45 Coronation Street 14:00 Sofia The First 04:10 Coronation Street 14:25 Sofia The First 04:30 Coronation Street 14:50 Miles From Tomorrow 04:50 The Chase: Celebrity 15:15 Jake And The Never Land Specials 05:45 The Jonathan Ross Show 15:40 Jake And The Never Land 06:40 Seven Days With,Ķ 07:35 Keep It In The Family 16:05 The Adventures Of Disney **Christmas Special** 08:30 A Merry Murdoch Christmas 16:35 Miles From Tomorrow 10:30 Paul O'Grady: For The Love 17:00 Sofia The First Of Dogs At Christmas 11:25 Keep It In The Family 17:50 Adventures Of The Gummi Christmas Special 12:15 Grantchester 18:15 Chip n Dale Rescue Rangers 18:40 Jake And The Never Land 13:10 The Royal Variety Performance 2014 15:50 The Syndicate 19:05 Miles From Tomorrow 16:45 The Jonathan Ross Show 19:30 Sofia The First 17:35 Seven Davs With.Ķ 18:30 Come Date With Me Australia 19:00 The Syndicate 19:55 Keep It In The Family Christmas Special 20:45 The Jonathan Ross Show 21:45 The Royal Variety Performance 2014 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL ED 00:10 Man V. Viral 01:00 Breakthrough 02:00 Innovation Nation 02:25 Innovation Nation 02:55 The Border 03:50 Megastructures 04:45 Breakthrough 05:40 Yukon Gold 06:35 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South 07:30 Ultimate Airport Dubai 08:25 Car SOS 09:20 Man V. Viral 10:15 Breakthrough 11:10 Innovation Nation 11:35 Innovation Nation 12:05 Do Or Die 12:30 Do Or Die 13:00 Dog Whisperer 14:00 Dog Whisperer 15:00 Yukon Gold

TV PROGRAMS

South 20:50 Ultimate Airport Dubai 21:40 Megastructures 22:30 Yukon Gold 23:20 Monster Fish



00:35 David Rocco's Dolce India 01:00 Wineroads 01:25 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea 02:15 Poh & Co. 02:40 Food Lover's Guide To The Plane 03:05 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet

03:30 Exploring The Vine 03:55 Exploring The Vine 04:20 The Food Files 04:45 The Food Files 05:10 Hook It, Cook It 05:35 Tales From The Bush Larder 06:00 Chefs Run Wild 06:25 The Best Job In The World 06:50 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet 07:15 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet 07:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces 08:30 Seoul: Capital Of K-Pop 09:20 David Rocco's Dolce India 09:45 David Rocco's Dolce India 10:10 Ariana's Persian Kitchen Ariana's Persian Kitchen 10:35 11:00 Hook It, Cook It 11:25 Street Food Around The World 11:50 Lee Chan's World Food Tour 12:15 Lee Chan's World Food Tour 12:40 Wineroads 13:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea 14:00 Poh & Co. 14:30 Valentine Warner's Wild Table 14:55 Rustic Adventure Argentina 15:25 Street Food Around The World 15:50 Tripping Out With Alie &

Georgia 16:20 The Food Files 16:45 The Food Files 17:15 Seoul: Capital Of K-Pop 18:10 Chefs Run Wild

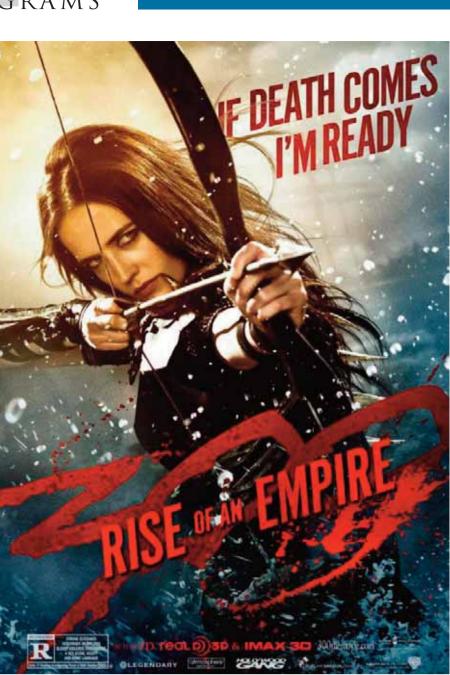
18:35 Chasing Time 19:05 Rustic Adventure Argentina 19:30 Street Food Around The

World 20:00 Tripping Out With Alie &

Georgia 20:25 The Food Files 20:50 The Food Files 21:15 Seoul: Capital Of K-Pop 22:05 Chefs Run Wild 22:30 Chasing Time 22:55 Wineroads 23:20 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea



00:20 Animal Underworld 01:10 Grizzly Cauldron 02:00 Monster Fish 02:50 Dark Side Of Crocs 03:45 Outback Wrangler 04:10 Outback Wrangler 04:40 The Kangaroo King 05:35 Killer Shots 06:30 Monster Fish 07:25 Why Sharks Attack 08:20 Orangutan Rescue 09:15 Crimes Against Nature 10:10 That Shouldn't Flv 11:05 Warrior Bees 12:00 Killer Shots 12:55 Monster Fish 13:50 Croc Inside Out 14:45 Outback Wrangler 15.10 Outback Wran 15:40 Unseen Islands 16:35 Unseen Islands 17:30 Hunter Hunted 18:25 Caught In The Act 19:20 Outback Wrangle 19:45 Outback Wrangle 20:10 Unseen Islands 21:00 Unseen Islands 21:50 Hunter Hunted 22:40 Caught In The Act 23:30 Killer Shots O/n FIRST HD COMEDY 01:30 Saturday Night Live 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring **Jimmy Fallon** 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon 13:00 Suburgatory 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers 20:00 Mulaney 22:00 Married 23:30 Mulaney OM FIRST HD 00:00 Justified 01:00 Heroes Reborn 02:00 The Blacklist 03:00 Minority Report



300- RISE OF AN EMPIRE ON OSN MOVIES PREMIERE HD

ACTION

02:00 Last Passenger-PG15

06:00 King Arthur-PG15 08:15 Man Of Tai Chi-PG15

12:00 Marvel's Next Avengers:

13:30 The Perfect Storm-PG15

OM MOVIES HD

COMEDY

Heroes Of Tomorrow-PG

15:45 King Arthur-PG15

18:00 The Outsider-PG15

20:00 Escape Plan-PG15

00:00 Deliver Us From Eva

22:00 Turkey Shoot-18

00:15 Patrick-18

04:00

04:00 The Whispers 05:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 06:00 Castle 07:00 Bones 08:00 Resurrection The Whispers 09:00 10:00 Castle 11:00 Bones 12:00 Emmerdale 12:30 Coronation Street 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 14:00 Resurrection 15:00 Castle 16:00 Emmerdale **Coronation Street** 16:30 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 18:00 Resurrection Heroes Reborn 19:00 20:00 The Blacklist 21:00 Scandal 22:00 How To Get Away With Murder



02:00 Good Morning America

01:00 Chicago Fire

03:00

11:00

19:00

04:00 Mousehunt 06:00 Mr. Wonderful 08:00 The Little Rascals Save The Day 00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 10:00 Mousehunt 12:00 All About Christmas Eve 14:00 Foodfight! The Little Ra

02:00 Zoolander

O/N MOVIES

OVA MOVIES HD PREMIERE

00:00 The Anomaly-18 01:45 A Gift Of Miracles-PG15 The Italian Job (2003)-PG15 03:15 Christmas With Holly ¬ 05:00 Billy Elliot The Musical-PG15 08:00 Tactical Force-PG15 10:00 The Italian Job (2003)-PG15 10:00 Justice League: War-PG15 12:00 The Expendables 3-PG15 14:00 No Clue-PG15 16:00 Tactical Force-PG15 18:00 Vamps-PG15 20:00 The Last Of Robin Hood 22:00 300: Rise Of An Empire-18



04:10 Robinson Crusoe 05:40 The Haunted Palace 07:10 Hoosiers 09:05 Of Mice And Men 10:55 The Man In The Iron Mask 13:05 Teen Witch 14:35 Thunderbirds Are Go 16:10 Puckoon 17:35 The Haunted Palace 19:05 Jakob The Liar 21:00 Les Miserables (1998)

19:05 Great Expectations 20:00 Great Expectations 20:55 Sherlock 22:25 David Copperfield 23:15 David Copperfield 00:00 David Copperfield 00:50 David Copperfield 01:40 Our Queen 02:30 Doctor Who: The Time Of The Doctor



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 Disquise 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 10:30 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 Nexo Knights 16:45 Nexo Knights 17:10 We Bare Bears - New 17:30 Adventure Time 17:55 Steven Universe 18:20 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu 18:40 Regular Show: The Movie 19:50 Transformers: Robots In Disguise New 20:15 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 Disquise 02:02 Transformers: Robots In Disguise 02:25 Grojband 02:51 Grojband

03:40 Murder In-Law 04:35 The Haunting Of. 05:25 The Ghost Inside My Child 06:15 Crimes That Shook Britain 07:05 The First 48 08:00 The First 48 09:00 The First 48 10:00 Crimes That Shook Britain 11:00 Crimes That Shook Britain 12:00 Crimes That Shook Britain 13:00 Nightmare In Suburbia 14:00 Nightmare In Suburbia 15:00 Nightmare In Suburbia 16:00 Nightmare In Suburbia 17:00 Nightmare In Suburbia

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2015

Doc McStuffins 19:55 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 The Adventures Of Disney Fairies 22:25 The Adventures Of Disney Fairies 22:55 The Adventures Of Disney Fairies 23:20 Lilo & Stitch 23:50 Zou 00:00 New Money 00:30 Fashion Bloggers 00:55 Fashion Bloggers Stewarts And Hamiltons 01:25 02:20 Stewarts And Hamiltons 03:15 Eric And Jessie: Game On 03:40 Eric And Jessie: Game On 04:10 Beyond Candid With Giuliana 05:05 E! Entertainment Special 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 07:50 Style Star House Of DVF 08:20 09:15 House Of DVF 10:15 House Of DVF Fashion Bloggers 11:10 11:35 Fashion Bloggers 12:05 Keeping Up With The



16:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs.

