THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Deputy Amir receives Dr Saleh Al-Ujairi



S Korea, Japan strike deal on 'comfort women'



Cameron visits flood-hit **British city** of York



Messi, Barca win big at Globe Soccer Awards



SAUDIS RAISE FUEL, UTILITY PRICES AMID \$98BN DEFICIT

KINGDOM VOWS REFORMS AFTER RECORD BUDGET SHORTFALL

05° Min **Max** 20°

High Tide

01:10 & 15:20 **Low Tide**

08:48 & 20:42

BAHRAIN CABINET OKS NEW DIESEL, KEROSENE PRICES

UAE CUTS FUEL PRICES

DUBAI: Bahrain's cabinet has approved a new pricing system for diesel and kerosene that is set to begin in January, state news agency BNA reported yesterday. The new pricing system is expected to result in a "gradual increase" in the cost of both fuels to domestic customers in the coming years, as Bahrain adjusts its prices to reflect expected rises in other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

"Bahrain continues to preserve its competitiveness with the GCC even after the adjustment of prices in diesel and kerosene and will observe the gradual increase in diesel fuel and kerosene over the coming years," said the statement, attributed to the kingdom's energy minister, Abdul Hussein bin Ali Mirza. The pricing system comes after a detailed study with the relevant authorities and parliamentary committees in the kingdom "tasked with looking at subsidies and growing government revenues", said the statement. The decision will benefit Bahrain's national economy and, at the same time, preserve the interest of citizens, the statement added.

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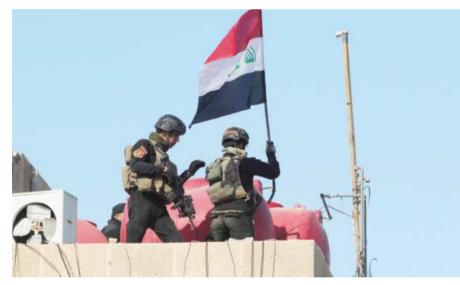


RIYADH: Saudi Arabia announced a record budget deficit and cuts to fuel and utility subsidies yesterday as the oil powerhouse suffers from the drastic fall in crude prices. Petrol prices in the kingdom were to rise by more than 50 percent on some products from today, authorities said, after the world's largest crude exporter said it had posted a deficit of \$98 billion in 2015. Riyadh also projected a shortfall of \$87 billion in next year's budget, the first since King Salman took over the country in January.

The finance ministry said in a statement that revenues in 2015 were estimated at 608 billion riyals (\$162 billion), the lowest since 2009 when oil prices dived as a result of the global financial crisis. Income for 2015 was 15 percent lower than projections and 42 percent less than in 2014, after oil prices fell by more than 60 percent since mid-2014 to below \$40 a barrel. The dive is largely due to Saudi Arabia's own policies and those of other OPEC nations, who are refusing to cut oil production as they seek to drive less-competitive players, including US shale producers, out of the market.

Spending this year came in at \$260 billion, the ministry said, almost equal to 2013 expenditures and down 6.6 percent from 2014. The 2015 deficit is the highest in the history of Saudi Arabia, which relies on oil for 90 percent of public revenues, but was not as big as some expected. The International Monetary Fund had projected the 2015 deficit to be around \$130 billion and other reports also put it above \$100 billion. The 2016 budget projects revenues at \$137 billion, the lowest since 2009, and spending at \$224 billion, slightly below 2015 projections of \$229 billion. Saudi Arabia normally overspends its budget projections by around 20 percent.

Continued on Page 13



RAMADI: Members of Irag's elite counter-terrorism service place the national flag yesterday on the roof of a building of the government complex after they recaptured this city. — AFP

IRAQI FLAG RAISED ABOVE RAMADI GOVT COMPLEX

RAMADI: Iraq declared the city of Ramadi armed forces of the counter-terrorism liberated from the Islamic State group yesterday and raised the national flag over its government complex after clinching a landmark victory against the jihadists. Fighters brandishing rifles danced in the Anbar provincial capital as top commanders paraded through the streets after recapturing the city they lost to IS in May. Pockets of jihadists may remain but the army said it no longer faced any resistance and that its main task was to defuse the countless bombs and traps IS left behind. "Ramadi has been liberated and the

service have raised the Iraqi flag above the government complex," Brigadier General Yahya Rasool announced on state television. The former government headquarters in Ramadi was the epicentre of the fighting but Iraqi forces did not rush in when IS pulled out because the entire area was rigged. "Daesh has planted more than 300 explosive devices on the roads and in the buildings of the government complex," said Brigadier General Majid al-Fatlawi of the army's 8th division.

Continued on Page 13

SYRIA TOWNS SEE RARE EVACUATIONS

DEADLY BLASTS HIT HOMS

OUTRAGE AFTER EGYPT TROOPS KILL GAZA MAN

TURKEY CAUTIONS ISRAEL

GAZA: Palestinians in Gaza and on social media have expressed outrage over the death of a naked man who was shot as he crossed from the Gaza Strip into Egypt. Video has spread online purporting to show the man walking in the Mediterranean surf and crossing the posts and fencing marking the border between the Palestinian enclave and Egypt. Egyptian guards open fire, while someone who appears to be part of the Gazan security forces appears to wave and signal to those shooting to stop because the man is mentally unstable.

The video, taken on Thursday, later shows the man's body on the shore. The Egyptian army has so far not commented on the incident. Officials from Hamas, the Islamist movement that rules the Gaza Strip, say he suffered from mental illness, though the father of the Gazan man has been quoted as saying he did not. The hashtag "Why did they kill him?" has since spread on social media and several dozen Gazans demonstrated on Sunday to demand Egypt return the man's body to his family.

Gaza has been under an Israeli blockade since 2006, while its sole crossing with Egypt has been largely closed since the summer of 2013, when

Continued on Page 13

BEIRUT: A rare UN-backed deal between Syria's warring sides saw hundreds of fighters and civilians evacuate three towns yesterday, as bomb blasts in the regime-held city of Homs killed at least 19 people. President Bashar al-Assad's regime has agreed to several ceasefires with rebel groups in the past but yesterday's evacuation plan was one of the most elaborate in the nearly five-year war. The United Nations has been push-

ing for such local deals as global powers

pursue wider efforts to resolve a conflict that left more than 250,000 dead and forced millions from their homes.

More than 450 fighters and civilians, including the wounded, began leaving three flashpoint areas in Syria as part of a six-month truce reached in September. At least 120 people, including rebels and some civilians, crossed from the last rebel bastion on the Syrian border into

Lebanese territory yesterday, an AFP **Continued on Page 13**



MASNAA, Lebanon: Syrians and Lebanese wave and flash victory signs as a convoy carrying wounded Syrian opposition fighters leaves this Lebanese border crossing point yesterday. — AP

ROWLETT, Texas: Pam Russell (left) rescues her cat Larue from her damaged home on Delta Drive on Sunday, a day after a tornado hit the area. — AP

WILD US WEATHER KILLS 43

CHICAGO: Floods and tornadoes killed at least 43 people in the southern and midwestern United States during the Christmas holiday, with forecasters warning yesterday that blizzards and freezing rain would add to the misery. Hundreds of people in Texas were struggling to rebuild homes damaged or destroyed by rare but extremely powerful December twisters as residents of Alabama and Florida were warned they could be next. Millions of people trying to get home after Christmas were stranded by the bad weather, which grounded flights and buried major highways and roadways in snow, ice and floodwaters.

Officials pleaded with people to be wary of flash flooding after several cars were swept off roadways and to be wary of slick conditions following freezing rain. Over 1,100 US flights were canceled and another 1,650 were delayed yesterday morning, according to tracking service FlightAware. Airports were already overwhelmed by frustrated travelers after some 1,640 flights were scrapped and more than 6,400 delayed Sunday as the storm system essentially shut down airports in Texas.

Hardest hit yesterday was the major hub of Chicago,

where freezing rain and gusting winds grounded over 450 flights, according to FlightAware. The National Weather Service said more than 20 states - from Texas to as far north and east as Maine - were under a weather watch or warning. Over a foot 30 cm of snow was expected in some areas and flash flooding and freezing rain in others. The powerful storm system fueled by unseasonably warm air that began in the deep south Wednesday had already dumped as much as 104 cm of snow in parts of New Mexico and 10 inches of rain in parts of Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas the

weather service said. The governors of New Mexico, Texas and Missouri declared states of emergency for all or parts of their states Sunday to better handle storm damage. Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia also took similar measures. At least 11 people were killed over the weekend as tornadoes struck the heavily populated Dallas area in Texas. The rare December twisters flattened homes, knocked cars off highways and flipped big-rig trucks like toys. The NWS said that at least nine twisters touched down in the region late Saturday.

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Dr Saleh Mohammad Al-Ujairi. — KUNA



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Head of the National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets President of the National Security Apparatus Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Crown Prince receives Dr Saleh Al-Ujairi, officials

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and President of the National Security Apparatus Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday Dr Saleh Mohammad Al-Ujairi. His Highness Also received Deputy Head of the National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah,

Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and Sheikh Salem Abdulaziz Al-Saud Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, Speaker of National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem received in his office members of offices of the National Union of

Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) in the US and the United Kingdom.

Amir condoles with Obama

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences yesterday to US President Barack Obama over victims of tornadoes, thunderstorm and floods that engulfed

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed his hope that the US could overcome effects of these natural disasters, wishing a speedy recovery to the injured. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to Obama. — KUNA

KUWAIT KEEN ON SAFEGUARDING FREEDOMS: KWA SECRETARY GENERAL

ABU DHABI: The State of Kuwait devotes special concern for safeguarding freedoms namely liberties of expression and rights of literary creators and intellectuals, affirmed the Secretary General of Kuwait Writers Association (KWA).

Adopting such an approach, Kuwait has revamped its legislations to ensure such liberties since early last century, Talal Al-Rumaidhi, said late on Sunday while taking part in the 26th conference of the Arab Writers (AWH). As a result of enacting the freedoms' laws, Kuwait has occupied a pioneering and distinguished status on the regional cultural and literary map.

Provisions of the Kuwait Constitution explicitly stipulates ensuring the freedom of expressing and safeguarding individuals' liberties that constitute basis for literary and cultural creativity, said Rumaidhi, who took part in a seminar held as part of the broad convention, tackling "the crisis of concepts about human freedoms and liberties." Rumaidhi, who spoke during the seminar about phased development of these legislations, added that the "atmosphere of freedoms prevailing in the State of Kuwait since years ago has led to creation of a growing and creative cultural status, impact of which has reached various Arab states and portrayed a civilized image about the Kuwaiti creator and author'

Boosting concepts such as "responsible freedoms" in Kuwait, along with legislative means that regulate the public and private freedoms constitute some of the most eminent factors that back up the "cultural and innovative life," he said, also noting that these regulations are in harmony with the Kuwaiti people's religious and social beliefs and values.

Cultural activities in Kuwait have not been restricted to Kuwaiti innovators; as there have been a large number of Arab intellectual figures who have taken part in the process, benefiting from the freedoms in the literary sector, Rumaidhi said.

Arab libraries are rich in Kuwaiti literary and cultural books and publications, he mentioned as a tangible proof of the significant development of the sector. The seminar ended with poetry reciting by the Kuwaiti poet Mohammad Al-Bghaili, who addressed patriotic issues, Arab unity and various humanitarian and social topics.

The conference, inaugurated by UAE's Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al-Nahyan, features some cultural seminars, scientific lectures and sessions of poetry. About 16 representatives from Arab countries, a delegation of Secretariat of AWU and a delegation from Uganda are participating in the event. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah meets Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Abdulmalik Al-Mekhlafi. — KUNA

KUWAITI AUTHORITIES CARE **MUCH FOR YEMENIS: MINISTER**

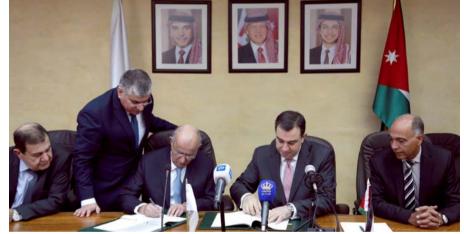
KUWAIT: The Yemeni community in Kuwait enjoys all possible care and support from State authorities, affirmed the Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister yesterday.