17:00 Ultimate Airport Dubai

18:00 Megastructures

Yukon Gold

South

19:00

Escape Plan ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

Devious N 16.00 04:00 The Leftovers Dav 18:00 The Ladykillers 20:00 I Give It A Year 22:00 Reginald D. Hunter: Live 05:00 Chicago Fire 06:00 Good Morning America 07:00 Emmerdale 07:30 Coronation Street 08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 09:00 The Astronaut Wives Club 10:00 Emmerdale 10:30 Coronation Street The Ellen DeGeneres Show 13:00 Once Upon A Time 14:00 The Astronaut Wives Club 15:00 Chicago Fire 16:00 Live Good Morning America 18:00 Once Upon A Time

The Astronaut Wives Club 21:00 Once Upon A Time 22:00 Devious Maids OM MOVIES HD

ACTION

00:00 The Perfect Storm 02:15 Patrick 04:00 Last Passenger 06:00 The Italian Job (2003) 08:00 King Arthur 10:15 Man Of Tai Chi 12:00 The Italian Job (2003) 14:00 Marvel's Next Avengers: Heroes Of Tomorrow 15:30 The Perfect Storm 17:45 King Arthur 20:00 The Outsider

MOVIES DRAMA 01:00 The Truth About Emanuel-PG15 03:00 Late Bloomers-PG15 05:00 A Promise-PG15 07:00 Paranoia-PG15 09:00 I'll Follow You Down-PG15 11:00 A Promise-PG15 13:00 Yellow Rock-PG15 15:00 Hours-PG15 17:00 I'll Follow You Down-PG15

19:00 Trespass-PG15 21:00 Inside Llewyn Davis-PG15 23:00 Philomena-PG15

ON MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

02:00 Pawn 03:30 Bugsy 05:45 The Bag Man 07:45 Rushmore 09:15 Diana

- 11:15 The Darjeeling Limited 12:45 Evita
- 15:00 Tea With Mussolini 17:00 Diana
- 19:00 Half Of A Yellow Sun 21:00 Blue Sky

23:00 Dallas Buyers Club

OVA MOVIES

01:15 Before I Go To Sleep-PG15 03:00 Million Dollar Arm-PG15 05:00 Big Hero 6-PG 06:45 Great Expectations-PG15 09:00 The Maze Runner-PG15 11:00 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I-PG15 13:00 Jersey Boys-PG15 15:15 Veronica Mars-PG15 17:00 The Maze Runner-PG15 19:00 Hercules-PG15

21:00 Outcast-PG15 23:00 Maleficent-PG

ON MOVIES HD KIDS

01:00 Hatching 03:00 Bamse And The City Of Thieves 04:45 Tom And Jerry: Santa's Little Helpers 06:00 Bolts And Blip 07:45 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure 09:30 Tarzan 11:15 Ice Age: The Meltdown 13:00 Bamse And The City Of Thieves 14:30 Moshi Monsters: The Movie 16:00 Hiroku: Defenders Of Gaia 18:00 Tarzan 20:00 Marco Macaco 22:00 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure 23:30 Hiroku: Defenders Of Gaia

23:20 Cold Mountain 01:55 Les Miserables (1998)



03:35 Blood Lake: Attack Of The

05:15 Serial Killer Tiger At Large 06:02 River Monsters (Best Of

06:49 River Monsters (Best Of

08:25 Hunt For The Tasmanian

09:15 Hunt For The Tasmanian

10:10 Killer Hornets From Hell

12:00 River Monsters (Best Of

12:55 River Monsters (Best Of

13:50 Swimming With Monsters:

14:45 Swimming With Monsters:

15:40 Swimming With Monsters:

16:35 Swimming With Monsters:

17:30 Hunt For The Tasmanian

Tiger 18:25 Hunt For The Tasmanian

19:20 Killer Hornets From Hell

21:10 River Monsters (Best Of

22:05 River Monsters (Best Of

23:00 The Cannibal In The Jungle

00:50 Russian Yeti: The Killer Lives

BBC

entertainment

06:10 Mr Bloom's Nursery: Hoe!

03:20 Alan Carr: Chatty Man

05:25 Show Me Show Me

04:05 Call The Midwife

05:00 Teletubbies

05:45 Teletubbies

Hoe! Hoe! 06:35 Charlie And Lola

06:45 Doctors

07:15 Doctors

07:45 Doctors

08:15 Doctors

08:45 Eastenders

09:15 Eastenders

09:45 Eastenders

10:15 Eastenders

10:45 Our Queen

Doctor

Special 2013

Special 2013

11:35 David Copperfield

12:25 David Copperfield

13:10 David Copperfield

14:00 David Copperfield

15:50 Call The Midwife

18:15 Great Expectations

14:50 Doctor Who: The Time Of The

16:45 Call The Midwife: Christmas

17:30 Call The Midwife: Christmas

02:40 Man-Eating Zombie Cats

20:15 Mermaids: The New

11:05 Mermaids: The New

07:36 Call Of The Wildman

08:00 Call Of The Wildman

Killer Lampreys

Series 1-5)

Series 1-5)

Tigel

Tiaer

Evidence

Series 1-5)

Series 1-5)

Steve Backshall

Steve Backshall

Steve Backshall

Steve Backshall

Tiger

Evidence

Series 1-5)

Series 1-5)

18:00 Nightmare In Suburbia 19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia 20:00 Fatal Vows 21:00 Fatal Vows 22:00 Fatal Vows 23:00 Murder In-Law 23:55 Lmn Crime Specials 00:50 The Last Goodbye 01:20 The Last Goodbye 01:45 The Haunting Of. 02:45 Murder In-Law



07:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero 07:25 Boyster 07:50 Supa Strikas 08:15 Lab Rats 08:40 K.C Undercover 09.10 Kickin' It 09:35 Kirby Buckets 10:00 Lab Rats 10:25 Kickin' It 10:50 Mighty Med 11:15 Supa Strikas 11:40 K.C Undercover 12:05 Boyster 12:35 Kickin' It 13:00 Miahty Med 13:45 Lab Rats: Sink Or Swim 14:30 Phineas And Ferb 14:50 Supa Strikas 15:15 Supa Strikas 15:40 Kickin' It 16:10 Lab Rats 16:35 Star Wars Rebels 17:00 Mighty Med 17:25 Mighty Med 18:10 Cars Toons Compilation 18:50 Phineas And Ferb 19:05 Toy Story Toons 19:10 Annedroids 19:40 Mighty Med 20:05 K.C Undercover 20:30 Supa Strikas 20:55 Star Wars Rebels 21:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything 21:50 Lab Rats 22:15 Phineas And Ferb 22:40 Super Matrak 23:05 Super Matrak 23:30 Star vs The Forces Of Evil 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA Nat Geo People HD 03:05 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet 03:30 Exploring The Vine 03:55 Exploring The Vine 04:20 The Food Files 04:45 The Food Files 05:10 Hook It, Cook It 05:35 Tales From The Bush Larder 06:00 Chefs Run Wild 06:25 The Best Job In The World 06:50 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet 07:15 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet 07:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces 08:30 Seoul: Capital Of K-Pop 09:20 David Rocco's Dolce India 09:45 David Rocco's Dolce India 10:10 Ariana's Persian Kitchen 10:35 Ariana's Persian Kitchen 11:00 Hook It, Cook It 11:25 Street Food Around The World

CLASSIFIEDS

STOMPING GROUND

Kuwait - Times

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2015



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (24/12/2015 TO 30/12/2015)

SHARQIA-1 THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi

SHARQIA-2 POINT BREAK POINT BREAK STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

POINT BREAK POINT BREAK POINT BREAK

SHARQIA-3 KHANET EL YEK

STOMPING GROUND THE GOOD DINOSAUR KHANET EL YEK STOMPING GROUND KHANET EL YEK STOMPING GROUND

MUHALAB-1 DILWALE - Hindi

NARCOPOLIS DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi NARCOPOLIS NARCOPOLIS

MUHALAB-2

KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS SOUKHYAM - Telugu SOUKHYAM - Telugu KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK

MUHALAB-3 POINT BREAK

THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE POINT BREAK POINT BREAK POINT BREAK

FANAR-1

THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK

FANAR-2

NARCOPOLIS STOMPING GROUND NARCOPOLIS STOMPING GROUND NARCOPOLIS

	STOMPING GROUND	9
11:45 AM	NARCOPOLIS	1
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4:00 PM		
6:00 PM	FANAR-3	_
9:00 PM	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	1
12:05 AM	DARK MOUNTAIN	3
	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	4
	DARK MOUNTAIN	7
12:45 PM	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	ç
3:00 PM	SOUKHYAM - Telugu	3
5:15 PM	MAMA MANCHU ALLUDU KANCHU - Te	elugu
8:00 PM	PM	
10:15 PM	SOUKHYAM - Telugu	ç
12:30 AM	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	1
12.30 AM	STAR WARS, THE FORCE AWARENS	
	FANAR-4	
1:00 PM	POINT BREAK -3D	1
3:00 PM	POINT BREAK	2
4:45 PM	THE GOOD DINOSAUR	5
7:00 PM	POINT BREAK -3D	7
9:00 PM	POINT BREAK	9
10:45 PM	POINT BREAK	1
12:45 AM		
	FANAR-5	
	DILWALE - Hindi	1
11:45 AM	DILWALE - Hindi	2
2:45 PM	DILWALE - Hindi	5
4:45 PM	DILWALE - Hindi	8
7:45 PM	DILWALE - Hindi	1
10:45 PM		
12:45 AM	MARINA-1	
	DILWALE - Hindi	1
	ROOM	1
12:15 PM	KHANET EL YEK	3
2:15 PM	ROOM	6
4:15 PM	KHANET EL YEK	8
7:15 PM	KHANET EL YEK	1
4:15 PM	ROOM	1
7:15 PM		
10:15 PM	MARINA-2	
12:15 AM	POINT BREAK	1
12.13 AN		
	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	2
	POINT BREAK	5
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3:00 PM	POINT BREAK	1
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9:30 PM	MARINA-3	
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	THE PEANUTS MOVIE -3D	З
	THE GOOD DINOSAUR	5
12.00 DM	THE PEANUTS MOVIE	
12:00 PM		7
2:00 PM	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	9
4:00 PM	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	1
6:00 PM		
8:00 PM	AVENUES-1	
10:00 PM	NARCOPOLIS	1
12:05 AM	NARCOPOLIS	3
	NARCOPOLIS	5
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11:30 AM	NARCOPOLIS	1
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9:00 PM 10:45 PM 12:45 AM	STOMPING GROUND STOMPING GROUND STOMPING GROUND STOMPING GROUND STOMPING GROUND
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12·45 PM	STOMPING GROUND

12:45 PM

NARCOPOLIS

2:45 PM	AL-KOUT.4
4:45 PM	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS
6:45 PM	THE PEANUTS MOVIE
8:45 PM	THE PEANUTS MOVIE
10:45 PM	THE PEANUTS MOVIE
12:45 AM	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS
	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS
11:30 AM	BAIRAQ-1
2:30 PM	KHANET EL YEK
5:45 PM	KHANET EL YEK
9:00 PM	POINT BREAK -3D KHANET EL YEK
12:05 AM	POINT BREAK -3D
	KHANET EL YEK
1.15 DM	POINT BREAK
1:15 PM 3:45 PM	
6:15 PM	BAIRAQ-2
8:45 PM	THE PEANUTS MOVIE
11:15 PM	THE PEANUTS MOVIE
11.15 FIV	THE GOOD DINOSAUR
	THE PEANUTS MOVIE
12:00 PM	STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS
2:15 PM	IN THE HEART OF THE SEA
4:30 PM	
6:45 PM	BAIRAQ-3
9:00 PM	DILWALE - Hindi
11:15 PM	BELLE & SEBASTIAN:
1:15 AM	DILWALE - Hindi
	DILWALE - Hindi
	DILWALE - Hindi
11:45 AM	PLAZA
1:45 PM	THE PEANUTS MOVIE
3:45 PM	PASANGA 2 - Tamil
5:45 PM	DILWALE - Hindi
7:45 PM	POINT BREAK
9:45 PM	KHANET EL YEK
11:45 PM	LAILA
	DILWALE - Hindi
11:30 AM	THE PEANUTS MOVIE
2:00 PM	KHANET EL YEK
4:30 PM	POINT BREAK
7:00 PM	
9:30 PM	AJIAL.1
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	DILWALE - Hindi
	DILWALE - Hindi
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4:00 PM 6:00 PM	THE PEANUTS MOVIE
8:00 PM	DILWALE - Hindi
10:00 PM	Diewale
12:05 AM	AJIAL.3
12.057411	LOAFER - Telugu
	LOAFER - Telugu
11:45 AM	SOUKHYAM - Telugu
1:30 PM	SOUKHYAM - Telugu
3:30 PM	MAMA MANCHU ALLUDU KANCHU
5:15 PM	0.1101 <i>a</i>
7:15 PM	AJIAL.4
9:00 PM	PASANGA 2 - Tamil PASANGA 2 - Tamil
11:00 PM	PASANGA 2 - Tamil PASANGA 2 - Tamil
12:45 AM	
- C	val of Civil Aviation II
le Gene	ral of Civil Aviation He



THE GOLD CAMP

FOR RENT

For companies and families Programs: competitions for kids and games. Programs: competitions for grownups. Playgrounds: football, volleyball, Horses & camel Fenced camp + security. Tel: 96003089 / 🌄 @The_Gold_Camp

SITUATION VACANT

12:00 PM

2:45 PM

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8:45 PM

11:45 PM

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7:15 PM

10:00 PM

Professional cook for house, good experience all kinds of food, especially Arabic food, good salary, part time. Call: 23901053, . 60064934. (C 5102) 21-12-2015

A single American-Lebanese male living in Salmiya needs a lady work er to help in cooking and cleaning. She must understand and speak English and her timing and salary are negotiable. Call 6641-7504. (C 5100)

CHANGE OF NAME

19-12-2015

I Irfan Mohammed S/o Noor Jaman, Dist Banswara (Rajasthan) holder of Indian Passport No. F9295894, I am going to change my name Irfan Khan, in future known by my new name

THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY FOR CIVIL INFORMATION Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988



FOR RENT

In West Mishref

New perfect sized

pent house apartment

3 bedroom and 3

bathroom & nanny

bedroom with bathroom

foreigners only or Co.

Cost 870

9977

27-12-2015

Irfan Khan. (C 5103)

I Dheemu Sudeep holder

Rajampet (M), YSR Kadapa

Dist, A.P., India. Now I have

of Indian Passport No.

F6768269 resident of

changed my name as

Bheemu Sudeep Kumar

Reddy instead of Dheemu

Sudeep in future all trans-

action will be made in

Bheemu Sudeep Kumar

Reddy only. (C 5101)

21-12-2015

Pulapathur (V & P)

PRAYER TIMINGS

:	05:16	
rook	06:41	
r:	11:49	
	14:39	
Jhrib:	16:57	i i
•	18.20	2





AVENUES-2

STOMPING GROUND

5:15 PM

7:00 PM

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

	0							JORI	9 5 wiii		Jusse	inge	13 10 43	eseats	
	Arrival Flig	ghts on Sunday 27/12/2015		SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30			Flights on Sunday 27/12/2015		KAC	785	Jeddah	13:00
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KAC	284	Dhaka	14:45	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05	KAC	672	Dubai	14:45					FDB	076	Dubai	13:10
	239			KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05				
JZR		Amman	00:25					FDB	072	Dubai	00:40	KAC	791	Madinah	13:25
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	GFA	221	Bahrain	15:00	MSC	404	Asyut	00:55	SAW	702	Damascus	13:35
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	KNE	472	Jeddah	15:05	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:55	JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55	OMA	645	Muscat	15:30	MSC	416	Sohag	01:00	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	KAC	562	Amman	15:40	UAL	981	IAD	01:10	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:45	KAC	283	Dhaka	02:10	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
ETH	3402	Addis Ababa/Riyadh	01:30	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	FDB	058	Dubai	15:10
DLH	635	Doha	01:35	JZR	535	Cairo	15:50	DLH	635	Frankfurt		QTR	1079	Doha	15:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45	QTR	1072	Doha	16:10				02:35				
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	JZR	787	Riyadh	16:25	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45	AXB	394	Kozhikode	15:20
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:25	FDB	051	Dubai	16:30	ETH	3403	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	617	Doha	15:45
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	16:40	KAC	381	Delhi	03:30	SVA	503	Madinah/Jeddah	15:45
				RJA	640	Amman	16:55	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	542	Cairo	16:55	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:55	KAC	773	Riyadh	15:50
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	KAC	741	Dammam	15:55
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05	GFA			17:30	FDB	068	Dubai	04:00	KNE	473	Jeddah	16:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10		215	Bahrain		MSR	613	Cairo	04:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:25
CEB	7694	Manila	03:15	MSR	614	Cairo	17:50	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:30
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15	KAC	678	Muscat/Abu Dhabi	17:50								
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:55	KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25	KAC	502	Beirut	18:00	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00	JZR	238	Amman	17:30
KAC	544	Cairo	03:35	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	LMU	511	Cairo	05:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	17:30
LMU	510	Cairo	04:05	FDB	063	Dubai	18:05	THY	765	Istanbul	05:15	FDB	052	Dubai	17:35
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40	KAC	792	Madinah	18:10	CEB	7695	Manila	05:20	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	UAL	982	IAD	18:15	JZR	560	Sohag	06:10	JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
QTR	8511		06:10	JZR	177	Dubai	18:20	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
		Doha		KAC	786	Jeddah	18:30	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30	ABY	123	Sharjah	18:45								
BAW	157	London	06:40	QTR	1080	Doha	18:55	RJA	643	Amman	07:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20	KAC	742	Dammam	19:05	THY	771	Istanbul	07:05	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:25	KAC	774	Riyadh	19:25	FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10	JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15	MSR	615	Cairo	18:50
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50	KAC	166	Paris/Rome	19:30	QTR	8512	Doha	07:40	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:10
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50					FDB	054	Dubai	08:10	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
OMA	641	Muscat	08:00	JZR	483	Istanbul	19:35	QTR	1087	Doha	08:40	ABY	124	Sharjah	19:25
KAC	354	BLR	08:15	KAC	618	Doha	19:35	BAW	156	London	08:45	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45					UAL			
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30	KAC	102	New York/London	19:55	SVA	513	Riyadh	08:50		982	Bahrain	19:30
	346			FDB	061	Dubai	20:20	JZR	534	Cairo	08:55	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC		Ahmedabad	08:30	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20	OMA	642	Muscat	08:55	KAC	361	Colombo	20:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	MSR	606	Luxor	20:45	KAC	171	Frankfurt	09:05	KAC	351	Kochi	20:50
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50	FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:25	QTR	1081	Doha	20:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50	JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:55	KAC	541	Cairo	09:55	FDB	062	Dubai	21:20
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20	KAC	117	New York	09:55	MSR	619	Alexandria	21:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	UAE				DLH	634	Doha	21:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ALK	229	Colombo	21:25		856	Dubai	09:55				
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	UAE	859	Dubai	21:40	KAC	561	Amman	10:00	FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:00	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45	KAC	671	Dubai	10:05	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:25	JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05	JZR	1082	Bahrain	22:00	KAC	501	Beirut	10:30	JZR	502	Luxor	22:00
								JZR	482	Istanbul	10:35	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
SYR	341	Damascus	11:25	KLM	417	Amsterdam	22:05	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:10
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:40	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
AGY	682	Asyut	11:40	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:25	KAC	677	Abu Dhabi/Muscat	10:50	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	FDB	059	Dubai	22:30								
SAW	701	Damascus	12:20	KAC	172	Frankfurt	22:35	QTR	1071	Doha	11:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25	MSC	501	Alexandria	23:00	IRC	529	Ahwaz	11:00	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	JZR	239	Amman	23:05	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25	QTR	1083	Doha	23:05
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JZR	185	Dubai	23:15	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:20	KLM	417	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	UAL	981	Bahrain	23:25	KAC	103	London	12:25	KAC	205	Islamabad	23:10
KAC	382	Delhi	13:50	PIA	205	Lahore	23:40	SYR	342	Damascus	12:25	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:15
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45	UAE	874	Dubai	12:30	KAC	411	Bangkok/Manila	23:35
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10	THY	764	Istanbul	23:50	AGY	683	Alexandria	12:40	FDB	060	Dubai	23:35
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AND	282	NUZHIKUUE	14:20	2.11	57 1		23.33	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55	NAC	415	Kuala Lumpur/Jakarta	25:40
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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Kuwait 🗻 Times



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STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are raring to go now and you're eager to tell everyone about your upcoming creative projects while the Moon is kicking up her heels in your 5th House of Self-Expression. However, instead of receiving the applause you expect today, your plans may fall on deaf ears. An unappreciative audience could send you back to the drawing board, requiring you to rethink your big ideas. But don't view this delay as a defeat: use it as opportunity to improve your chances for success.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taking care of the chores you should have done yesterday will be less burdensome once you actually shift into gear. However, you may feel as if cosmic forces are working against you now, preventing you from initiating action. Unfortunately, finding the source of these elusive pockets of resistance is challenging. It's tough to change your attitude once you realize completing even a simple task is complicated today. Thankfully, your persistence will open doors that were previously locked.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

encouraging you to take the next step on your journey. But this support may come with a mixed message because following someone else's advice isn't very straightforward now. You're tempted to impetuously rush ahead, but complicated logistics and unwieldy red tape are likely to hinder your progress. Slow down and tend to details that need handling one more time. One can't succeed on inspiration alone.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

It's nearly impossible to stick to your plans today, even if you believe that your abundant physical energy and unwavering willpower are enough to power you through any unexpected obstacles. Unfortunately, brute strength won't be sufficient; you must work smarter, not harder. Start by recognizing the limits of your knowledge; faking it will only damage the trust others place in you. Expressing your vulnerability can deepen the bonds between you and those you love.

Leo (July 23-August 22)

Be wary if anyone attempts to convince you that he or she is right and you are wrong. Other people's arguments may be so persuasive now that you might be tempted to drop your agenda for theirs. Unfortunately, your disdain for details can have you moving so fast that you overlook an important fact or two. Give yourself time to think through any change in plans before you find yourself backed into a corner. A dose of common sense prevents an unnecessary headache later on.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are leaning towards jumping into a project or organizing a social event, but you might be afraid of someone's negative judgment today. You prefer to do things your way but may not have as much say in the matter as you wish. Your decision doesn't allow for any ambiguity now, requiring a yes-or-no answer. Think very carefully about your desired outcome before choosing whether or not you're willing to sacrifice your freedom. Sometimes the path of integrity is a lonely one.