The authorities are keen on resolving difficulties that may face the Yemenis in Kuwait within framework of the deep-rooted relations that bond the two countries, said Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as cited in a statement released by the Ministry of Interior's

Security Information Department.

Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al-Khaled made the statement during a meeting with the visiting Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdulmalik Al-Mekhlafi, and officials accompanying him. The official statement added that the two sides discussed security issues of common concern and means of solidifying bilateral ties between Kuwait and Yemen. The Kuwaiti-Yemeni talks dealt with regional issues, it

said, adding that the two parties affirmed necessity of coordination, namely in the security domain, with aim of training and sharpening skills of Yemeni personnel, "as a priority at present for Yemen to restore security for the people. The meeting was attended by Interior Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad, Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Homeland Aziz Al-Daihani and State of Kuwait's Ambassador to Yemen Fahad Al-Mai'. — KUNA



AMMAN: AFESD Director General and Chairman of the Board of Directors Abdlatif Al-Hamad, and Jordan's Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Imad Fakhoury sign the agreements. — KUNA

AFESD, JORDAN SIGN \$70.6 MILLION AGREEMENTS

AMMAN: The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) and Jordan signed yesterday two loan agreements and one grant for \$70.6 million to fund development projects in Jordan. The agreements were signed by Director General and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Arab Fund Abdlatif Yousef Al-Hamad, and by Jordan's Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Imad Fakhoury.

Hamad said that Jordan has been struggling with economic challenges due to the Syrian refugees and many other reform programs; however, it has been exerting all efforts to face these obstacles by setting up various social and economic projects.

Fakhoury, meanwhile, explained that the \$1 million grant will be allocated to purchase a weather radar and all of its applications for meteorological department. One of the loans, worth \$19.6 million, will go to developing the infrastructure in Petra in order to activate its tourism sector. The second, worth \$50 million, will fund medium to small businesses as a solution to combat unemployment.

Fakhoury expressed his appreciation to AFESD's unwavering support to Jordan's efforts to improve its economy. From 1975 to 2015, the AFESD funded and built 46 primary development projects in Jordan that amounted to \$1.9 billion. Grants given during the same period reached \$46 million. In addition, the AFESD funded a number of medium to small enterprises through concessional loans that amounted to \$80 million. — KUNA

AMBASSADOR LAUDS BAHRAIN'S INVESTMENT **ENVIRONMENT**

MANAMA: Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah lauded Bahrain's development and attractive investment atmosphere. Bahrain's flexible economic policies and legislations contribute to encouraging successful investments in the country, Sheikh Azzam said in a press statement yesterday following the opening of the "Chinese Dragon City", which the country's biggest private and urban development project.

He pointed out Kuwaiti investors could also benefit from available venture opportunities in Bahrain. The \$100 million "Chinese Dragon City" is a major retail project in the western part of Diyar Al Muharraq. The Dragon City offers unique wholesale and retail opportunities to local consumers, trade customers and tourists. — KUNA



MANAMA: Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah (right) attends the opening of the Chinese Dragon City. — KUNA

'KUWAIT TV WOOS MORE VIEWERS'

KUWAIT: The number of Kuwait Television watchers climbed by 43 percent in October 2015, as compared to the same period of last year, a senior information official said yesterday. Yousef Mustafa, the Assistant Undersecretary for Television Affairs, attributed the significant rise of spectators to revamping the national visual service in terms of content, technology, employed in shadow of soaring number of users of electronic telecommunication devices.

Programs that have lured largest number of watchers are 'Layali Al-Kuwait,' 'Shai Al-Duha, 'Al-Mubader,' 'Mawaheb,' religious programs and news casts. Employment of renowned personalities to present these programs was also a factor for attracting greater audience.

TV remains the most effective and credible means as compared to other media outlets, he said, noting that the national TV succeeded in increasing number of watch-



Yousef Mustafa

ers despite mounting figures of people hooked to electronic social media devices. Kuwait Television is planning to present serious programs of content based on science and studies during the fasting month Ramadan. — KUNA

ALGERIAN SPEAKER MEETS KUWAIT'S AMBASSADOR

ALGIERS: Algerian National Assembly Speaker Abdulqader bin Saleh held talks with Kuwait's Ambassador in Algiers Mohammad Al-Shabo yesterday on a host of issues of mutual interest as well as means of promoting bilateral parliamentary coopera-

Shabo, who conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Parliament speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim to bin Saleh, said they have discussed the positions of Kuwait and Algeria regarding Arab issues. Speaking to KUNA, Shabo underlined importance of parliamentary cooperation between the two countries. He said Kuwait and Algeria shared a strong desire to develop bilateral relations and cooperation in many domains. — KUNA



ALGIERS: Algerian National Assembly speaker Abdulqader bin Saleh meets Kuwait's Ambassador in Algiers Mohammad Al-Shabo. — KUNA

IRANIAN AMBASSADOR GREETS ON PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY, CHRISTMAS



Iranian Ambassador Dr Ali Reza Enayati

a statement issued by the Iranian Embassy in Cuwait on the occasion of commemorating the birth of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Iranian Ambassador Dr Ali Reza Enayati said this occasion coincides with the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ (PBUH) and thus both Muslims and Christians are simultaneously celebrating two blessed holy occasions.

Enayati added that both religions' followers can share the joy in streets, houses, mosques and churches this year as both heavenly religions highly cherish values revealed by Almighty Allah to protect mankind from ignorance and dismay. "This synchronization shows that we, nowadays, need more consolidation, cooperation and fraternal unity to confront the challenges facing human, Islamic and religious values as well as spread the culture of tolerance and interfaith and intercultural dialogue," said Enayati.





Firefighters and workers look down a hole in the ground created following a landslide which killed a construction worker in Funaitees yesterday.

POLICEMAN KILLED IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

LACK OF SAFETY BLAMED IN WORKER'S DEATH



Two trucks loaded with trees that were cut illegally by two men who were arrested by environmental police yesterday.

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A police officer died in an accident reported at Abdali Road yesterday. Sergeant Major Meshari Al-Enezi, 22, from the Jahra police department was pronounced dead on the scene before his body was taken to the forensic department. Paramedics, police and firefighters had rushed to the scene; located at the 15th kilometer mark of the road, shortly after the accident was reported. The officer had succumbed to his injuries and died before their arrival, according to the police report. An investigation was opened to determine the circumstances which led to the acci-

Work mishap

The collapse of a sand barrier and lack of safety procedures led to the death of an Egyptian worker at the site of a building under construction in Funaitees. Mubarak Al-Kabeer fire center responded to a call about a trapped worker, but when the man was taken out by firemen, he was pronounced dead by paramedics. The coroner recovered the body.

Environmental crime

Environment police carried out a campaign on violating camps, resulting in the arrest of two Egyptian men for cutting down trees in the Subbiya open area. They were sent to concerned authorities for further

Financial commitments

The Stock Market Committee asked the Stock Market Authority to transfer KD 3.3 million to the Kuwait Stock Exchange's (KSE) account to cover commitments for the next two months.

NGOs' closure

A memo from the Cabinet to the Social Affairs and Labor Ministry said that the percentage of the closure of violating nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) is 30 percent now, and demanded that 70 percent be closed before the end of the year. The memo said the Cabinet had views on the mechanisms organizing licensing and opening some branches of NGOs, such as proposing several areas where branches can be opened including social development centers, family care, co-ops, hospitals and health centers, like the case with patient aid fund in Sabah health

Curricula development

Education Minister Dr Bader Al-Essa issued a decision to form the constitution, human rights and democracy curricula development committee and prepare a mechanism to teach them in the three educational stages. Essa appointed Dr Siham Abdelwahab Al-Furaih from the Kuwait International College of Law as chairperson.

Barbeque ban

State Minister for Municipality Affairs and Communications Minister Essa Al-Kandari issued a decision to amend cleanliness rules and transport of garbage. The decision bans barbequing on pavements, streets and public parks and seafronts. The minister's decision included the following:

Article one: The text of the first, fifth, tenth and 24th articles of ministerial decree 190/2008 shall be changed to the following. Article one: Definitions

First: Garbage: Leftovers resulting from residential and urban concentration and its accompanying activities, be they social, economic and developmental, and its quantities are linked with an increasing relation with the concentration's density and the nature of their activities in order to implement the system of transporting the garbage, and can be categorized as follows:

Municipal garbage

Garbage categorized according to the source of its production, type and its nature solid or semi-solid. Residential, commercial, and office garbage, in addition to biological and farming garbage, as well as those resulting from slaughterhouses and some non-hazardous industrial garbage.

Construction garbage and building rubble

Garbage resulting from demolishing buildings and facilities, as well as those leftover by construction of new buildings or refurbishing current buildings.

Article five: Garbage should not be tampered with, sorted, used or set on fire in the places of their collection, bearing in mind the following:

It is not allowed for anyone other than those contracted to run and operate the site of receiving and treating solid municipal garbage, sorting or preparing garbage for recycling purposes, using or burning it.

Parties who are contracted can sort out garbage and get out what can be recycled, but burning is not allowed on the site. Article 10:

Sewer water, septic tanks and ready concrete cannot be transported in vehicles other that what is licensed for this purpose. Drivers of such vehicles should take the necessary precaution to prevent leakage of water and material during the transport.

Drivers of such vehicles must cover the opening of emptying the sewer water, tanks and readymade concrete with plugs that has specifications decided by the concerned department to prevent leakage.

Article 24:

With no violation of any stricter punishment mentioned in another law that has punishment for violating the rules of articles 2, 3, 4 items (B) (C) (D), sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth and 23rd item (first, second third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth), with a minimum fine of KD 100 and a maximum of KD 300, and for violating the rules of article four item (a), article 11, 14, 15, 17 and 23 (item third and fourth) with a minimum fine of KD 500 and a maximum of KD 1,000, while the general manager has the right to revoke or suspend the license.

Article two:

Item (D) should be added to article four of the said decision as follows:

Article four, item (D)

Grilling is banned on pavements, streets, roads, parks, open areas, public facilities seafronts and lands owned by the state, while the municipality general manager can issue a decision to designate areas where grilling is

AMIR'S OFFENDER REMANDED IN CUSTODY

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The criminal court rejected a request to release an Egyptian engineer accused of insulting His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and assaulting policemen. His detention period was renewed.

Forgery

Meanwhile, the judge decided to release 11 employees accused of forging fingerprints at the Ministry of Electricity and Water

(ME)W. The suspects denied the charges of forgery and taking unearned money. The defense asked for their release with any guarantee the court sees fit, but their request was not granted.

Showbiz land

The criminal court decided not to issue a ruling in the case of a former minister with

regards to the Showbiz land. Meanwhile, it sentenced his son and another person to seven years in jail as well as a KD 5 million fine.

CABINET URGES DELIVERING GCC RAILWAY LAND TO COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

NORTHERN AREA TO BE TURNED INTO NATURE RESERVE

KUWAIT: The cabinet yesterday tasked the Public Authority of Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) with taking necessary measures towards delivering plots of land where the Gulf railway project goes through to the Ministry of Communications. This came during a cabinet meeting held at Seif Palace under the chairmanship of Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

The cabinet was briefed on the recommendations of the public services committee pertaining to the track of the project inside the State of Kuwait. The cabinet also urged the authority to remove all obstacles in order to carry out this vital project as soon as possible.

The Ministry of Communications had earlier stressed the importance of this project among GCC member states in supporting development projects, exchanging trade and transferring commodities, and passengers as well as promoting cooperation and integration in this field. The State of Kuwait had specified the two main tracks of the project along 564 kilometers.