Libra (September 23-October 22)

You might not get as much time to yourself today as you were hoping while the Moon shines in your 11th House of Social Networking. Everything and everyone that passes your way is just another bundle of possibilities, making it challenging to turn down any invitations for business or pleasure. Instead of attempting to limit your options now, follow the course of least resistance. If you stop trying to control the outcome, you could discover something wonderful right in front of your nose.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are super-jazzed about turning a corner and starting a new chapter with your work and family, yet you could end up spending too much time trying to keep everyone happy now. You might not be able to work on the larger shift until you open up more free time, especially if you're juggling a number of mundane issues and projects today. In the meantime, balance your anticipation for something different with the constancy of familiar routines. Maintaining a tight schedule is key; timing is everything.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You act as if you have all the answers today as you supply family and friends with a constant stream of political and philosophical repartee. But in spite of all your bravado, you just want to emotionally connect with those closest to you. Unfortunately, you could get carried away in an argument about a topic that's not even important to you. You aren't fooling anyone; admit what you don't know and engage others on the basis of honest interactions about subjects that really matter.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

but it can be tricky to narrow your choices and just pick one to pursue now. Don't blame your indecisiveness on anyone else. You will feel more like yourself again once you choose a path and begin following the whims of your heart.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You're feeling quite positive about your current opportunities now, but your friends might not see things in the same light. Although everyone seems to have a different idea of how your life should unfold, it's pointless arguing with anyone else about subjects that are your own personal business. Instead of escalating a war of words, politely excuse yourself from the conversation. Setting clear boundaries gives all those involved a chance to cool off before you revisit the topic at a later date. Maintain the peace at all costs.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

If you recently started to put a big idea into motion, today's bold Leo Moon gives your momentum another boost. Although you possess plenty of energy now, it still could be challenging to sustain it over an extended period of time. Even if you're ready to take on the world in a moment, don't burn up your resources all at once. Operate in a methodical manner so you can finish what you start with a smile on your face.

Yesterday's Solution

Songs From the Year 2003

ACROSS

1. A toilet in England. 4. South American caracara.

12. One millionth of a gram.

15. Automatic data processing in which data acquisition and other stages or processing are integrated into a coherent system.

16. Having small chinks or crannies (especially in or between rocks or stones). 17. An acute febrile highly contagious viral disease.

18. In the Roman calendar.

20. Gather, as of as crops.

22. Local anemia in a given body part sometimes resulting from vasoconstriction or

thrombosis or embolism. 25. Sexually transmitted urethritis (usually

caused by chlamydia). 26. Informal terms for a mother.

27. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike

part of an organism.

28. Mentally or physically infirm with age. 31. 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.

33. (of eggs) No longer edible.

36. Small Old and New World herons.

37. A rare soft orange mineral consisting of arsenic sulphide.

39. Having any of numerous bright or strong colors reminiscent of the color of blood or cherries or tomatoes or rubies. 40. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation

equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material. 43. The elementary stages of any subject

(usually plural). 44. An immunosuppressive drug (trade name Imuran) used to prevent rejection of a

transplanted organ. A white metallic element

83. Discharge from the external ear. 84. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).

82. (informal) Of the highest quality.

travelers.

DOWN

1. Being three more than fifty. 2. The probability of a specified outcome. 3. An organization of countries formed in

1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum. 4. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.

5. A colorless and odorless inert gas.

6. East Indian cereal grass whose seed yield a somewhat bitter flour, a staple in the Orient.

7. An organ in its earliest stage of development.

8. The compass point that is midway between north and northeast.

9. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.

10. Dyed with henna.

11. A public promotion of some product or service.

12. A master's degree in fine arts.

13. An upward slope or grade (as in a road). 14. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.

19. Be going to.

21. A bodily passage or tube conveying a secretion or other substance. 23. Resembling or characteristic of or

- appropriate to an elegy. 24. A woman of refinement.
- 29. A city in northern India.

30. A small explosive bomb thrown by hand or fired from a missile.

runs northeast into the Rhine.



People seem to enter your life today for the express purpose of



You may discover a few new interesting things to do with your time at home today, enabling you to retreat behind your castle walls without growing bored. It's fun when there are so many possibilities available,





- 32. A river in north central Switzerland that

46. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.	34. Corrupt morally or by intemperance or sensuality.
48. An intensely radioactive metallic ele-	35. The capital and largest city of
ment that occurs in minute amounts in ura-	Bangladesh.
nium ores.	38. Type genus of the Rubiaceae.
49. An indehiscent fruit derived from a sin-	41. A sharp narrow ridge found in rugged
gle ovary having one or many seeds within	mountains.
a fleshy wall or pericarp.	42. Russian country house.
51. A soft silvery metallic element of the	45. Avatar of Vishnu.
alkali earth group.	47. The slender spear of the Bantu-speaking
52. The blood group whose red cells carry	people of Africa.
both the A and B antigens.	50. Conqueror of Gaul and master of Italy (100-44 BC).
54. A detailed description of design criteria for a piece of work.	53. A large mass of ice floating at sea.
56. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.	55. Genus of tropical American shrubby
57. Any of a class of organic compounds	trees and woody climbers having slender
that contain the divalent radical -CONHCO	branches with broad flat leaves and large
59. (Old Testament) Third son of Adam.	panicles of flowers.
60. A ductile gray metallic element of the	58. An Eskimo hut.
lanthanide series.	61. 30 to 300 kilohertz.
62. A particular geographical region of	63. Lower in esteem.
indefinite boundary (usually serving some	65. Transient cessation of respiration.
special purpose or distinguished by its peo-	67. Surpassing the ordinary especially in size
ple or culture or geography).	or scale.
64. A measuring instrument for measuring	68. Projectiles to be fired from a gun.
and indicating a quantity or for testing con- formity with a standard.	69. Someone who leaves. 70. A woman hired to suckle a child of
66. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked	someone else.
on a skewer usually with vegetables.	72. A light clear metallic sound as of a small
71. Shaped and dried dough made from	bell.
flour and water and sometimes egg.	73. A former copper coin of Pakistan.
74. South American armadillo with three	75. Used of physical heat.
bands of bony plates.	77. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit
76. A person who is very small but who is	juice.
not otherwise deformed or abnormal.	79. A trivalent metallic element of the rare
78. (prefix) Bad or erroneous or lack of.	earth group.
81. A hotel providing overnight lodging for	80. A form of address for a man.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Look Up!

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BIG DIPPER	HAZE	MOON	SOLAR ECLIPSE
BIRDS	HELICOPTER	PLANETS	STARS
BLIMP	HOT AIR BALLOON	POWER LINES	STREET LIGHT
BLUE SKY	JET EXHAUST	RAINBOW	THE SUN
CHIMNEY SMOKE	JUPITER	SATELLITE	TREETOP
CLOUDS	KITE	SATURN	UNIVERSE
COMET	LIGHTNING	SKYDIVER	VENUS
DRONE	MARS	SKYSCRAPER	
FIREWORKS	MERCURY	SKYWRITING	

Daily SuDoku

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BABY BOY	HEADSTRONG	LIKE GLUE	STAND UP
CLOCKS	I CAN I WANT YOU	MESMERIZE MISS YOU	STUCK SUGA SUGA
COME OVER	I'M WITH YOU	PICTURE	SUNRISE
FIGHTER	IN DA CLUB	RAIN ON ME	SUPERMAN TROUBLE
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HEADSTRONG	LIKE GLUE	STAND UP
I CAN	MESMERIZE	STUCK
I WANT YOU	MISS YOU	SUGA SUG
I'M WITH YOU	PICTURE	SUNRISE
IGNITION	RAIN ON ME	SUPERMA
IN DA CLUB	RIGHT THURR	TROUBLE
INTO YOU	SAY YES	UNWELL
INTUITION	SENORITA	

The hidden song title is: HOW YOU GONNA ACT LIKE THAT

FRONTIN'

GET BUSY

Yesterday's Solution

6	8	2	5	1	3	7	4	9
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hard

Kuwait - Times

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



GOVERNORATE PHARMACY Ahmadi Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa **Danat Al-Sultan** Jahra Modern Jahra Madina Munawara Capital Ahlam Khaldiya Coop New Shifa Farwaniya Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan Hawally Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis

ADDRESS	PHONE
Fahaeel Makka St	23915883
Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd	23715414
Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23726558
Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1	24575518
Jahra-Block 92	24566622
Fahad Al-Salem St	22436184
Khaldiya Coop	24833967
Farwaniya Block 40	24734000
Ferdous Coop	24881201
Old Kheitan Block 11	24726638
Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St	25726265
Salmiya-Amman St	25647075
Hawally-Beirut St	22625999
Hawally & Rawdha Coop	22564549
Jabriya-Block 1A	25340559
Jabriya-Block 3B	25326554
Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St	25721264
Mishrif Coop	25380581
Salwa Coop	25628241

PHARMACIES

ON 24 HRS DUTY

Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630 Fax: (+965) 24348714

Max Tem	p (°C)	16
Min Tem	p (°C)	10
Max Rel	Hum (%)	98
Min Rel H	tum (%)	62
Max Wine and Direct	d Speed (km/h) ction	50 NW
TOTAL R	AINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm
*	Sunrise	06:41
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Sunrise	06	i:41
Zuhr	11	:48
Asr	14	:38
Sunset	16	:57
Isha	18	: 19

Endocrinologist

Physiotherapists & VD

Rheumatologists:

Internist, Chest & Heart

Consultant Cardiologist

Liberia

Lithuania

Libya

00231

00218

00370

Zambia

Zimbabwe

Yugoslavia

00381

00260

00263

Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman 25339330

Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari 25658888

Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr 25329924

Dr. Deyaa Shehab 25722291

Dr. Adel Al-Awadi 25330060

Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah

DR.Mohammes Akkad

Dr. Mohammad Zubaid

MB, ChB, FRCPC, PACC

Dr. Farida Al-Habib

MD, PH.D, FACC

Te: 2575077

Noor Clinic

23845955

Fax: 25723123

Assistant Professor Of Medicine

Head, Division of Cardiology

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital

Inaya German Medical Center

Dr. Musaed Faraj Khamees

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



					-
		Afghanistan	0093	Luxembourg	00352
PHO	ONE	Albania	00355	Lesotho	00266
230	15883	Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
	15414	Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
237	26558	Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
245	75518	Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
	66622	Antiga Argentina	001268	Malawi Malaysia	00265 0060
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	36184 33967	Armenia Australia	00374	Maldives	00960 00223
240	33307	Austria	0043	Malta	00223
	34000	Bahamas	0043	Marshall Islands	00350
	81201 26638	Bahrain	00973	Martinique	00596
247	20050	Bangladesh	00880	Mauritania	00222
	26265	Barbados	001246	Mauritius	00230
	47075 25999	Belarus	00375	Mayotte	00269
	64549	Belgium	0032	Mexico	0052
	40559	Belize	00501	Micronesia	00691
	26554 21264	Benin	00229	Moldova	00373
	80581	Bermuda	001441	Monaco	00377
256	28241	Bhutan	00975	Mongolia	00976
		Bolivia	00591	Montserrat	001664
		Bosnia	00387	Morocco	00212
30		Botswana Brazil	00267	Mozambique	00258 0095
	0	Brunei	0055 00673	Myanmar (Burma) Namibia	0095
		Bulgaria	00359	Nepal	00204
		Burkina	00226	Netherlands	0031
		Burundi	00220	Netherlands Antilles	
tcher	-	Cambodia	00257	New Caledonia	00535
	12452	Cameroon	00237	New Zealand	0064
atches		Canada	001	Nicaragua	00505
		Cape Verde	00238	Nigar	00227
IN °C	Max °C EXP	Cayman Islands	001345	Nigeria	00234
11	18	Central African	00236	Niue	00683
		Chad	00235	Norfolk Island	00672
07	18	Chile	0056	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
07	16	China	0086	North Korea	00850
08	16	Colombia	0057	Norway	0047
09	17	Comoros	00269	Oman	00968
09	16	Congo Cook Jolanda	00242	Pakistan	0092
12	16	Cook Islands	00682	Palau	00680
10	17	Costa Rica Croatia	00506	Panama Papua New Guinea	00507 00675
07	15	Cuba	00385	Papua New Guinea Paraguay	00595
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10	19	Czech Republic	00420	Poland	0048
09	17	Denmark	0045	Portugal	00351
07	15	Diego Garcia	00246	Puerto Rico	001787
07	14	Djibouti	00253	Qatar	00974
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-		Faroe Islands	00298	Sao Tone	00239
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		Finland	00358	Scotland (UK)	0044
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6:41		French Guiana	00594	Seychelles	00284
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4:38		Gabon	00241	Singapore	0065
6:57		Gambia	00220	Slovakia	00421
8:19		Georgia	00995	Slovenia	00386
		Germany	0049	Solomon Islands	00677
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		Greece Greenland	0030	South Korea Spain	0082
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		Guatemala	00502	Swaziland	00268
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		Guyana	00592	Switzerland	0041
2533	39330	Haiti	00509	Syria	00963
		Holland (Netherlands)		Serbia	00381
		Honduras	00504	Taiwan	00886
		Hong Kong	00852	Tanzania	00255
&VD		Hungary	0036	Thailand	0066
		Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Toga	00228
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ts:		Indian Ocean	0091	Trinidad	00690
();		Indian Ocean Indonesia	00873	Tunisia	001868
		Iran	0098	Turkey	00210
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		Ireland	00353	Uganda	00256
Heart		Italy	0039	Ukraine	00380
2455	55050 Ext 210	Ivory Coast	00225	United Arab Emirates	
		Jamaica	001876	United Kingdom	0044
		Japan	0081	Uruguay	00598
ne		Jordan	00962	USA	001
2525	20667	Kazakhstan	007	Uzbekistan	00998
	39667	Kenya	00254	Vanuatu	00678
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2611	555-2622555	Kuwait	00965	Vietnam	0084
		Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands UK	001284
		Laos	00856	Virgin Islands US	001340
		Latvia Lebanon	00371 00961	Wales (UK) Yemen	0044 00967
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Mishrif Coop

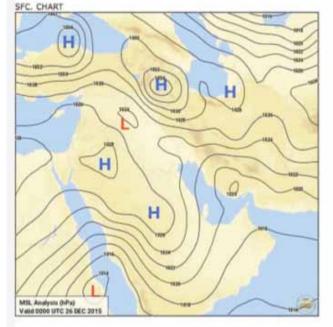
Salwa Coop



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours Issued 26/12/2015-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 18 °C

By Day : Sunny with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h By Night : Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h



Four-Day Forecast

Tuesday Wednesday Sunday Monday

www.met.gov.kw

Warnings & Weathe	r Watches	
no warnings or weath	er watches	
Kuwait Forecast		
Station	MIN °C REC	Max * EXP
KUWAIT CITY	11	18
KUWAIT AIRPORT	07	18
ABDALY	07	16
BUBYAN	08	16
JAHRA	09	17
FAILAKA ISLAND	09	16
SALMIYAH	12	16
AHMADI	10	17
JAL ALIYAH	07	15
QAROH ISLAND	15	17
UMM AL-MARADEM	14	17
NUWAISIB	10	19

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

Ophthalmologists

25622444

25752222

25321171

25739999

25757700

25732223

25732223

25644660

25311996

25731988

22620166

25651426

24719312

23926920

25730465

24555050 Ext 123

24555050 Ext 510

(ENT)

Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor

Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea

Dr. Masoma Habeeb

Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy

Dr Adnan Hasan Alwayl

Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly

Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali

Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah

Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary

Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz

Dr. Mohamme Y Majidi

Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem

Dr. Yousef Al-Omar

Dr. Kathem Maarafi

Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi

Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy

Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul

Dr. Leons Joseph

Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner

Dr. Mohammad Al-Daaory

Ear, Nose & Thro

Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel 25646478

General Pract

Urologist

Psychologists

/Psychotherapists

Dr. Mohsen Abel

	-4-	-6-		0
Expected Weather	sunny	sunny	clouds will increase	Cloudy + scattered thunder rain
Min Temp *C	07	06	08	09
Max Temp *C	19	19	18	15
Wind Direction	north westerly	north westerly to light variable	variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly later on	south easterly changing to north westerly later on
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 28	06 - 26	06 - 26	20 - 40

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah 25655528 24577781 Dr. Adnan Ebil Dr. Dina Abidallah Al-Refae 25333501 Dr. Mousa Khadada Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan 22641534 Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra 22639955 Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi 22616660 Dr. Mobarak Aldoub Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C) 25313120 Dr Nasser Behbehani 66703427 Soor Center Tel: 2290-1677

Fax: 2290 1688

PRIVATE CLINICS

Plastic Surgeons

Family Doctor

Psychiatrists

Gynaecologists & Obstetricians

General Surgeons

Internists, Chest & Heart

info@soorcenter.com

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Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf

Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari

Dr. Abdel Quttainah

Dr Divya Damodar

Dr. Esam Al-Ansari

Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan

Dr. Verginia s.Marin

Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan

Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly

Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer

Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher

Dr. Salem soso

Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami

DrAdrian arbe

eons		Paediatricia	ns
	22547272	Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
	22617700	Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
	25625030/60	Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
tor		Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
23	729596/23729581	Dr. Snaa Maaroof	25713514
sts		Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
	22635047	Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
	22613623/0	Dermatolog	ЭУ
bste	tricians	Dr. Mohammed Salam	
237	729596/23729581	Bern University	23845955
25	72-6666 ext 8321	Dentists	
	22655539	Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
i	25343406	Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
	25739272	Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
	22618787	Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer	22561444
ieon	s	Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
	22610044	Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
ner	25327148	Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
& H	eart	Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
	22639939	Neurologis	ts
	22666300	Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
	25728004	Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
	25355515	Gastrologis	ts
	24726446	Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
	25654300/3	Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
	2000-000/0	Dr. Foad Abidallah Al-Ali	22633135

Kaizen center

25716707

William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677

Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2015

KANYE AND KIM OFFERED \$2.5M FOR THE FIRST PHOTOGRAPHS OF THEIR SON

December 5 and since his birth, they have been inundated with offers from publications keen to show him off for the first time. According to TMZ, offers range from \$2 million to \$2.5 million and request the full family, including Saint's older sister North, two, to take part in a range of pictures, including candid group shots. However, insiders told the website the couple are "almost certain" they will reject all offers for the pictures. When North was born, Kanye, 38, showed off a selection of pictures of her

In ecouple welcomed little Saint into the world on on his mother-in-law Kris Jenner's now-defunct talk show, fuelling speculation that Saint's public debut will come on Kim's sister Khloe Kardashian's new programme 'Kocktails with Khloe', which launches in the new year. The family have already been seen in public together since Saint's birth, but during the visit to take the infant to the doctor last week, Kim, 35, and her rapper husband ensured he was kept fully covered and away from view in his car seat.





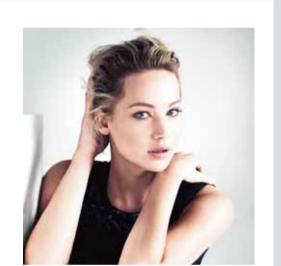
Weisz 'picks out' the Christmas traditions she likes

he 45-year-old actress - who is married to Daniel Craig and has a nineyear-old son, Henry, with ex-fiancÈ Darren Aronofsky - doesn't fully embrace all aspects of the festive season as she grew up in a Jewish household, but she does abide by some customs typical of the Christian holiday period. She said: "I grew up Jewish so when I was a kid, it was all about Hannukkah. "But these days I have a Christmas tree and do some of the other stuff. "I am not a very traditional person, so I just pick out the bits that I like. I like mid-

night mass and I like Christmas carols. "I do a very good 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing." When it comes to receiving gifts, Rachel loves a handmade present. She said: "I think the best present is something that has been made for you. "My best friend gave me a cushion in the shape of a cow, which she did herself with needlepoint and it was the most beautiful gift. "As far as I know, there was no symbolic meaning to the cow shape."

Keaton loves going on a road trip at Christmas

he 69-year-old actress - who is a single parent to adopted children Dexter, 20, and 15-year-old Duke - enjoyed a traditional holiday season when she was a child and though she had a good time, she now prefers her new family ritual of exploring California. She said: "What I love to do [at Christmas] is get into the car with the kids and our dog Emmy and drive up north to see the country. "When I was a kid, we had the whole traditional Christmas thing with the tree and the dinner and the aunts and cousins and I remember loving it. "But I also remember getting into the car with the family at other times and taking trips around California and I loved that too. "California is the best place in the world for me and I love to get out there. "Now I'm older, I'm swapping one tradition for another and we have the best time." The 'Christmas with the Coopers' star is fascinated by how different her daughter has grown up to be. She said: "Dexter is really interesting because she's so different to me. She's the managerial type and very practical. "She's good to have around because she likes to get everything just right. "Duke - well, he's such a guy and he likes, guess what, sports and guitars."







Roberts spends days in the kitchen during the holidays

children Hazel and Phinnaeus, 10, and Henry, eight, with husband Daniel Moder - admits one of her favorite things about the Christmas period is having the chance to try out new recipes and entertain other people with culinary delights. She said: "I love to cook anyway and the great thing about the holidays is that you have this perfect excuse to spend all day in the kitchen for days and days. "Not that I don't enjoy cooking every day for the five of us, but it's very exciting to

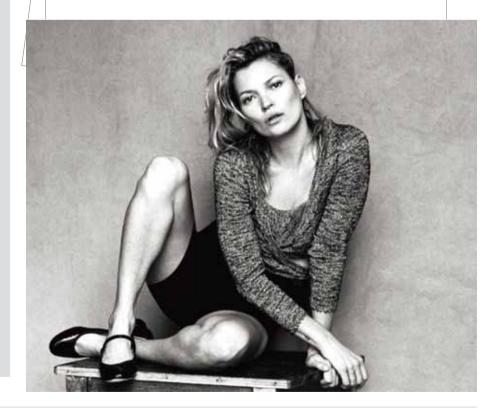
■he 'Money Monster' actress - who has get out the cookbooks and find things that are new and delicious and cook up an abundance of food for a big group of people." The 48-year-old star may enjoy trying new recipes over Christmas, but she also has old favorites which she goes back to every year. She said: "There's a particular Brussels sprout recipe that I have down. It requires shredding them to start with, which I think is the secret to delicious and palatable Brussels sprouts. "My husband really likes this and I make it every year."