Hospital fire

Meanwhile, the cabinet offered sincere condolences to Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz over the victims of a hospital fire in the kingdom's southwestern Jazan. The cabinet wished speedy recovery to those injured in the hospital fire. Last Thursday, at least 25 people died and 107 suffered injuries in the fire which broke out in the first floor of the four-storev hospital building, the Civil Defense said in a state-

Jleeb's raid

In the meantime, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the cabinet on the wide scale security campaign launched in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh area where thousands of residence law violators, law breakers and outlaws were arrested. Various threats to security were also unearthed. The cabinet lauded the campaign and the great efforts by the security personnel to maintain stability of the nation, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah stated.

Also yesterday, the cabinet tasked the Supreme Council of Environment with taking the



KUWAIT: The empty chair of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah is seen during yesterday's cabinet meeting. — KUNA

necessary measures for turning the area of Maqalea Al-Salboukh north of the country into a nature reserve. Further, the cabinet approved and referred to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a draft decree on the appointment of Counselor Yousef Jassim Al-Mutaw'a as head of the Court of Cassation.

Lawmaker eulogized

The cabinet also eulogized late MP Nabil Al-Fadhl who died in Abdullah Al-Salim Hall during last Tuesday's National Assembly session. The ministers recalled with high-appreciation Al-Fadhl's sincere efforts and positive role to serve causes of the nation, as an MP who fulfilled his responsibilities faithfully and competently.

As yesterday's meeting started, the cabinet congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and all the Kuwaiti people on the occasion of the New Year, said Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Then Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled apprised the cabinet of the outcome of his participation in the recent extraordinary meeting of the Arab League Ministerial Council held in Cairo, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said.

The Arab foreign ministers called on Turkey to pull out its forces from Iraq unconditionally, informing the UN of their decision. They also con-

demned the abduction of Qatari citizens in southern Iraq. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also gave notice of his talks with the Arab League Secretary General Nabil Al-Araby on the sidelines of the ministerial meeting. They discussed the latest developments in the Arab region.

Kuwaiti-Iraqi Committee

The Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister also briefed the cabinet on the outcome of the recent visit to Kuwait by Iraq's Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, for the 5th session of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi Joint Higher Committee. The committee discussed means of boosting bilateral ties in all fields, and signed a host of agreements

to bolster cooperation. In addition, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled notified the ministers of the outcome of the recent visit to Kuwait by Egypt's Minister of International Cooperation Sahar Nasr.

Means of enhancing bilateral ties, especially investment, featured high on the agenda of talks held during the visit. He also informed the cabinet about the outcome of his talks with visiting Yemeni Foreign Minister Dr Abdulmalik Al-Mekhlafi, said Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

The talks addressed political and security developments in the region, as Kuwait reiterated its unwavering stance on the necessity of the full application of the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the Yemeni national dialogue and the UN Security Council Resolution 2216, for restoring security





KUWAIT: The first fire training camp was opened in the presence of Director General of Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) Lieutenant General Yousuf Al-Ansari, and Deputy Director General for Manpower Resources Development Sector Major General Khalid Al-Tarkeet. It was organized in cooperation with Qimam Establishment for Organizing training camps in Kabd area. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

UNIVERSITY ACCEPTS ALL APPLYING STUDENTS

KUWAIT: A total of 2,135 Kuwaiti students and siblings of Kuwaiti mothers have been accepted for the second academic term 2015-2016 at Kuwait University (KU), Dr Adel Malallah, Acting Dean of Admission and Registration said yes-

He said in press remarks that the accepted students included 1,422 Kuwaiti and siblings of Kuwaiti mothers of High school graduates who fulfilled the terms of graduation, in addition to 713 students whom their acceptance were delayed for the second term.

Meanwhile, the admission results of non-Kuwaiti students will be announced before the end of this week, he mentioned. The lowest rates for acceptance of Kuwaiti and sibling of Kuwaiti mothers students for all majors at KU were published on the website of KU's Admission and Registration Deanship and local dailies, he said.

Acceptance at all faculties excluding the faculty of Science was conducted according to the equivalence rate which is counted upon the results of academic skills examination which is done by each student willing to join KU, besides the GPA of the high school certificate, Dr Malallah said. He wished the students success in their academic life, expressing thanks for the KU employees and officials for all the effort they exerted on that matter. — KUNA

Kuwait produces 1.1 MILLION METRIC TONS OF UREA ANNUALLY

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti petrochemical plants currently produce 1.1 million metric tons of urea and 680 million tons of ammonia per year, according to Kuwait Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC). Up to 45 percent of the production is exported to North America, 35 percent to South America, 10 percent to Thailand and the remainder to other markets, said Abdullah Al-Suwailem, PIC's Deputy CEO for Fertilizers, in remarks included in KUNA's quarterly oil report, which sheds extensive light on the national fertilizers' industry, crude prices and global petroleum industry.

The report quoted Hanan Al-Qaisy, KUNA's Deputy Chief Editor for Economic Affairs, as saying that the PIC had contributed to establishing the Bahraini Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC), with 33.3 percent of its stakes. Sector of petrochemical industries is the main contributor to the Kuwaiti economy, Qaisy said, for all of its companies are modern, feasible with satisfactory performance

Qaisy said the report second chapter sheds light on oil prices in Q3 of 2015, noting that the Kuwaiti crude price averaged \$46.7 per barrel and country's output amounted to 2.855 million pd. Kuwait, she added, is adherent to up the output to four million barrels per day by 2020, however she noted that the prices are basically affected with changing and divergent factors, such as geopolitical, economic reasons, supply and demand. Elaborating, she said the prices, in the year Q3, declined, while rates of the exported Kuwaiti crude drastically dropped; simultaneously with production hike by other members of OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. The Kuwaiti crude fell \$11, 18.8 percent, reaching \$58.72 pb.

In Q2, it dropped to \$47.70 PB. In August, it dropped to \$45.58 pb and to \$43.69 pb in September. Global crude reserves are estimated 1.5 trillion barrels. There more than 4, 000 oil fields and 5,000 rigs for exploring and extracting the crudes worldwide. Declared global output stands in the range of 90 million bpd. Kuwait ranks fifth with respect of reserves and seventh as to crude exportation and derivatives.

Nabil Bouresli, Managing Director for International Marketing at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, is cited in the report, affirming that Kuwait plans to hike its crude production to four million bpd by 2020. Up to 90 percent of KPC's contracts are of long term nature - they have been worked out with Asian, European states as well as the United States of America. — KUNA

LOCAL

In **Brief**

GCC PARLIAMENT EXPERIENCE

KUWAIT: Secretary-General of the National Assembly Alam Al-Kandari underscored yesterday the need for training programs and exchange of experience between representatives of GCC legislative councils. This came during Al-Kandari's meeting with GCC parliament members participating in a training program on comprehensive skills for making draft laws, held by the National Assembly's Training Department. The training program was based on a joint training plan for the GCC parliaments and the 29th meeting of the joint development and training committee, he said. —KUNA



ARAB CULTURAL TIES

CAIRO: Kuwait National Library's General Manager Kamel Al-Abduljaleel stressed the importance of developing and spreading Arab culture through boosting ties between Arab states in the field. The official's statement came during a ceremony held in Cairo late Sunday to celebrate 125 years of establishing Egypt's Dar Al-Ma'arif. During the event, Dar Al-Ma'arif honored Kuwait for its role in spreading Arab culture. — KUNA



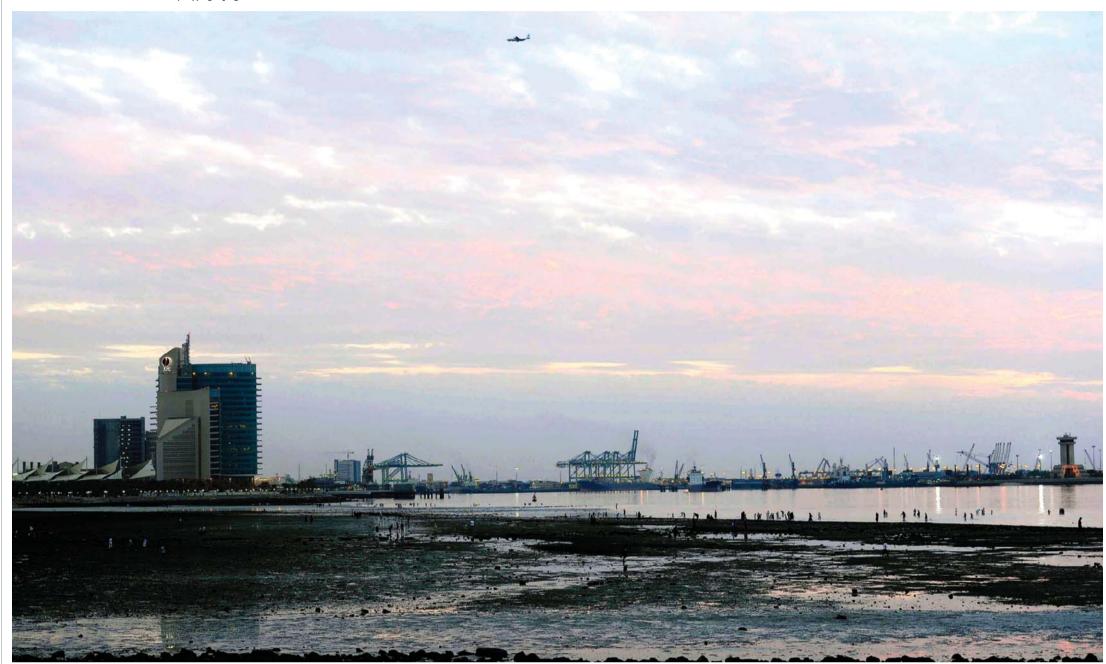
KUWAIT SUPPORTS TANZANIA

KUWAIT: Tanzanian Mufti Abu Bakr Zubair ben Ali yesterday praised the charitable and humanitarian role of Kuwait in helping people in need in Muslim countries. After his meeting with Kuwaiti Ambassador to Tanzania Jassem Al-Najem, Bin Ali thanked His Highness the Kuwaiti Amir, people and government for the continuous support to Tanzania. Kuwait is carrying out a large number of projects in Tanzania, such as mosques, wells, orphanages, schools and other projects. — KUNA



Feature

Photo



 ${\it KUWAIT: Shuwaikh Port is seen from the shore at Kuwait City.} - {\it KUNA}$

In my **view**

PEACE IN SYRIA



he UN recently approved a resolution on an international roadmap for a political transition in Syria to end the conflict and call for launching Syrian peace talks by the beginning of January, which reflects international powers' conflict of power as well as protecting their followers and 'arms' on the ground in a way that would spare some parties, here and there, some embarrassment.

Activating a ceasefire in Syria and having representatives of the Syrian government and opposition commence negotiations and debates to limit the numbers of those killed and injured, reach peace and stability and limit human and financial losses that could have been used in building rather than destruction is mostly welcomed.

Syria still suffers from human losses. A wounded Arab sisterly country, where many religions and sects have co-existed for decades, still suffers. The Security Council's confirmation that "The only sustainable solution to the current crisis in Syria is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, with a view to full implementation of the Geneva Communique of June 30, 2012 as endorsed by resolution 2118 (2013), including through the establishment of an inclusive transitional governing body with full executive powers, which shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent while ensuring continuity of governmental institutions," is sort of putting things in black and white, especially since talking about human rights cannot be achieved except through public democratic choices.

On the other hand, holding the Arab strategic conference in Dubai where the WAM news agency announced that the Arab Spring had cost \$833.7 billion, including reconstruction, GDP and tourism losses, the cost of refuges, stock market and investment losses, call for much consideration. The report highlights the detrimental outcomes of the Arab Spring on economic and social development in the region, which calls for admitting that those Arab states had been plagued with regimes that lost their way without thinking about their peoples and opened all doors to foreign greed and violations.

KUWAIT REPRESENTED IN UAE CHILDREN'S THEATER FESTIVAL

SHARJAH: Kuwaiti Interior Designer Heba Al-Sane has expressed pride for representing Kuwait in the 11th UAE Children's Theater Festival's contest jury. In a statement to KUNA, Sana, also an interior designer at Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), stated that she was chosen as jury member and prize designer at the seven-day event. This choice reflects Kuwait's eminence in cultural and art domains, she said.

Sane said she was responsible for evaluating the interior designs, lights, and costumes used in the participating performances. She pointed out that the NCCAL is keen on participating in cultural festivals abroad, especially in those organized in the United Arab Emirates. The festival concluded Sunday in a huge prize-giving ceremony. Iraqi Director Abdulilah Abdulqader was named the personality of this year's edition. — KUNA



SHARJAH: Kuwaiti Interior Designer Heba Al-Sane represents Kuwait in the 11th UAE Children's Theater Festival's contest jury. — KUNA

KUWAITIS RECEIVE SUDAN'S SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MEDALS

KHARTOUM: Sudan's presidential medal for social responsibility was granted to Chief of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain for Poetic Creativity Foundation Abdulrahman Al-Babtain and Chairman of the Board of Takaful Society for Prisoners Care Musa'ad Mandani. These medals were given out during the opening of the Second Regional Forum of International Ambassadors for Social Responsibility held in

During the session, Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir was given the best president award for 2015 in social respon-

sibility while head of Islamic Dawa Organization Field Marshal Abd Al-Rahman Siwar Al-Dhahab was chosen as 2015 social responsibility figure. Madina and Khartoum cities were picked as 2016 social responsibility cities.

Babtain told KUNA after the award ceremony that efforts done by International Ambassadors for Social Responsibility are appreciated and very much needed to help the underprivileged. It creates a sense of social solidarity.

He expressed his appreciation for receiving the medal and dedicated it to the Kuwaiti leadership and the Kuwaiti people,

pointing out that this medal will only demand "bigger social responsibility and more humanitarian actions."

Mandani, meanwhile, said that the idea of forum saw the light four years ago but was actually put into action last year. It aims at raising awareness of the various sectors of the community about social responsibility, cast light on humanitarian projects, honoring the international ambassadors for social responsibility and assist companies and corporations to adjust their works and activities to be in line with the standards of sustainable development. — KUNA



KHARTOUM: Chief of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain for Poetic Creativity Foundation Abdulrahman Al-Babtain and Chairman of the Board of Takaful Society for Prisoners Care Musa'ad Mandani receive Sudan's presidential medals for social responsibility. — KUNA

DISABLED ACTORS PRESENT THEIR ISSUES THROUGH PLAYS

MUSCAT: Kuwait is taking part in the Fourth GCC Theater Festival for Persons with Disabilities, held in Oman for seven days. The festival aims to encourage disabled actors to show their theatrical talents, while also develop their abilities through training courses, assistant Undersecretary of Human Resources and Financial Affairs Department at the Kuwait Public Authority for the Disabled Hussein Al-Duwaihes said yesterday.

The festival, inaugurated yesterday, includes six plays performed by each GCC state, said Duwaihes, adding that the event is an opportunity for people with disability to present topics of concern to themselves including the difficulties they face in their lives and the society's point of view on them. The official also noted that Kuwait is exerting great efforts to support this category of society through developing different bodies to provide them with the best services. — KUNA







KUWAIT: (From left) Dr Aisha John, Head of Quality Department at Taiba Hospital, Rashid Al-Fadhalah, Deputy CEO and Dr Ihab Hanna, Consultant Histopathology and Head of the Medical Laboratories and Pathology Department attend the press conference. (Right) Taiba Hospital officials and staff in a group photo.—Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

TAIBA HOSPITAL ACQUIRES COLLEGE OF AMERICAN PATHOLOGISTS ACCREDITATION



(From left) Rashid Al-Fadhalah, Dr Aisha John and Dr Ihab Hanna cut the ceremony's cake.

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Taiba Hospital recently acquired the College of American Pathologists (CAP) accreditation for providing services according to international quality criteria for medical laboratories. To mark this occasion, the hospital held a press conference and award ceremony for all the staff who participated in achieving this prestigious accreditation at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel on Sunday.

Rashid Al-Fadhalah, Deputy CEO of Taiba Hospital, said that the CAP accreditation is a quantum leap for the services provided by the hospital to its patients. "This accreditation was achieved through following international norms consisting of 12 systems and applying the 'patients safety' policy and procedures," he noted during the press conference. "Achieving this accreditation by Taiba Hospital reflects the policy of Elaj medical services company in keeping pace with international standards of quality and accuracy, which is positively reflected on servicing the our precious clients.'

Most prestigious

Dr Aisha John, Head of Quality Department, stated the

CAP accreditation is one of the most prestigious international quality certificates. "We started preparing and working to achieve this accreditation for one and a half years. The laboratory doctors spent great efforts in cooperation with the quality department staff to make this achievement possible," she said.

"The American accreditation delegation visited the medical laboratory and pathology department on inspection tours to evaluate the quality of services and review the safety systems. They also reviewed the efficiency of the available tools and machines in addition to inspections over following international systems over patients' safety. These tours were concluded with a complete report submitted by the delegation to the hospital's administration to give the final result, which resulted in achieving the CAP accreditation," added John.

Patient safety

Dr Ihab Hanna, Consultant Histopathology and Head of the Medical Laboratories and Pathology Department, highlighted that patient safety is the hospital's priority. "This fact was behind our hard work to achieve the CAP accreditation, which will positively affect our work and the laboratory results. All this will increase the quality and safety of the medical and treatment services provided to the patients," he pointed out.

The submitting committee expressed their gladness with the professional level and modern equipment in the laboratory department. "The committee also praised the efficient and professional staff who are ready to deal with all laboratory tests. Achieving this accreditation by the hospital make the responsibility of the laboratory staff even greater to preserve the quality standard reached by the hospital, which qualified it to acquire this accreditation. This commitment will be positively reflected on the quality, accuracy and short period of the laboratory tests,"

Taiba Hospital has also achieved other accreditations including the Joint Commission International accreditation (JCI) for implementing safe and effective healthcare of highest quality and value, which was the first of its kind in Kuwait, received in 2010. Also Taiba Hospital is the first and only private hospital in Kuwait that acquired the 'Baby Friendly Hospital' accreditation given by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health and accredited by the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

KUWAIT HOSTS DENTISTRY CONFERENCE

4th Kuwait Dental Administration Conference between February 13-15, 2016, a senior health official said yesterday. The Health Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Dental Affairs Dr Yousuf Al-

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health is set to organize the the patronage of Minister of Health Ali Al-Obaidi. The dental event will attract a galaxy of 32 dental specialists and lecturers from all over the world, he added. The conference will include a special program for technicians and administrators in the dental field,



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Report

SCORES ARRESTED IN THIEVES' MARKET RAID

KUWAIT: Jleeb Al-Shuyiukh detectives stormed what they described as a 'thieves' market' in the area, where a number of Asian street vendors had returned to sell their merchandise after security forces had been stopping them for months, said security sources, noting that scores of Asian peddlers fled on seeing the police, leaving their goods behind. The sources added that detectives confiscated all the foodstuff and vegetables and gave them to charities.

Guard assaulted

An Asian camp guard in Salmi filed a case against four of his sponsor's friends, accusing them of assaulting him when they came to the camp in the absence of the owner and asked him to start the generator, which he refused until checking with his boss.

Harassment charges

A female citizen in her forties accused an Egyptian man working at a mobile phone workshop of harassing her by making repeated calls after she took her mobile to his shop to be repaired. The man, on the other hand, stressed that he had called only to inform her that the phone was fixed and ready. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Drunk driving

A citizen was arrested in Salmiya driving while heavily drunk, said security sources. Case papers indicate that a police patrol noticed that the suspect was not in full control of his vehicle and on stopping him and asking to see his ID, he insulted the policemen and refused to show it. The man is facing charges of driving under the effect of alcohol and insulting a public servant on duty.

Store robbed

An Asian grocer in Fintas reported that an unidentified robber assaulted him and stole KD 200 in cash, in addition to a telecom company machine. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Girl hospitalized

A citizen was arrested for brutally assaulting a bedoon girl in the parking lot of Adan Hospital, said security sources, noting that passersby informed the police about the assault. The girl was rushed to the hospital for treatment and the assaulter was arrested pending further investigations.

Wives' row

A Syrian woman married to a Kuwaiti reported that her husband's first wife, a citizen, who shared the same house with her in Rihab, assaulted her and poured boiling water on her. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Fatal crash

A Pakistani man was killed when he lost control over his vehicle and it flipped over along Reqqa road, said security sources. An investigation was filed to determine the circumstances behind the accident.

Driver loses control

An Egyptian truck driver lost control over his truck along Gulf Road when the accelerator got stuck, said security sources, noting that the driver shouted at a nearby police patrol that drove alongside him to clear the way for him. The truck hit a vehicle and swerved towards the sea, but was eventually stopped by wavebreakers. Both the driver and his assistant were thrown out and were taken to hospital for treatment.

Hostess assaulted

An air hostess filed a case with Jabriya police accusing a citizen she knew of assaulting her over some disputes. A case was filed and the suspect is being summoned for further investigations.

Drunk man arrested

An Asian man was found sleeping on the street in Jleeb Al-Shuyiukh and on checking on him, he was found heavily drunk. Another Asian was found in a similar state in Rabiya where he got heavily drunk and slept in

Fraud

A citizen recently filed a case against a compatriot accusing him of fraud, as he had reportedly sold him 3,000 square meters of land in Germany and collected half the amount before he disappeared. —Al-Rai / Al-Anbaa

KUWAIT TO HOST YEMEN TALKS JAN 14

KUWAIT: Kuwait has initially agreed to host inter-Yemeni talks due on Jan 14, said Yemeni deputy FM Dr Abdullah Al-Mekhlafi, noting that the approval was mentioned to him by Kuwait's deputy PM and FM Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. Mekhlafi added that the Yemeni side had discussed the possibility of hosting such talks with the Kuwaiti government so that the talks started in Geneva could be resumed. He added that his country had suggested holding the talks in Kuwait, Egypt or Jordan, and Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled was the first to express Kuwait's readiness.—Al-Qabas



الجريدة.

Al-Jarida

RESPECT DEATH

By Arwa Al-Waqian

eath teaches us many things while we are still alive. It teaches us how to appreciate the simplest blessings we enjoy. It, some way or another, makes us behave and show love to loved ones, because we never know when we will lose them. It teaches us to enjoy life's details, appreciate beauty and spread good. Despite death's tragedy, because it has been our greatest concern since one never knows when, how and at what age it might happen and despite mysteries surrounding it, I am amazed how some people act snobbishly and rudely gloat over the death of someone.

The recent death of Kuwaiti parliamentarian Nabil Al-Fadhl resulted in mixed reactions that were strange to me, because as soon as I hear about the death of a wellknown person, there is always someone making fun of it and gloating over it, as if it was a punishment not destined to us all; as if death only selects bad people and as if it was a way to express hatred.

Death has a prestige and teaches you to respect life, people, and most of all, to respect the Almighty's will. Those gloating people do not know how and when they would meet their end. Yet, being alive, they think they are the winners and act just like the ones looking down on their opponents without realizing the real meaning of honest competition nor respecting opponents and con-

fronting them while alive, instead of acting meanly when they die.

Dead people move into another world that seems to be more peaceful than this life where everybody is fighting and disgracefully lusting behind materialistic gains. They pretend to have some principles, but they antagonize others, with whom they disagree. Those departing us go to the most Gracious and most Merciful with all mankind. Others who remain struggling in this illogical and animalistic life remain under pressure of greed, aggression, wars and killings!