Lawrence would never celebrate Christmas in LA

he 'Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2' actress resides in the city for work but always returns to her family in Kentucky for the festive season. She said: "I always go to Kentucky for Christmas - I can't imagine spending Christmas in LA." And the 25-year-old beauty loves the fact her father still dresses as Santa Claus every year and the whole family take part in the same festive ritual. She explained: "I have a couple of nephews now and Christmas is so much more fun when there's babies around. "We have a tradition over Christmas that my dad will dress up as Santa and then we all go, 'Oh my God, Santa has crashed his sleigh' and we run to the window and see my dad walk past. "We did that when I was little and I used to love it and now that my oldest nephew is four, he's old enough to do it too, so that'll be fun." Jennifer is especially excited about tucking into some of her mother's festive cooking. She said: "My mom always makes this amazing dish of mashed potato - she puts hot pepper into it and a thick layer of cheese and puts it into the oven and it's so good. "We have it every year with Christmas dinner."

he 41-year-old supermodel - who has a 13-year-old daughter, Lila, with ex-boyfriend Jefferson Hack - will be handing her loved ones some sparkling gifts, and hopes to receive something similar in return. She said: "I like jewels, to give and receive." Kate - who is rumored to be dating Nikolai Von Bismarck though she's still married to Jamie Hince - is planning a traditional family Christmas with her loved ones. She said: "I'll be at home with my family and friends. [We'll eat] roast turkey and all the trimmings." Though she thinks she throws the best festive parties, the stunning star will also be hoping for some relaxing time at home over the holiday period. She said: "My guilty pleasure is watching TV in bed." The British beauty has already been thinking about some simple resolutions for 2016. Asked her New Year's resolutions, she said: "Peace and love."

MOSS loves to give jewels at Christmas





TYGA has bought himself a \$200,000 Christmas gift

he 'Rack City' hitmaker - who recently reconciled with girlfriend Kylie Jenner was seen leaving a Lamborghini dealership driving a top-of-the-range Lamborghini Aventador super car. The vehicles usually retail at around \$200,000 so Tyga was clearly keen to splurge ahead of the festive season. However, his new purchase may raise some eyebrows as it has been rumored the rapper has money troubles. It was recently revealed he had failed to close on the purchase of his new home three times. The 'Ayo' hitmaker has been in escrow on a \$10 million, eight-bedroom prop-

Kylie and various members of her family live, but has reportedly come up with excuses every time the deal has been due to complete. The 26-year-old star had blamed being on the road or not getting paid for not having the cash to finalize the transaction but the news came just a few weeks after Tyga was reprimanded by a judge for not paying a settlement agreed with one of his dancers. Allison Brown sued the rapper for sexual battery as she claimed she was plied with alcohol and coerced to remove her top during a shoot on

erty in the Calabasas home close to where one of his music videos and alleged a man on the set groped one of her breasts. She and Tyga - who was the target of the action because he was in charge - settled for around \$50,000 but he only paid half so earlier this month a judge ordered him to pay the outstanding \$25,000, plus \$16,000 in lawyers fees. In addition, the rapper has an outstanding tax lien of over \$19,000 and owes his landlord \$70,000 in back rent.

<u> Kuwait Mimes</u>

LIFESTYLE Gossip



Price insists she's easy to buy presents for

Kieran Hayler always likes to "treat" her over the festive season and finds buying her a gift is never a problem because she rarely splashes out on herself throughout the year. Katie said: "I'm really easy to buy for." Kieran added: "Everyone must think Kate always buys herself designer shoes and handbags but she never does. "I like to treat her - in the past I've bought her Louboutins and a Louis Vuitton handbag with matching shoes, things

The 37-year-old former glamour model's husband like that." Katie will also be relying on Kieran to go shopping for gifts for their kids Jett, two, and Bunny, 16 months, and her children from past relationships, Harvey, 13, Junior, 10, and Princess, eight. She said: "It'll be Kieran who probably sorts the kids' presents. He thinks of thoughtful presents which they'll actually use and sits down and uses them with them." And the couple is reluctant to splash out on some of the things on the kids' wish lists. Katie said: "Princess wants an iPhone but she's not getting one. I've

told her she's too young." Kieran added: "They also like those new Megaboard things, but we're not sure about those either." Katie worries about the expense of having so many children during the festive season. She said: "These days they want iPads and expensive gadgets and they don't realize the cost. And when you've got five kids, you're just like, Jesus, where do you start?"

Jenner loves ex-wife's annual Christmas Eve party

he 'l Am Cait' star - who was known as Bruce Jenner before her transition earlier this year - will be joining the rest of her family at her former spouse's festive bash and can't wait to kick off the holiday season in style. Answering fan questions on her website, she said: "It's a great time for our family, a great time for all our close friends."It just really kicks off our holiday season perfectly and it certainly is a lot of fun." The 66-year-old former Olympian thinks Kris does a "beautiful" job of organizing the "spectacular" party. She said: "Probably the biggest tradition I have along with the rest of the family, is Kris - for the last 30 years - her Christmas Eve party is over the top spectacular." She does such a beautiful job with decorating the house. We've had the same Santa Claus for 25

years." Caitlyn went on to explain she had photos of daughters Kendall, 20, and Kylie, 18, as babies with the same Santa who still visits their house. While Caitlyn is looking forward to tonight's party, Kris is said to have scaled down the bash this year and planned a more intimate affair because daughter Kim Kardashian West and husband Kanye West are planning to bring their 19-day-old son Saint along, as well as two-year-old daughter North. A source told E! News: "They just wanted it more low key, especially because Kanye and Kim are there now with the baby."



he 36-year-old comic teamed up with basketball star Chris Paul for their second annual Holiday Takeover event at a Los Angeles branch of retailer Target and allowed the youngsters to splurge on new toys - so long as they also bought at least one gift for someone else. The children invited to take part were from several Los Angeles youth organizations, including the Brotherhood Crusade and the Boys & Girls Club. Chris tweeted a picture of himself and Kevin wearing Santa hats and posing with the children and wrote alongside the image: "Just surprised 300 kids with holiday gifts - on to the next location for 300 more! #ChrisAndKevinHolidayTakeover (sic)" And the two stars' generosity didn't end there as they dished out more goodies to youngsters with the help of toy brand Hasbro. Chris tweeted: "Thank you to @HasbroNews for helping @KevinHart4real and me give toys to over 900 kids for the holidays." The 'Get Hard' actor finds helping others is one of his favorite things about the holiday period. He posted on Instagram: "Me & @cp3 Holiday Takeover is putting smiles on Kids Faces all over Los Angeles. This is why I love the Holidays!!!! #MerryChristmas #SpreadLove #WeDoitForTheKids #GivingBack (sic)"

Tempah wanted to buy Katy B a Swegway

he 27-year-old rapper was unsure year, she said: "I don't want anything for what to get his 'Louder' collaborator but thought she'd appreciate one of the self-balancing vehicles, which are also known as hoverboards. Asked what he was And Tinie himself said he'd just like to have planning to buy Katy for Christmas, he all of his family together. He said: "I just recently told BANG Showbiz: "I don't know but I'm going to get her one. I don't know what should I get? I don't know, what would you get Katy B? Perfume?" And on the suggestion of buying her a Swegway, he agreed: "I'm going to get her Swegway. I'm going to do that." Regardless of what he chose for his pal, Katy was unlikely to be disappointed as she admitted she hadn't asked for anything special and was just looking forward to tucking into a Christmas dinner. Asked what she is hoping to be under the Christmas tree this

Christmas. I just enjoy spending time with my family, eating cooked dinner. "All I need is Yorkshire puddings and roast potatoes." want all of my siblings and my mum and dad to be under one roof, and for it to just be amazing and magical like when we were kids. "Everyone's getting older now, so everyone's just starting to get on with their own lives, so I'm looking forward to that."





Kimberly Wyatt will be doing 'lots of cooking' this Christmas

he former Pussycat Dolls singer is very excited about celebrating this year because her 12-month-old daughter Willow - who she has with husband Max Rogers - will be more aware of what's going on. She said: "It's Willow's second Christmas but she'll be more aware this year so we'll be able to celebrate it. "We are having it all at our house so I'll be cooking the meal having lots of friends and family over. Lots of cooking." The 33-year-old beauty hopes her little girl will like the special gift they've chosen her. She said: "She won't see this will she? We've got her a little car. "And we got her a doll house last year and we're having it built this year." Meanwhile, Kimberly has no idea what she'll be unwrapping from under the tree as Max has gone "off list" - and isn't feeling too confident about his choice. He exclusively told BANG Showbiz: "She hasn't asked for anything this year. I'm going off list. We'll see what happens. We'll be divorced by January." — Bangshowbiz





tyre can't wait for her festive holiday

he 21-year-old singer and boyfriend Lewi Morgan reached their first anniversary together in October but have been too busy to celebrate, and are looking forward to finally marking the occasion by jetting off to Mexico on Boxing Day. Asked how they celebrated their anniversary, she said: "We had to wait for the Christmas period, when it's a lot calmer and when everybody has disappeared off for a week or two. "I'm going to Mexico with Lew on Boxing Day, which I'm very excited about. "I think I'm more excited to be going to Mexico than I am about Christmas."It'll be nice to go and get some winter sunshine. "We've done work in different countries before

at the same time but that's not really a holiday." 2015 saw Ella scoop Best Female Act at the MOBO Awards and the 'Gravity' singer was thrilled to triumph in such a hotly-contested category. She said: "It's amazing. I never, ever expect anything. "It's always such a pleasure to be in such a strong category. There are so many strong female artists around. "I'm proud and flattered to be a part of that. I would much rather support them than feel like I'm against them. "I'm a big fan of all the girls in the industry and I will forever be championing that."

Teigen and Legend are expecting a baby girl

he couple has taken to their Instagram pages to share a new photo of the 30-year-old model on the cover of Vogue Thailand's January 2016 cover, revealing the picture was taken on the same day they discovered the gender of their unborn tot. Alongside the picture, Chrissy wrote: "A couple minutes after this shot, John and I learned we were having our little baby girl!" And her 36-year-old husband shared the same photo and wrote: "Chrissy's Vogue Thailand cover. From the day we found out we were pregnant with our baby girl." The 'All of Me' singer admitted earlier this month he and Chrissy knew the gender of their baby. He

said: Yeah, we know [the gender,]. "I hear tabloids are reporting. They don't know, but we know. And they have a 50 percent chance of being right. Maybe they're right, maybe they're wrong." But the couple is still deciding on a name for their offspring. He added "We don't have a name yet."We kind of go at it with our own process and think about the names that mean something to us. Some of them have family resonance. Some of them are for other sentimental reasons. "We'll just decide on our own taste and what means something to us."



<u> Kuwait Times</u>





This photo provided by Twentieth Century Fox shows, Jennifer Lawrence, from left, Robert De Niro, and Edgar Ramirez, in a scene from the film, "Joy."

Miracle Mops to movie stars: The real Joy dishes on **'Joy'**

Co then there was that time that Joy Mangano, "Miracle Mop" inventor and home shopping entrepreneur, was sitting at a meeting wedged between Jennifer Lawrence and Robert De Niro. And De Niro leaned over and said: "Joy, I have to talk to you. I have such a great idea for a product!"

Mangano continues the story, laughing: "And Jennifer is on the other side and she says, 'Bob, you can't ask her that. Everybody asks her that!" She won't say what the product idea was, but allows that when things eventually calm down with the movie, she and Bob will probably get around to discussing it. Late-night meetings with movie stars - oh yes, Bradley Cooper was there, too - isn't something Mangano ever envisioned, but life changed a few years back when she got a call telling her of plans for "Joy." The movie, directed by David O. Russell, tells the inspirational tale of a tenacious



Inventor Joy Mangano attends the world premiere of "Joy" at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York. — AP photos

Long Island mother who could barely support her family and then had one great idea that self-wringing mop - that launched an empire. But Mangano, 59, thinks the movie - on which she serves as executive producer - has a much more universal message that applies equally to women and men: "Be courageous to do what you're passionate about and know instinctively you should be doing, because if

ing. He knows more about me than anybody in the world - I would never need therapy!