It is not optional to stay alive or to die, so how can we, humble creatures, boast about something we have not chosen and have nothing to do but to accept Almighty's will about it?! Religion teaches us to only speak about the dead in a good manner and not to slander them the moment they are laid to rest. Bearded people who gloat over death should have showed more respect to their beards and to the religion they have always been keen on showing that they follow it without acting they really do!

Islam teaches us to be tolerant, yet all of those socalled religious people showed nothing but grudges and malice, which are all against the teachings of Islam!

—Translated by Kuwait Times

MOE SETS AMERICAN SCHOOLS' FEES AT KD 1,600-7,000

vate education directorate set the fees to be collected at various American schools operating in Kuwait for the 2015-2016 school year (from kindergarten to high school) at KD 1,653-7,000 per student. Private education director Abdullah Al-Basri issued a memo explaining the details of fees to be collected by the 10 American schools in Kuwait per student in all four educational stages. The details showed that fees at American Private School were KD 3,123 for the first and second levels of kindergarten, KD 4,059 for primary stage, KD 4,370 for intermediate and KD 4,893 for the secondary stage.

Basri said fees at the American International School would be KD 2,498 for junior kindergarten, KD 2,706 for senior KG, KD 3,645 for primary, KD 3,851 for intermediate and KD 4,271 for

at Universal American School would be KD 2,003 for first level kindergarten, KD 2,484 for the second level, KD 3,324 for primary, KD 3,523 for intermediate and KD 3,727 for secondary stages. Fees at the American Academy for Girls would be KD 2,293 for first level kindergarten, KD 2,601 for the second level, KD 3,331 for primary, KD 3,602 for intermediate and KD 4,002 for secondary stages. Fees at the American Creativity Academy for boys would be KD 2,287 for first and second levels of kindergarten, KD 3,325 for primary, KD 3,752 for intermediate and KD 4,256 for secondary stages.

Basri said fees at Kuwait American School would be KD 1,655 for first level kindergarten, KD 1,841 for the second level, KD 2,767 for primary, KD 2,950 for intermediate and KD 3,278 for second-

KUWAIT: The education ministry's pri- secondary stages. He added that fees ary stages. Fees at the Atakamul International School would be KD 1,653 for first and second levels of kindergarten, KD 2,698 for primary, KD 2,870 for intermediate and KD 3,044 for secondary stages. Fees at the International Creativity Academy would be KD 2,287 for first and second levels of kindergarten and KD 3,325 for primary. Fees at American Bilingual School would be KD 2,435 for first and second levels of kindergarten, KD 3,617 for primary, KD 3,911 for intermediate and KD 4,245 for secondary

> Basri highlighted that the highest fees would be collected by the American United School, where first and second levels of kindergarten cost KD 5,000 each, KD 6,000 for primary and KD 7,000 for the intermediate stages. —Al-Rai

CURRENT COMPANIES' LAW PERFECT: ALI



Yousef Al-Ali

Industry Dr Yousef Al-Ali stressed that law no. 25/2012 currently in effect was completely sound and legal. He added that this law had been reviewed, amended and passed by the parliament. "This law is different from the anti-corruption one and cannot be equated to it because it involves different proceedings," explained Ali, noting that making such analogies might negatively affect the domestic economy. Notably, Ali is a 'class A lawman'

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and

with long experience in commerce and economy and has been acquainted with economic regulations and legisla-

tions for decades. —Al-Jarida

FINANCE, OIL MINISTRIES ARGUE ABOUT BREAKEVEN OIL PRICES

KUWAIT: At a time when Kuwaiti oil prices have dropped to record lows not reached in over 11 years, at \$27.90 per barrel, the ministries of finance and oil seem to have a strong disagreement concerning determining the oil price index in the state's 2016-2017 budget. Well-informed official oil sources said that the oil ministry wants to set the breakeven price at the average price of Kuwaiti oil over the past six months, while the finance ministry wants to use international averages, which are higher than Kuwaiti oil prices with the aim of reducing the volume of deficit in the state's budget. The sources added that this technical disagreement between both sides would have significant impact on the budget as one dollar down or up in breakeven prices would mount up to a billion dollars in the column of annual oil revenues in the budget. Notably, the finance ministry had set the breakeven price at \$45 a barrel and showed a deficit of KD 2.7 billion after deducting 10 percent from oil revenues for the future generations' fund. —Al-Anbaa

COMMERCIAL OPERATION AT NORTH ZOUR NEXT YEAR



KUWAIT: Informed sources at the Ministry of Electricity and Water said the commercial operation of north Zour station project, the first stage, will be on schedule by the North Zour Company on November 26, 2016. The sources said the commercial operation phase will include five gas turbines and two steam turbines, along with 10 units using multi-effect distillation technology. It will start with generating 1539.2 MW and desalinate 107 million imperial gallons daily. The North Zour Co and the ministry are keen on building positive and transparent relations since the start of the project, bearing in mind what will take place in the next stages, as all water quantities that will be desalinated and power generated will be delivered to citizens and expats through the power and desalinated water network operated by MEW, according to the long-term power and water purchase agreement for 40 years. The sources added that the station will cost \$1.4 billion. —Al-Rai

الانياء

Al-Anbaa

FILTER-LESS PRESIDENT

By Sami Al-Nisf

n a famous interview, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi once said that words do not come out of his mouth until they pass through several filters in his mind. On the other hand, all political observers agree that the words uttered by the Republican US presidential candidate who has been leading opinion polls, Donald Trump, seem to never go through any filters in his mind, if he ever has any filters or mind in the first place. He keeps insulting and hurting other groups and opponents in an unprecedented way in American political history, where a simple slip of the tongue used to make a candidate disappear. His opponent Jeb Bush said that Trump does not realize that no one would make it to the presidency through slander

Trump insulted people with Latin origins, accusing them of being criminals, thieves and violators. He also insulted 1.5 billion Muslims and demanded not allowing them into the US and dealing with millions of Muslim Americans the way people with German and Japanese origins were dealt with during World War II, which was disgraceful and the US had to apologize for it. The most recent of Trump's shameful personal insults was directed to his wise Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton, when he accused her of going to the toilet during the recent Democratic debate, which provoked a large segment of American women, and at the same time, made him lead opinion polls once more.

A large number of Americans, especially fanatic Christian rightists who believe conspiracies are always plotted in Washington, support Trump because he comes from outside the known political sphere (senators, governors or government officials), because they believe those people are already corrupt and elusive ones who claim to disagree although they have the same agendas. They believe they tell people nice words they want to hear. Therefore, they like Trump because he is an businessman and not a politician, and unlike traditional politicians, he always says what is on his mind.

Meanwhile, political analysts see that this admiration is temporary and normal at such an early stage in the election process. They also believe that Trump is similar to rightist Republican candidate Newt Gingrich, who was fully backed by conservative and extreme rightists as well as the Tea Party rightist movement, as he was known to insult the Palestinians and describe them as a group of terrorists and an 'invented people'. He also led in the early stages before the general elections, when he lost in Iowa and New Hampshire, and accordingly lost the elections against Obama in 2012. Just like Trump, he has also been married several times and is absolutely filter-less!

—Translated by Kuwait Times

News

in brief

Rent allowance suspended in June

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources at the public authority for housing announced that rent allowances paid for citizens who had been granted housing units in Sabah Al-Ahmad would be suspended starting June 1, 2016. The sources explained that the decision was made in accordance to the authority's laws that recommend suspending rent allowances if electricity is connected to the area where a housing unit is allocated. The sources added that rent allowances will also be suspended in case an applicant receiving them refuses the housing unit, because the allowance is only valid in the period between application and the date a unit is allocated to an applicant. —Al-Anbaa

Labor support jumped 31-fold

KUWAIT: Government expenditure on national labor support jumped 31-fold since the passing of the labor support law in 2000, as it reached KD 542 million during the current fiscal year, compared to KD 17.5 million during 2001/2002, an increase of nearly KD 524 million. Official statistics showed that the three fiscal years 2008/2009, 2012/2013, and 2014/2015 registered the highest increase in actual payments for labor support. They showed that 2008/2009 witnessed an increase over the previous year by nearly KD 90 million, while the increase in 2012/2013 and 2014/2015 was KD 96 and KD 84 respectively.

—Al-Qabas

Unified labor contracts in 2016

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Minister and State Minister for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih said the Manpower Public Authority is ready to implement the unified labor contract for expatriate workers at the start of the new year. She said the aim of this contract is to safeguard workers' rights, especially since most of them use contracts void of any items that guarantee their rights or duties. She said the contract comes to put an end to disputes that occur between the employee and employer. She said the contract includes making the employer pay for an airline ticket when the contract expires if it is not a local one, in addition to paying the health insurance for the worker and payment of all dues at the end of the contract. —Al-Jarida

International

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2015

CAMERON VISITS FLOOD HIT HISTORIC CITY OF YORK

Japan closes door to refugees

Page 9

Page 12



SEOUL: South Korean bereaved family members of victims of World War II stage a rally demanding full compensation and apology from Japanese government in front of Foreign Ministry. — AP

KOREA, JAPAN REACH DEAL ON 'COMFORT WOMEN'

REPRESENTS SHIFT FOR CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT

SEOUL: An apology from Japan's prime minister and a pledge of more than \$8 million sealed a breakthrough deal yesterday on a decades-long impasse with South Korea over Korean women forced into Japanese military-run brothels during World War II.

The accord, which aims to resolve the emotional core of South Korea's grievances with its former colonial overlord, could begin to reverse decades of animosity and mistrust between the two thriving democracies, trade partners and staunch US allies. It represents a shift for Tokyo's conservative government and a new willingness to compromise from previously wary Seoul.

A joint statement from both countries' foreign ministers said Prime Minister Shinzo Abe "expresses anew his most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women," their euphemistic name.

'Final and irreversible'

It wasn't immediately clear if Abe would be issuing a separate written statement or if it would be directly delivered to the 46 surviving former Korean sex slaves, now in their 80s and 90s. The language mirrored past expressions of remorse by other prime ministers, although it was seen by some in Seoul as an improvement on previous comments by the hawkish Abe government, which has been accused of whitewashing past wartime atrocities.

Another deciding factor was that the 1 billion yen (\$8.3 million) came from the government, not private sources, something Tokyo has been reluctant to provide in the past. South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se said Seoul considers the agreement "final and irreversible," as long as Japan faithfully follows through with its promises.

Later yesterday, Abe called Park and reiterated his apology. He said Tokyo would implement the deal and called the issue settled irreversibly. Park said she hopes the two countries will build up mutual trust and open a new era in bilateral ties based on yesterday's agreement, it said.

After phoning Park, Abe told reporters that the agreement was based on his commitment to stop younger generations from being obliged to apologize. "Japan and South Korea are now entering into a new era," said Abe, adding that he did not want to "pass on the burden on our children, grandchildren and their offspring to keep apologizing.... We should not drag this problem into the next generation."

Despite the soaring official rhetoric, the initial reaction of former sex slaves was mixed. One woman said she would follow the government's lead, while another vowed to ignore the accord because Tokyo didn't consider the money a formal compensation. "Isn't it natural to make a legal compensation if they commit a crime?" said Lee Yong-su, 88, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

ews agency.
Some in Seoul saw the deal, while not perfect, as an important step forward. "If we brushed aside this deal, the comfort women issue would remain unresolved forever," said Lee Won Deog, director of Institute of Japanese Studies at Seoul's Kookmin University. "Elderly women would die one by one; South Korea and Japan would engage in history wars and find it harder to improve

Many South Koreans feel lingering bitterness over Japan's brutal colonial occupation of the Korean Peninsula from 1910-1945. **But South Korean officials** have also faced calls to improve ties with Japan, the world's No 3 economy and a regional powerhouse, not least from US officials eager for a strong united front against a rising China and North Korea's pursuit of nuclear-armed missiles that could target the American mainland.

Japan appeared emboldened to make the overture to Seoul after the first formal leaders' meeting between the neighbors in 3 1/2 years, in November, and after South Korean courts recently acquitted a Japanese reporter charged with defaming South Korea's president and refused to review a complaint by a South Korean seeking individual compensation for Japan's forceful mobilization of workers during colonial days.