AP: What do you think he found unique about your story?

Mangano: I've always had this inner resiliency. I grew up in an Italian family in an era where it was, 'When are you gonna get married and have children?' And throughout life, I was always taking care of everyone around me. And through the course of that, I lost ... I think we lose what we ARE. And then to find that again, and to go against all odds and have the courage to keep doing that - I wish everybody could be able to find that space within themselves. I feel like I grew wings when that happened!

AP: The movie is based on you but also some other businesswomen. Is it accurate about vour life?

Mangano: I will say that I SEVERELY inspire the movie. How many women do you know who invented the Miracle Mop?

AP: In the movie, Joy goes to QVC with her mop but it doesn't sell - until she insists that she herself go on camera to pitch it. Mangano: Yes, it was my own determination to

say: 'Put ME on with that mop, and the mop will

AP: So now you're making a new version of the Miracle Mop?

Mangano: Yes and I can promise you, the only thing harder than inventing is reinventing. I was possessed to keep this mop at the original price - \$19.95 - and I promise when you see it, you'll see why I say it should be \$50. I'm telling you, you're gonna sing and dance with this mop - even if you don't buy it!

AP: What do you think of Jennifer Lawrence playing you?

Mangano: What an honor, right? She has one of the wittiest minds. Within 10 minutes we were finishing each other's sentences. When we met - I don't know that I've told anybody this, but she looks at me, and my (three adult) children, and says, 'I've never seen a family as close as you all are. It reminds me of my family. That's something a 25-year old doesn't always pick up on.



Arab women turn trash into artistic works





Photo feature by Wassim Haidar

BEIRUT: Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian women refugees have joined hands to make 250 artistic pieces from recycled materials retrieved from trash bins. Up to 75 talented women took part in an exhibition, organized by the local society, "Al-Abaad," displaying their works, earning some money that help these cash-strapped females, particularly the Syrians and Palestinians, cope with living difficulties. The activity serves a double purpose; enabling these limited-income, but rather skillful, ladies put some cash in their pockets and promoting recycling, an environmental issue of great significance worldwide. - KUNA







you don't, you'll never have that achievement that you know is within you," she says. Mangano sat down last week to discuss her life and the film. The interview has been edited for clarity and length.

AP: How did you first hear about plans for "Joy"?

Mangano: The telephone rings and it's a producer (whom Mangano had met years earlier), and he says, 'Hi, Joy, we're here because we're going to make a movie about your life story. And then David called, and I remember it was in the afternoon, and he said 'I just want to talk for a few minutes, and when we hung up it was absolutely pitch black out. And that was the beginning of many hundreds of hours of talk-

AP: What do you most want people to take away from the film?

Mangano: I've had so many people saying afterward, 'There's something I was going to do and I never did, and now I'm gonna do it.' I feel like people are going to want to climb mountains when they get out of this movie. — AP







Calvin Klein

'45 Years' a devastating time bomb

ow many great movies could be written across the enigmatic, profound face of Charlotte Rampling? Hundreds? Thousands? At any rate, Andrew Haigh's "45 Years" is one of them.

In it, Rampling stars as half of a childless couple - Kate and Geoff (Tom Courtenay) Mercer - preparing to celebrate their 45th anniversary. In minutes, we can already feel jealousy welling in us from snapshots of their peaceful, harmonious lives in rural England: dog walks, drinking tea and taking leisurely trips into town.

That such appearances of elderly tranquility are not what they seem is one of the notions upended by "45 Years." A letter arrives for Geoff with startling news that the frozen body of the woman he dated before meeting Kate has been found in a Swiss glacier where she died in an accident while traveling with Geoff more than 50 years ago. "Like something in the freezer," mumbles an astonished Geoff. "She'd look like what she did in 1962," he says. "And I look like this."

The news unsettles Geoff, transporting him back to his mid-20s self, unmooring an iceberg of the past. Confessions follow, revealing a deeper history than Kate was before aware. She watches with increasing alarm as her husband begins smoking again and rummaging around the attic late at night for pictures of his old flame. Their previously rock-solid relationship is suddenly beset with fissures and tremors erupted by a history that isn't so ancient, after all.

Haigh, who is 42, has made the HBO series "Looking" and the excellent independent film "Weekend." That movie dealt with two gay men whose one-night stand is extended across a weekend, during which a remarkable intimacy accumulates as they examine their night together and contemplate their connection.

For Haigh, relationships are forged in a moment, crystallized in the circumstances of their beginnings. Kate and Geoff may be in their 70s, but their marriage is still built upon - and haunted by - whatever brought them together in their 20s. Old age has done far less to change them than most would think.

The devastating power of "45 Years," which Haigh adapted from David Constantine's short story "In Another Country," lies in the director's sensitive understanding of relationships: of the conversations that take place over pillows and the quiet contemplation of fates abandoned in marriage.

But it's Haigh's tremendous lead actors that make the movie. They're a convincing couple: Courtenay is absentminded and untidy; Rampling is cool and controlled. As Kate sees a new rival to her husband rise from the dead, the anxieties and confusions flicker across Rampling's face. Turmoil stirs beneath her chilly stillness.

If going to see "45 Years" (and you should), choose your date wisely. After the film's haunting final shot, you're likely to be exiting the theater wondering just how well you really know the companion next to you. "45 Years," an IFC Films release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "language and brief sexuality." Running time: 95 minutes. Four stars out of four. — AP

round

Iransparent. Ephemeral. Calvin Klein round. A luminous bracelet accented by geometric cut-out details simultaneously reveals and conceals the wrist of the wearer. This light and refined timepiece is offered in polished stainless steel, PVD yellow or PVD pink gold and either a black, silver or mirror dial. Calvin Klein round is finished with a "Calvin Klein" logo at 12 o'clock.



This photo provided by Agatha A. Nitecka shows Tom Courtenay, left, as Geoff and Charlotte **Rampling as Kate in Andrew** Haigh's film, "45 Years". — AP



Tongue in cheek, Miss Universe Merry Easter y'all Merry Easter y'all Merry Easter y'all

Steve Harvey, the man who famously gave the Miss Universe crown to the wrong contestant, has now offered the world Easter greetings — on Christmas Day. "Merry Easter, y'all!" ran the caption to a picture of smiling Harvey, smoking a cigar and flashing a peace sign. The picture was posted Friday on Harvey's social media accounts.

Harvey poked fun at himself-and his gaffes-in his first public appearance since the high-profile fiasco. Harvey, a 58 year-old comedian and talk show host, misread his cue card in front of a global television audience at the Miss Universe pageant on December 20 and announced that Miss Colombia, Ariadna Gutierrez, had triumphed.

Moments later he apologized and announced

Miss Philippines, Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach, was the actual winner. Harvey apologized on Twitter for what he called "an honest mistake," but identified the women as "Miss Philippians and Miss Columbia." He quickly corrected the spelling mistakes and deleted the tweet.

Viewers can expect to see a lot more of him: "Steve Harvey Signs Multi-Year Deal to Host Miss Universe" ran the headline on the website Comedyhype.com. Harvey posted a link to the site on his Facebook page.

The contract was signed just before the pageant aired, and the deal "is for at least three years, possibly even as many as six or seven," read the brief text, quoting an ET Online story. After the pageant mixup several people took to Twitter to

claim that the affair was a publicity stunt aimed at boosting both Harvey and the event's sagging TV ratings.

"I generally don't buy into conspiracy theories, but this is the most attention the Miss Universe pageant has gotten since, well, ever," said newspaper sportswriter Les East. "Steve Harvey's mistake was all a conspiracy created for two purposes: Make Miss Universe relevant again. Make Steve Harvey relevant again," another tweet said. The online magazine Salon dismissed the doubters as "Miss Universe truthers"-an American term for conspiracy theory devotees-that "show how paranoid we've become." — AFP





In this Monday, Dec 8, 1997, file photo, actor Robert Downey Jr listens to Municipal Judge Lawrence Mira in a Malibu, California, courtroom before being sentenced to six months in jail for violating parole on a prior drug conviction. — AP

Robert Downey Jr pardoned in drug case

he governor of California pardoned Robert Downey Jr. on Thursday for a nearly 20-year-old felony drug conviction that led to the Oscar-nominated actor's imprisonment for roughly a year. Downey was among 91 people granted pardons for criminal convictions after demonstrating they had rehabilitated themselves and been out of custody for at least 10 years, Gov Jerry Brown's office announced.

The pardon does not erase records of a conviction but is a public proclamation that the person has remained out of trouble and demonstrated exemplary behavior, according to material on Brown's website. Downey, once a courthouse mainstay for a series of drugrelated arrests, has become one of Hollywood's greatest success stories for career and addiction rehabilitation. Since 2008, Downey has portrayed "Iron Man" in a series of Disney blockbuster films, including "The Avengers," based on the Marvel comic books. The 50-year-old actor is a two-time Oscar nominee for his roles in 1992's "Chaplin" and 2008's "Tropic Thunder." Downey's legal troubles began in June 1996 when he was stopped for speeding on Pacific Coast Highway and authorities found cocaine, heroin and a pistol in his vehicle.

getting a judge to issue a certificate of rehabilitation, according to a proclamation released by Brown's office. It said Downey has "lived an honest and upright life, exhibited good moral character, and conducted himself as a law-abiding citizen." An email sent to Downey's agent Jim Toth and a call to his attorney Blair Berk were not immediately returned.

The Democratic governor, a former Jesuit seminarian, has made it a practice to issue pardons around Christian holidays. The state's longest-serving governor has now issued 1,087 pardons, including 683 in the past five years and 404 during his first eight years in office from 1975-1983, according to his office.

Legendary sci-fi writer **George Clayton Johnson** dead at 86

George Clayton Johnson, the legendary science-fiction writer who authored the first "Star Trek" television episode and several classic stories for the popular 1960s TV show "The Twilight Zone," died on Christmas Day. He was 86. Johnson, who also co-wrote the dark futuristic tale "Logan's Run," died of cancer in Los Angeles on Thursday afternoon, his son, Paul B Johnson, told The Associated Press on Friday.

"Please emphasize how much he loved his fans, and judging by the overwhelming response I've received, from hundreds of people, known and unknown, he made quite an impact on them," said his son, who has been deluged with calls, emails and social media postings in recent days.

Although not widely known outside of science-fiction circles, Johnson was revered among fans of the genre for his work, which also included collaborating with Ray Bradbury on the 1962, Oscar-nominated, animated short film "Icarus Montgolfier Wright."

A popular figure at science-fiction conventions for decades, the soft-spoken but friendly author was instantly recognizable for his long, flowing white hair and beard, as well as what might best be described as his hippie attire.

"He is not one of those guys who uses his celebrity as such," his son had recently told the AP. "He'll give the same attention to a young aspiring writer who wants to know how to get into the business as he would a famous producer he knows or someone he was friends with like Ray Bradbury." Johnson's best-known science-fiction work was likely "Logan's Run," cowritten as a novel with William F. Nolan in 1967 and released as a film in 1976.