Seoul, meanwhile, will refrain from criticizing Japan over the issue, and will talk with "relevant organizations" - a reference to civic groups representing the former sex slaves - to try to resolve Japan's grievance with a statue of a girl representing victims of Japanese sexual slavery that sits in front of the Japanese Embassy in downtown Seoul. Yun said South Korea recognizes Japan's worries about security over the

statue, where anti-Tokyo protests take place weekly. There has long been resistance in South Korea to past Japanese apologies because many here wanted Japan to acknowledge that it has a legal responsibility for the women. Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida later emphasized in a closed-door briefing with Japanese reporters that Tokyo doesn't consider the 1 billion yen as compensation, but "a project to relieve emotional scars and provide healing for the victims." It will include medical services, health checks and other support for the women, he said. All compensation was settled by a 1965 treaty that restored diplomatic ties and was accompanied by more than \$800 million in economic aid and loans from Tokyo to Seoul, he said. — AP



Rigging Supervisor / Rigging Superintendent

- Be at least 40-45 years of age
- Bachelor's Degree (B.E / B Sc) in Mechanical Engineering
- Have Experience of not less than 15 years in the same area of application of which at least 7 to 9 years Project Lead/ Coordinator experience must be in petrochemical Live Plants
- Training from certified agency or equivalent International training organizations
- Have had adequate training and experience and be competent act as an appointed person or focal point nominated by management to be in overall control of the Rigging Operations.
- Have strong administrative and leading skills to oversee and coordinate the Rigging Contract personnel and lifting operations.
- Knowledge and experience in Risk Management (identifying, evaluating and monitoring of risks in all aspects of the work)
- Thorough requirement of Oil and Gas sector
- Excellent command of English language, both written and spoken



Candidates are requested to submit their updated CV in MS Word Format along with complete certificates indicating availability & salary expectation in the subject line at janem@dopet.com or Fax no. +974-44601066

YEMEN EX-LEADER CALLS FOR TALKS WITH SAUDI

SANAA: Yemen's pro-rebel ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh has rejected further peace talks with the government, saying dialogue should instead take place with Saudi Arabia. Riyadh has been leading a military campaign since March against Iranbacked Shiite Houthi rebels, who have also been supported by Saleh loyalists.

In a speech late Sunday during a meeting with members of his General People's Congress (GPC) party, UN-sanctioned Saleh said "we will not take part in (future) dialogue... unless the war ends." GPC representatives attended UN-sponsored peace talks in Switzerland last week. There was no major breakthrough in the talks but the parties agreed to meet again on January 14.

"And if the war ends, we will hold talks with Saudi Arabia and not with the delegate of escapees," he said, in reference to the delegation of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi's internationally recognized government, which was forced into months of exile before returning in September to main southern city Aden.

A ceasefire began as the talks opened in Switzerland but was violated daily. The conflict in Yemen has killed more than 5,800 people since the Saudi-led intervention began in March, according to UN figures.

Saleh ruled Yemen for three decades and maintained good ties with Saudi Arabia before resigning in 2012 following a popular uprising against his rule. In the speech he offered to "cooperate" with the Houthis to convince them to hold talks with the neighboring kingdom. Saleh belongs to the Houthis' Zaidi offshoot of Shiite Islam.

Aid not reaching

In other news, relief groups in Yemen's third city Taez said yesterday that humanitarian aid was not reaching the provincial capital under rebel siege. "No aid has arrived in the besieged city," a member of a local medical relief committee said.

"We heard there is aid entering areas outside the city... controlled by those besieging us," Mohammed Al-Qobati said. The World Health Organization said last week it had managed to deliver more than 100 tonnes of medical aid in Taez province to benefit more than a third of "3 million people... in dire need of humanitarian assistance". But the delivery of 22 tons of medical aid to five health facilities in Taez city was "on hold due to access issues," it said.

"There is a lack of medicine and oxygen cylinders," Qobati said. "Taez is living a real catastrophe."

The southwestern city's largest hospital, Al-Thawra, closed on Friday after running out of medical supplies and surgical equipment. Its 600,000 residents are in desperate need and many have taken to treacherous mountain paths to bring in essential goods.

They have been caught in the crossfire between loyalists to Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi who are defending their positions in Taez and Shiite Houthi rebels who have encircled them. Abdulkarim Shamsan, the head of a coalition of local aid groups, said the city had also not received any food supplies."The aid is being given away to those who are killing us," Shamsan said. "The militias have tightened the noose on Taez, stopping the entry of people on foot and confiscating anything they are carrying," he said. — AFP



PAYSANDU: A local looks out from a balcony during the floods. — AFP

TORRENTIAL RAINS KILL 10 IN SOUTH AMERICA

ASUNCION: Mudslides have killed at least four people in Brazil, one of several South American countries where torrential rains and flooding now have claimed at least 10 lives, officials said on Sunday. The epic rainfall also has driven 160,000 people from their homes in Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay, said officials.

Authorities said fatalities from the current violent weather include two deaths in Argentina and four in Paraguay. The director of Paraguay's weather service, Julian Baez, said his nation has been deluged by the precipitation, which so far shows no signs of letting up. "The Paraguay River has swollen almost to eight meters. Not even the most dramatic forecasts called for that in December," Baez told a briefing

If rains continue to the north as forecasters expect, the flood levels could tie or pass their record nine meters in 1983, when the capital's busy port area was under water, Baez warned. This mostly rural nation of 6.8 million is by far the hardest hit by the flooding which scientists say is caused by an unusually strong "El Nino" pattern. In addition to at least four people killed by the weather, more than 140,000 have fled their homes, officials said.

Meanwhile, driving rains in the metropolitan Sao Paulo area in southern Brazil let loose a

mudslide that killed a total of four people in two homes in Itapecerica da Serra, state officials said. In Argentina, new President Mauricio Macri cut short his New Year's vacation at a resort and headed to hard-hit Concordia in Entre Rios province.

In northeastern Argentina, two people were killed and about 20,000 were evacuated from their homes by flooding caused by a rise in the level of the Uruguay River, authorities said. Entre Rios province was the worst off with about 10,000 people displaced, most of them in Concordia, a city of some 170,000 located on the banks of the river where officials said it was the most serious flooding in 50 years. "We have got to commit to real solutions," Macri said as the river there finally started to recede. Uruguay, between Argentina and Brazil on the South Atlantic, has had to evacuate more than 11,000 people. Its Artigas department near Brazil was the hardest his region of Uruguay, officials said. El Nino is the name given to a weather pattern associated with a sustained period of warming in the central and eastern tropical Pacific that can spark deadly and costly climate extremes. Last month, the UN's World Meteorological Organization warned the phenomenon was the worst in more than 15 years, and one of the strongest since 1950. — AFP



ISTANBUL: People shout slogans yesterday as they hold pictures of victims of the Roboski strike and people who died during clashes in east Turkey as part of a march on Istiklal Avenue. The march marks the curfew in Cizre and fourth anniversary of the Dec 28, 2011 killing of 34 Turkish-Kurdish civilians working as smugglers at the Turkey-Iraq border in a botched raid by Turkish military jets, known as the Roboski strike, that mistook the group for Kurdistan Workersí Party (PKK) militants. — AFP

TURKISH PM EXCLUDES KURDISH PARTY FROM CONSTITUTION TALKS

ISTANBUL: Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu yesterday rejected holding talks with Turkey's main pro-Kurdish party over a new constitution because of the "disrespectful" attitude of its leadership. The premier's blackballing of the Kurdish Peoples' Democracy Party (HDP) from discussions comes as the army wages a relentless campaign against Kurdish militants in the southeast.

"It is not appropriate to accept them (the HDP) as negotiators after their disrespectful and provocative comments," Davutoglu said at a news conference before travelling to Serbia. Davutoglu will launch negotiations with parties this week on a new charter after the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) cofounded by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

regained its majority in November 1 elections.

Davutoglu on Saturday cancelled a planned meeting with the HDP, accusing its co-chair Selahattin Demirtas of benefiting from the renewed violence and of polarizing the country. Demirtas was accused by the premier of "treason" a high-profile visit to Moscow just a month after Turkey's shooting down of a Russian warplane led to a crisis in ties. "I can discuss the constitution with anyone, but the unity of Turkey is not a matter of discussion," Davutoglu said. On Sunday, the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), an association of

Kurdish political organizations, released a declaration calling for self-rule in the country's southeast. "The rightful resistance waged by our people against the policies that undermine the Kurdish problem, is essentially a demand and struggle for local self-governance and local democracy," the 14-article declaration said.

Turkish security forces are currently imposing curfews several towns in the Kurdish-dominated southeast of Turkey in a bid to root out Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) rebels from urban centers. The operations mark a new escalation in the over three decade conflict with the PKK after a fragile truce collapsed in July after just two-and-a-half years

July after just two-and-a-half years.

The army said on Saturday nearly 200 PKK militants were killed in the operations since the offensive began in mid-December. The strongman of Turkish politics for more than a decade, Erdogan has long been pushing for a new constitution to transform his post into a powerful US-style executive presidency. However the AKP still does not command the two-thirds or three-fifths majority needed to change the constitution without support from other parties or a popular referendum, respectively. The government accuses the HDP of being the political wing of the PKK, although the party vehemently rejects the label. — AFP

ISRAELI LIBERALS CRY FOUL OVER NEW FUNDING DISCLOSURE BILL

OPPN LEADER CLAIMS BILL IS 'MUZZLING LAW'

JERUSALEM: Israeli Cabinet ministers gave preliminary approval Sunday to a bill that imposes new disclosure requirements on nonprofit groups that receive foreign funding - drawing accusations the government was trying to crack down on government critics, rattling relations with Europe and deepening an increasingly toxic divide between liberal and hawkish Israelis.

Critics said the regulations are meant to stifle dovish organizations critical of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government policies toward the Palestinians, since such nonprofits tend to rely heavily on donations from European countries. In contrast, pro-government and nationalistic nonprofit groups tend to rely on wealthy private donors, who are exempt from the measures under the bill. The legislature is expected to approve the bill as early as this week.

Opposition leader Isaac Herzog quickly blasted the bill as a "muzzling law" that would bring about "thought police." The bill, proposed by Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked and approved by a committee of ministers, also dealt a new setback to already strained relations with the European Union, which funds a variety of nonprofit groups. Israeli leaders have been outraged over the EU's recent decision to require labels on imported products made in West Bank settlements.

'Democratic decisions'

"I expect the European Union to respect the democratic decisions of Israel," said Shaked, who has said the bill is merely meant to ensure transparency. The bill requires organizations that receive more than half of their funds from a foreign government or entity to declare their sources of funding in reports and parliamentary discussions. Their activists also will be required to wear special tags when working in Israel's parliament.

All nonprofit groups are already required to file quarterly disclosure reports, regardless of their political leanings. Amir Fuchs of the Israel Democracy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank, said the additional measures are "likely to damage the functioning of civil society organizations, which provide many beneficial social service, educational, environmental and women's rights activities."

With Israel mired in a wave of near-daily violence with the Palestinians, hard-line lawmakers and activist groups have been stepping up the pressure on dovish opponents. Earlier this month, a nationalistic activist group called Im Tirtzu launched a fierce video campaign that accused human rights groups of being spies and foreign agents.



JERUSALEM: In this Sunday, May 17, 2015 file photo, Israel's newly-appointed Justice Minister, Ayelet Shaked, 39, attends a ceremony welcoming her at the Justice Ministry. — AP

Such sentiments have tested Israel's democratic ideals at a time when the government is facing public anger over the continuing violence and growing international criticism of its policies toward the Palestinians. This sense of isolation is fueling what some say is a siege mentality that perceives opposition activists as the enemy.

Israel's Army Radio said Sunday that it had obtained an internal European Union document quoting the EU ambassador as telling Shaked that her bill would undermine Israel's image as a democratic and pluralistic country. The ambassador was reported as saying the bill is better suited for despotic regimes since it aims to discriminate against government critics. The EU's local office declined to comment on the report.

Singled out

Groups affected by the bill said they were being unfairly singled out and noted that hard-line groups, including Im Tirtzu and organizations that support Jewish settlers in the West Bank, are exempt. "If the minister of justice is truly interested in transparency, she must first and foremost promote legislation requiring right-wing organizations to expose the millions they receive from private donors abroad and from the state budget," said Peace Now, a group that opposes Israeli settlement construction on occupied lands claimed by the

lestinians.

Adalah, a group that promotes the rights of Israel's Arab minority, said the plan to make groups wear special tags "is an act of humiliation and incitement." The New Israel Fund, another group that supports liberal Israeli causes, said the bill would expand the "open season" on human rights activists. Proponents of the bill say that foreign governments have standard diplomatic channels at their disposal through which they can push their agendas, and that funding nonprofit groups amounts to meddling in Israeli affairs.

Matan Peleg, director of Im Tirtzu, said European organizations "give small organizations in Israel super power." "Why do you try to change us from within? Leave us alone," Peleg said. A main target of the bill appeared to be Breaking the Silence, a group of former Israeli combat soldiers who criticize Israeli policies in the occupied West Bank.

The soldiers say they have come forward with their war stories to shine a light on problems either unknown or ignored by the public. But many Israeli leaders have portrayed them as traitors, in part because their reports and lectures are often aimed at foreign audiences. "Instead of dealing with the violence of the radical right, they are putting up a smoke screen by picking on human rights groups in Israel," said Avihai Stollar, a spokesman for Breaking the Silence. — AP

BURUNDI RIVALS RESUME PEACE TALKS IN UGANDA

KAMPALA: Rival Burundi factions held talks in Uganda yesterday, resuming long-stalled negotiations aimed at ending months of violence that raised fears of a return to civil war. Burundi's unrest began in April when President Pierre Nkurunziza announced his intention to run for a controversial third term, which he went on to win in July.

Yesterday's meeting only laid the ground-work for further negotiations, expected in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha early next year. Ugandan officials said talks would resume on January 6 but the Burundi government delegation said "no consensus" had been reached on the date. The talks hosted in Uganda's presidential palace in Entebbe, just outside the capital Kampala, were chaired by President Yoweri Museveni, who is acting as regional mediator in the crisis.

"I really appeal to you, the two sides, to sit down and have a political solution so that you save the people from the suffering," Museveni said. "You have no excuse not to sit down and quickly resolve... these are clear things, you can meet one afternoon and agree," he said. The 54-member African Union (AU) has said it will send in a 5,000-strong force to halt the violence, despite Burundi's government calling the proposed peacekeeping mission an "invasion force".

Burundi's Foreign Minister Alain-Aime Nyamitwe led the government delegation. The opposition delegates including members of CNARED, a coalition that presents itself as upholding the Arusha peace agreement that ended more than a decade of civil war in 2006, and which its says Nkurunziza has

"CNARED requires above all an immediate end to the massacres, because we cannot negotiate while people are about to be killed," CNARED spokesman Pancrace Cimpaye said, calling for the "immediate deployment" of the proposed AU force. Leading civil society members, including exiled human rights activist Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa and a number of reli-



KAMPALA: Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni gestures to delegates attending the Burundi peace talks at Entebbe State House. — AP

gious leaders, also took part.

'Manmade crisis'

Burundi's government has so far refused to hold direct talks with CNARED, calling it a "terrorist organisation" and accusing it of being behind a failed coup in May as well as ongoing attacks on security forces.

Hundreds of people have been killed since April, when opponents of Nkurunziza's relection bid took to the streets in protest. The unrest has since devolved into recurring armed attacks, with gunfire ringing out in the capital Bujumbura by night and corpses appearing on the streets almost every day.

"Today, Burundi is at a crossroads: either the leaders and people of Burundi will invest in the peace, security, stability and prosperity that they so richly deserve, or with their eyes firmly fixed on the rear driving mirror they will continue to hurtle towards violence, political intolerance and possible civil war," said Richard Sezibera, secretary general of the East Africa Community (EAC) bloc. Sezibera said the crisis "was neither necessary nor inevitable" but a "manmade crisis that can be resolved with dialogue." The violence-which has included an abortive coup, regular ambushes on security forces, street battles and even failed mortar bombings on the presidential palace-echoes attacks carried out during Burundi's 1993-2006 civil war.

AU Commission chief Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma last week said she welcomed "the resumption of the inter-Burundian dialogue in Entebbe" and had written to Nkurunziza pleading for "the early deployment" of peacekeepers. — AFP



CHICAGO: LaTarsha Jones, center, the daughter of Bettie Jones, is comforted by family and friends during a news conference in front of the house where Bettie Jones was killed Saturday in the West Garfield Park neighborhood. — AP

POLICE SHOOTING OF GRANDMA, TEEN DRAWS FURTHER CRITICISM

CHICAGO: The fatal shootings of a woman who worked with antiviolence community groups and a young man visiting his father for the holidays has raised further questions about the Chicago police department, already under intense scrutiny after the killing of black teenager. Grieving relatives and friends of the two victims, 55-year-old Bettie Jones and 19-year-old Quintonio LeGrier, gathered Sunday to remember them and criticize city officials who they said had once again failed residents.

Both Jones and LeGrief were black, and their deaths come amid a federal civil rights investigation into the Chicago Police Department, launched after the release of police dashcam video showing a white officer a black 17-year-old 16 times in 2014. A series of such shootings across the country has given rise to the Black Lives Matter protest movement.

The latest shooting happened early Saturday morning at a small two-story home, where Jones lived in a ground-floor apartment and LeGrier's father in an upstairs unit. Police, who were responding to an emergency call made by LeGrier's father after an argument with his son, have released few details beyond a brief statement.

It said that officers "were confronted by a combative subject resulting in the discharging of the officer's weapon" and added that Jones "was accidentally struck." Police did not disclose the race of the officer or officers, saying only that those involved will be placed on administrative duties. "I used to watch the news daily and I would grieve for other mothers, other family members, and now today I'm grieving myself," LeGrier's mother, Janet Cooksey said at a news conference outside the residence earlier Sunday.

Others who spoke said police should have used stun guns or other nonlethal methods if they felt they needed to subdue LeGrier. "Why do (police) have to shoot first and ask questions later?" Jacqueline Walker, a friend of Jones, asked. "It's ridiculous." Autopsy findings released Sunday by the Cook County medical examiner's office say Jones died from a gunshot to the chest and LeGrier from multiple gunshot wounds.

Police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi on Sunday said only that the shootings are being investigated by the city's Independent Police Review Authority, the main police oversight agency. LeGrier's cousin, Albert Person, said LeGrier's father had invited his son to a holiday gathering at another home on Christmas. Person said the son's refusal to go caused friction, but he downplayed the severity of the argument. "What family doesn't fight on the holidays?" he said. — AP

PM CAMERON VISITS FLOOD HIT HISTORIC CITY OF YORK

ENGLAND BATTLES TO GET BACK ON ITS FEET

RED SQUARE CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE

MOSCOW: Moscow's Red Square, traditionally a place where people gather to ring in the New Year, will be closed to revelers on December 31, city authorities said yesterday, amid mounting security concerns. This year, police will turn back everyone showing up at the square for the countdown to midnight sounded by the chimes on the Kremlin's tower clock, Moscow security chief Alexei Mayorov was quoted as saying on city hall's website.

The official reason given for the unprecedented closure of the square, one of Russia's top tourist attractions, was the filming of a live concert for state-run Channel One television that only a select audience will be allowed to attend. Mayorov said the police would tell anyone else that wants to join in "that Red Square is closed for an event and that there are a lot of other places around where people can have a wonderful time."

Speaking to Kommersant radio former lawmaker Alexander Klyukin said the surprise move was "the same as closing off Times Square in New York." Moscow has introduced a raft of tighter security measures since the terror attacks in Paris in November. The attacks added to the nervousness caused by the downing of a Russian passenger plane over Egypt's Sinai in late October, killing 224 people in what Moscow says was an act of terror.

"It's not a secret that Moscow is a desired target for an attack by international terrorists," Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said earlier this month. Metal detectors manned by security guards have been installed at the entrances to shopping centers and parking lot attendants have been given permission to check the trunks of suspicious vehicles. In other measures, Russia's main television tower Ostankino was sealed off with barbed wire this month, additional CCTV cameras have been installed in pedestrian areas of Moscow and police now patrol metro stations with sniffer dogs. — AFP



YORK: Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron greets soldiers working on flood relief in York city centre after the river Ouse burst its banks. — AP

YORK: British Prime Minister David Cameron visited the floodhit historic city of York yesterday as cities, towns and villages across northern England battled to get back on their feet following devastating storms. Cameron met soldiers and volunteers helping with the aftermath of the flooding as he faced increasing pressure to take more action to prevent further chaos in future.

Around 500 properties were flooded in York, one of Britain's top tourist destinations, on Sunday as two rivers burst their banks. Some residential streets became so inundated that cars were covered up to their roofs. Soldiers helped pile sandbags up to protect properties and businesses while emergency services paddled around the streets in dinghies trying to find stranded residents.

Flooding has also hit the northern cities of Leeds and Manchester in recent days, as well as a string of towns and villages in the region. "Let's have a look and see whether more needs to be done," Cameron told Sky News when asked about his government's response. "After any one of these events, it's right to sit down, look at what you've spent, what you've built, what you're planning to spend, what you're planning to build and work out is it in the right places, are we doing it in the right way, do we need to do more?"

The Environment Agency had 10 severe flood warnings in place yesterday, signaling a "danger to life", chiefly at points along major rivers in Yorkshire. There were also over 150 flood

warning or alerts in place in England and Wales, meaning flooding was either expected or possible. Cameron sent in 200 more troops to help 300 already on the ground in northern England with tackling the effects of flooding Sunday. Another 1,000 are on standby in case the situation gets worse.

More rain is forecast later in the week, raising the prospect of further floods at a time when many people are still at home following Christmas celebrations. The Met Office weather forecasting service has issued warnings of rain on Wednesday in northwest and northeast England plus Wales, Northern Ireland and parts of Scotland.

'Changing climate'

As the clear-up got under way, Cameron's government was under pressure yesterday over the quality of Britain's flood defenses. The country has been hit by a series of serious floods including in Cumbria, northern England, earlier this month and in late 2013 and early 2014 in southwest and southeast England.

The Independent newspaper's front page headline read: "The drowning of the north of England" while the Sun ran with "Blunder water". The Guardian said that "empty rhetoric and even the army cannot substitute for coherent policy on flood prevention". "Climate change and inadequate preparation... ensure that the floods will become a painfully regular future of British life," it said in an editorial. — AFP



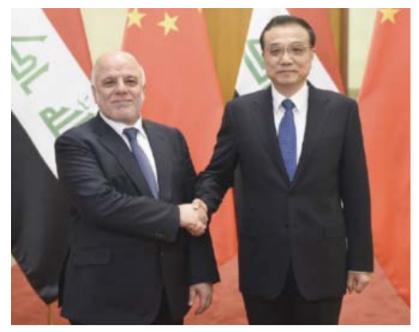








CHINA, IRAQ ESTABLISH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi (left) shakes hands with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang



Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir of Saudi Arabia



Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif Khonsari of Iran

BEIJING: China and Iraq agreed Tuesday to establish a strategic partnership during the on-going visit by Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to China. The two countries issued a joint statement to the effect in Beijing, saying that the strategic partnership will help deepen bilateral cooperation in various fields and promote development and prosperity in both countries.

According to the joint statement, the two sides agreed to strengthen high-level engagement, enhance strategic communication on the bilateral ties and international and regional issues of common concern to increase consensus and consolidate strategic mutual trust. The two countries will continue to support each other firmly on issues concerning national sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and security, it said.