The dystopian story envisions a futuristic society in which young people live idyllic lives inside an enclosed dome but with one catch - they are executed when they turn 30. One of them, Logan, is a so-called "sandman" whose job is to track down and kill those who attempt to avoid their ritualistic executions. His superiors, curious why the others want to run away, falsify his personal records, advancing his age to 29, then send him off to find those who don't return.

The book was adapted into an Oscar-nominated film star-

could have beaten him. When Klugman's character does win he's forced to spend his eternity defending the title from other young upstarts while Winters' character goes off fishing.

"Nothing in the Dark" which starred a young Robert Redford as a kindly version of the Grim Reaper, was one of Johnson's favorite stories, according to his son. In it Redford's character has arrived to take an elderly woman, but he doesn't reveal himself until he's assured her that death is nothing to fear.



Johnson's most prominent mainstream work was "Ocean's 11," the 1960 film about a Las Vegas casino heist that starred Frank Sinatra and his Rat Pack buddies Sammy Davis Jr., Dean Martin and Peter Lawford. He and fellow writer Jack Golden Russell created the story, which has resulted so far in a remake and two sequels, each starring Brad Pitt and George Clooney.

In 1966, Johnson wrote "The Man Trap," the premiere episode of "Star Trek" that introduced audiences to the crew of the USS Enterprise, including now familiar characters Capt.

In 1999, he was sent to prison for roughly a year after he acknowledged violating his probation. Downey obtained the pardon after

Most of those pardoned Thursday were convicted of drug and property crimes, though three were convicted of arson, one of kidnapping and one of vehicular manslaughter. Three were convicted of assaults using deadly weapons and one of carjacking with a BB gun. Many are now residents of other states. The hundreds of pardons Brown has issued in each of his four terms are typical except for his three immediate predecessors. Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger granted 15, Democrat Gray Davis granted none, and Republican Pete Wilson granted 13. — AP ring Michael York as Logan and Jenny Agutter as a fellow runner. It also included a brief but memorable appearance by a young Farrah Fawcett. It was followed by a short-lived TV series, and for years there has been talk of a remake. Before "Logan's Run" Johnson also created several of the best episodes of The Twilight Zone."

Star Trek and Twilight Zone

One that dealt poignantly with aging was "Kick the Can," in which a group of elderly rest-home residents turn back their biological clocks and relive their childhoods by playing that simple children's game. The story, which first aired on television in 1962, was retold in 1983's "Twilight Zone: The Movie," in a segment directed by Steven Spielberg.

In another "Twilight Zone" episode, titled "A Game of Pool," Jonathan Winters is the late Fats Brown, the greatest pocket billiards player who ever lived, and who comes back to life to challenge Jack Klugman's upstart young hustler who boasts he James T. Kirk and Mr. Spock. Born July 29, 1929, in Cheyenne, Wyo., George Clayton Johnson served in the Army before studying drafting in college.

He eventually moved to Los Angeles where he worked as a draftsman for the Lockheed aviation company while moonlighting as a writer. Soon after quitting his day job to pursue writing full-time, he connected with another prominent "Twilight Zone" writer, Charles Beaumont, who introduced him to the show's creator, Rod Serling.

Over the years Johnson also had a handful of small roles in quirky films such as "The Intruder," which starred William Shatner, "The Boneyard Collection" and "Her Morbid Diaries." His last film appearance was in 2013's "Saint Bernard." In addition to his son, Johnson is survived by a daughter, Judy Olive, and his wife, Lola Johnson. — AP



Volunteer Patty Shook takes a phone call from a child asking where Santa is and when he will deliver presents to her home, inside a phone-in center during the annual NORAD Tracks Santa Operation, at the North American Aerospace Defense Command, at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. — AP photos



NORAD and US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) Chief of Staff Major Gen Charles D Luckey joins other volunteers taking phone calls from children around the world asking where Santa is and when he will deliver presents to their homes, inside a phone-in center during the annual NORAD Tracks Santa Operation

US military 'tracks' St Nick storybook flight for 60th year

or the 60th consecutive year, the North American Aerospace Defense Command will continue its tradition of telling youngsters the location of Kris Kringle on his annual storybook world tour. The so-called Santa Tracker's hub is at Colorado's Peterson Air Force base, where hundreds of volunteers will be answering calls from an estimated 125,000 children around the globe looking for Santa's whereabouts.

In places like Alaska, however, remote NORAD identification technicians who monitor computer screens 24 hours a day for possible air incursions also spend Christmas Eve serving as official Santa "trackers." The technicians in Canada and the US report "sightings" of a sleigh full of toys pulled by flying reindeer, said Tech. Sgt. John Gordinier, an Alaska NORAD spokesman. "It's one of the largest military community relations events we have," Gordinier said.

How does NORAD track Santa?

A system of radar stations and satellites monitor all air traffic entering US and Canadian airspace. All aircraft have a code to identify themselves. If an aircraft doesn't have a code, Gordinier said, NORAD can scramble jets to see who it is and what they're doing. Luckily, Santa is good at keeping in touch with NORAD, Gordinier said. "When he pops up, we call him Big Red One," he said. "That's his call sign." The nose on Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer is a tipoff. It gives off an infrared signature similar to a missile launch, Gordinier said.

What is Santa's route?

On his mythical journey, Santa generally departs the North Pole, flies to the international date line over the Pacific Ocean, then begins deliveries in island nations. He then works his way west in the Northern and Southern hemispheres. Alaska is usually his last stop before heading home, Gordinier said.

How do children participate?

Starting at 10 p.m. Alaska time on Dec 23, and for 23 hours covering most of Christmas Eve, children can call a toll-free number, 877-446-6723 (877-Hi-NORAD) and speak to a live phone operator about Santa's whereabouts. They can also send an email to noradtracksanta@outlook.com. NORAD has 157 telephone lines and hundreds of volunteers ready to answer calls, including first lady Michelle Obama, who takes a break from her Hawaii vacation to take forwarded calls. NORAD also created a website, www.noradsanta.org; a Facebook page, www.facebook.com/noradsanta; and a Twitter account @NoradSanta for the program. The sites include games, movies and music. "Santacams" stream videos from various locations.

How did NORAD get involved with tracking Santa?

A 1955 newspaper advertisement for Sears Roebuck and

Co. listed a phone number for "kiddies" to call Santa Claus but got it wrong. The number was for a crisis phone at Air Operations Center at Continental Air Defense Command, NORAD's predecessor, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Air Force Col Harry Shoup took a call from a child and thought he was being pranked. When he figured out he was talking to a little boy, he pretended he was Santa. More children called. Shoop eventually instructed airmen answering the phone to offer Santa's radar location as he crossed the globe. That sparked the tradition that is heading into its 60th year. — AP



Visitors watch fireworks next to a 38 meter Christmas tree at a shopping center in Jakarta on December 25, 2015. — AFP

Dying art? A recipe to save Hong Kong's handmade dim sum

HONG KONG: For the past 60 years, Chui Hoi has risen in the early hours of the morning to prepare bite-size steamed morsels for his small but popular dim sum restaurant in Hong Kong. "Sun Hing" opens its doors at 3:00 am, seven days a week, with a loyal clientele from students to the elderly filling the 60seat restaurant in the western district of Kennedy Town

At 85 years old, Chui is committed to handmaking his dim sum-parcels of meat, seafood and sweet fillings served in stacks of bamboo baskets-saying that freshness is key to their success. But many in the industry fear the traditional art of making dim sum is dying as restaurants choose factory-made versions to save money and meet demand. "Fresh handmade foods are beautiful after they are steamed, but many are made in factories now," says Chui.

Younger chefs are less interested in the hard graft it takes to prepare dim sum, he adds-it is usually eaten in the morning, so cooks must get up in the night to prepare. "Young people think being in this industry means no freedom because you have to get up early and the hours are long," he said.

At Maxim's Palace in the harborfront City Hall building-a favorite with locals and tourists-chandeliers sparkle over dim sum diners in the buzzing banqueting hall. But, like Chui, Maxim's supervising chef Tang Leung-hung says there is a dearth of young talent to produce its handmade fare.

"The problem with the industry is the manpower. Young people are not willing to join us," he said. "Many of them have turned to hotels' western restaurants and sushi restaurants for jobs instead of Chinese ones," says Tang, with younger people seeing them as more fashionable and with better hours.

Teenage hopes

Dim sum-which means "touching the heart"-is a Cantonese-style cuisine from southern China, often served with pots of tea. Typical dishes vary from parcels of ground pork and shrimp "siu mai" to sweet treats including custard buns and "ma lai go" steamed sponge cake.

Once mainly part of a leisurely weekend ritual which could take hours, many dim sum joints in Hong Kong now have a guickfire approach, including takeaway kiosks inside subway stations. With demand growing and rental costs high, mass-produced buns and dumplings imported from mainland China are a way to up the volume and cut costs. But there are those who are actively seeking to prevent a culinary art from dying out.

In the kitchen of Hong Kong's famous five-star Peninsula hotel, teenagers don chefs' whites to knead dough and fill intricate parcels as part of a cooking contest. "We need to attract youngsters to join this trade. Craftsmanship is what is needed," says Frankie Tang, executive chef of the Peninsula's Spring Moon Restaurant and organizer of the contest.

Of the five finalists making dim sum from scratch, 17-year-old Wu Cheng-long won after making dishes including crunchy lotus-seed pastry and a spring roll filled with fruit. "We should make people not forget (how to make) dim sum. We should continue to develop this tradition," said Wu, who won HK\$25,000 (US\$3,200) cash and a one-year apprenticeship at the hotel.

Cultural heritage

There is also hope among the city's food experts, who say dim sum's enduring popularity at home and

increasing appeal abroad will inspire young chefs. Several of the city's local dim sum restaurants have received international accolades, including Michelin stars.

"The tradition (of eating dim sum) is still thriving... On Father's Day, for example, you don't go to a western fast food restaurant, you go to 'yum cha'' says Hong Kong food blogger KC Koo. "Yum cha"-Cantonese for "drink tea"-is the name for the meal during which dim sum are eaten, washed down by hot tea.

Koo adds that it is important to preserve the handmade tradition as it is a key facet of Cantonese culture. "I have confidence that there will be new blood as the market is there," he said. Back at "Sun Hing", the elder Chui's 48-year-old son Chui Kwok-hing is following in his father's footsteps. "I come in at 1:30 am. Sometimes I feel like I have migrated to another country as the hours are upside down," he says of the exhausting routine.

But he sees a reason for waking up in the dark. "People like to have dim sum in the morning, to be energized with some tea before going to work," he said. "I feel happy when people think the food is delicious." He adds that he wants to preserve the restaurant's hard-won reputation. "My dad is already 85years-old but he still works here-as the young generation, we should try to be even better." — AFP

In this photograph taken on November 12, 2015 a waitress serves baskets of dim sum on a trolley in a restaurant in Hong Kong.





A cook standing in the kitchen of the Sun Hing restaurant.



Bamboo steamer baskets are seen in a kitchen during a local dim sum contest. A participant is seen in a kitchen during a local dim sum contest.