The two countries vowed to take into consideration of each other's core interest and major concerns, and not to interfere in each other's domestic affairs, it said. Iraq will abide by the one-China policy and support China's stance on issues related to Xinjiang. China will support Iraq's unity, territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, said the joint statement.

The two sides condemned terrorism of all forms and pledged to support each other's efforts to maintain national security, stability and to fight against terrorism, it said. The two sides expressed opposition to applying double standards on fighting against terrorism, and to linking terrorism with certain country, ethnic group or religion.

They also agreed to strengthen coordination and cooperation on international and regional affairs, and voiced support for countries in West Asia and North Africa to explore a development path in accordance with their national situation and to solve regional hot issues through dialogue and negotiation to realize regional stability and development.

With regard to regional affairs, Iraq appreciated China's just position and important role, while China supported Iraq to play a positive role, the joint statement said. "Iraq is a major country in the Middle East. The new government attaches high importance to relations with China and hopes to make a difference in national construction after taking office. A further development of bilateral ties and cooperation is not only useful for both countries, but also for the region's stability and development," said Wu Sike, formerly China's special envoy on Middle East affairs.

Abadi's official visit to China from Tuesday to Wednesday is his first since taking office in September 2014. While meeting with Abadi Tuesday afternoon, President Xi Jinping said relations between the two countries have kept a momentum of steady development in recent years.

Establishing strategic partnership will lay a solid foundation for future development of bilateral ties, Xi said, adding the two sides should take it as an opportunity to advance their relationship to a higher level. Xi voiced support for Iraq's efforts to maintain national sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. He said China firmly supports Iraq's measures to safeguard national security and stability, and will advance cooperation in this field.

China was ready to strengthen the integration of two countries' development strategies within the framework of the Belt and Road initiative, and assist Iraq's reconstruction in energy, electricity, communication and infrastructure, Xi said.

China will encourage and support its companies to participate in the construction of large projects that will have a major impact on Iraq's development and the well-being of its people, and conduct related investment and financing cooperation, Xi said.

China will also help Iraq train professionals imperative for its economic and social development, and provide opportunities for Iraqi youths, scholars, journalists and think tank experts to visit China, the president added.

Abadi said he hoped to promote bilateral cooperation in such areas as economy, energy, electricity, communication, infrastructure and security, as well as exchanges between the two peoples through his visit. He welcomed Chinese companies to increase investment in Iraq and pledged to provide necessary protection.

The two countries also vowed to further strengthen parliamentary exchanges in a meeting between Abadi and China's top legislator Zhang Dejiang on Tuesday afternoon. "Legislative exchange and cooperation is an important part of the China-Iraq relationship," said Zhang, chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC). He noted that the NPC stands ready to work with the Iraqi National Assembly. Hailing Iraq-China friendship, Abadi said the Iraqi side looks forward to closer exchanges between the two parliaments.

Abadi was invited by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, who held talks with Abadi on Tuesday. China, Iraq sign memo to promote energy partnership

China, Iraq sign memo to promote energy partnership

China and Iraq pledged to establish a longterm, stable energy partnership with a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed on oil and gas on Tuesday. China is willing to increase energy cooperation with Iraq, with projects such as oilfield exploitation and refinery construction in the Middle Eastern country, said Chinese Premier Li Keqiang during talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi in Beijing.

The two sides agreed that energy cooperation is an important part of Iraq-China pragmatic cooperation, according to a joint statement issued on Tuesday. They agreed a long-term and comprehensive strategic partnership on energy cooperation, especially in the oil and gas sector, would be established, it said. More investment will be channeled to the energy sector and governments and enterprises will be encouraged to cooperate in the areas of crude oil trade, oil-gas exploration and development, oilfield engineering service technology, construction of storage and transportation facilities, chemical refining engineering, and energy equipment, it said.

During their talks, the two prime ministers reached a consensus on using China-made equipment to support oil-gas exploitation in Iraq, said Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Ming after the cooperative agreement signing ceremony.

Li and Abadi also witnessed the signing of a MoU on the promotion of the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The two sides agreed to improve pragmatic cooperation within the framework of the "Belt and Road" initiative to achieve mutual benefit and win-win, according to statement.

The Belt and Road initiative will be a trade and infrastructure network that connects Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient trade routes. "Iraq is an important partner of China in the region," said Li. China supports Iraq's economic reconstruction and will encourage competitive enterprises to participate in energy, electric power, telecommunication and infrastructure reconstruction projects in Iraq, said the statement.

In their talks, Li said China will help Iraq improve its production capacity in the areas of cement, steel, flat glass and engineering machinery. The roots of poverty in the Middle East are a lack of infrastructure and the low-level of industrialization, said Hua Liming, a research fellow at the China Institute of International Studies.

The Belt and Road initiative will contribute to the peace and development of countries in the Middle East region, said Hua. Li also hoped Iraq would take effective measures to ensure the safety of Chinese companies and citizens in Iraq. Abadi thanked China for supporting Iraq's economic development and social stability.

Iraq is facing the pressing task of rebuilding its economy and improving people's livelihood, he said, noting that Iraq was willing to enhance long-term cooperation with China in areas of infrastructure building, oil, electric power and telecommunication. Iraq expects to further expand friendly cooperation with China and hopes China will increase investment to Iraq in those areas, he said. Abadi is paying an official visit to China from Tuesday to Wednesday at the invitation of Li Kegiang.

Wang Yi: China Votes for Peace

Foreign Minister Wang Yi gave an interview to Chinese media after attending the third foreign ministers' meeting of the International Syria Support Group in New York. Wang Yi said this foreign ministers' meeting was held in haste, and there was inadequacy in some of the important preparations. Since the meeting was held, China holds that all parties focus on the political settlement process. The political settlement process can be seen as going backward if no advance is made. All parties should join efforts to maintain the momentum and put it on an irreversible track.

Wang Yi said that China's position on the Syrian issue is clear and firm. First, China advocates insisting on political settlement. Military means may achieve temporary results, but it is difficult to solve the problem fundamentally. The world does not lack military means or ability, but is in need of consensus to promote political settlement and practical actions taken thereof. At present, the political settlement to the Syrian issue comes to a new and hard-won window period. This foreign ministers' meeting should further pool consensus and focus on discussions about the major problems that we are faced with. The top priority now is to start peace talks, stop violence and cease fire. Without peace talks, cease-fire will not be sustainable; and without a cease-fire, peace talks can hardly continue. He hopes this foreign ministers' meeting can

reach consensus on solving these two problems. Second, China insists that the Syrian people determine Syria's future independently. It completely conforms to the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and accords with the universally recognized norms governing international relations. It might be convenient and necessary in case of emergency to decide a small country's destiny by one or several big countries, but it requires serious discussions on whether it can solve the problem fundamentally, whether it is in line with the will of people of countries concerned and whether it will bring troubles difficult to solve. We hold that Syria's future should be independently chosen and finally determined by the Syrian people. What the international community needs to do is to create a necessary environment and favorable conditions for this. We should make efforts towards

Third, China insists that the UN plays its role as the main channel in mediation. The UN's intervention has more legality and authority, and it is the greatest common divisor that all parties can accept. Concerning the issue of Syrian opposition's integration, all parties have made many efforts from Moscow to Cairo and Riyadh, but there are many different voices as well. The UN should actively intervene in the last period of discussions on the opposition's integration, listen to the views of all parties, properly adjust and enrich the existing list to strive for a list that all parties can accept, and appoint a team in the opposition to participate in the peace talks. At the same time, it is necessary for capable countries to intensify works with the Syrian government, drive the Syrian government to the negotiation table, and strive for a start, continuation and results of the negotiation.

The UN should also play a more important role in ceasing fire. In terms of realistic feasibility, ceasefire can be promoted step by step from the simple to the difficult, from points to regions, from parts to the overall situation. With the advancement of peace talks and the establishment of mutual trust, the scope of cease-fire can be expanded continuously. The Security Council should timely authorize arrangements of cease-fire supervision and authorize the deployment of peacekeeping operations in mature conditions. The Security Council will hold a ministerial conference on the Syrian issue this afternoon. He hopes that a resolution can be adopted to check and accept the consensus and achievements in the Geneva Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the two Vienna Foreign Ministers' Meetings and solidify the hard-won momentum of political

Wang Yi stressed that China has no private interests in Syria or the whole Middle East, and never pursues private interests. We always adhere to the stance of objectivity and fairness. The Syrian issue has lasted for five years. Whether China will vote for support or objection, the one and only aim is to avoid war, prevent turmoil, bring tranquility to the people, give chance to peace and give a way out to political settlement. China will adhere to this principle when participating in the ministerial conference on the Syrian issue of the Security Council this afternoon and the discussions on relevant resolutions

Yi attends Third Foreign Ministers' meeting of the International Syria Support Group

Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended in New York the third foreign ministers' meeting of the International Syria Support Group. Wang Yi put forward China's propositions and suggestions on politically solving the Syrian issue in five respects including launching peace talks, ceasing fire and stopping violence, joining forces to combat terrorism, humanitarian rescue and economic reconstruction.

First, as for peace talks, the list of oppositions attending the negotiations should be open and embody representativeness, balance and inclusiveness as much as possible. Those take part in no extreme and violent terrorist acts and support the political solution process should be given an opportunity to attend the negotiations, and the UN could involve in the process to make relevant work more authoritative and legitimate.

more authoritative and legitimate.

Second, with regard to ceasing fire, we should advance it gradually from easy to difficult work, from one to all aspects and from partial to overall situation by considering the feasibility in reality. With the advancement of the peace talks and establishment of mutual trust, we are constantly expanding the cease-fire area. The UN Security Council should authorize establishing cease-fire and supervision arrangements at a proper time and authorize and deploy peace-keeping missions when the conditions are ripe.

Third, as to counterterrorism, we focus on enhancing coordination to join forces. We hope that the foreign ministerial meeting will coordinate counterterrorism actions of all parties in Syria to join forces. Joint efforts to combat terrorism should be demonstrated not only in military actions but also in other aspects such as information exchanges and severing the channel of terrorist personnel and capital.

Fourth, in the field of humanitarian rescue, we should ensure the success of the humanitarian aid conference for Syria, and increase humanitarian support to Syria and its neighboring countries. China has sent multiple batches of humanitarian aid to Syria and the other countries in the region and will strengthen coordination with relevant parties.

Fifth, concerning reconstruction, we can consider establishing a friendly group for the reconstruction of Syria, and timely convene a conference of aiding countries for the reconstruction of Syria. China suggests to establish a reconstruction trust fund led by the UN to encourage the refugees to voluntarily go back to their homeland through reconstruction and specially establish a funding program for the refugees to resettle and be reemployed in their homeland in the international aid process.

Wang Yi expressed that the Syrian issue is very complicated. Protecting one's own interests will only come to a dead end, and only by mutual compromise and inclusiveness can we open up new space. It is hoped that all parties will seize the

opportunity, shelve the disputes, pool the consensus, and overcome the difficulties to jointly advance the political solution process of the Syrian issue. China will continuously play a constructive role to this end.

Yi attends Ministerial meeting of the UN Security Council on the Syrian Issue

Wang Yi attended the Ministerial Meeting of the UN Security Council on the Syrian Issue in New York. The UN Security Council unanimously adopted the Resolution 2254 ratifying the results of the foreign ministers' meeting of the International Syria Support Group, and China cast an affirmative vote.

After the adoption of the Resolution, Wang Yi said in his speech that China welcomes the UN Security Council unanimously adopting the Resolution to politically solve the Syrian issue that pooled the extensive consensus of the international community, embodied the important role of the UN Security Council, reflected the ardent expectation of the Syrian people and injected new impetus into the political solution of the Syrian issue. We should earnestly implement the Resolution, turn the consensus into actions as soon as possible and transform the expectations into reality at an early date.

Wang Yi expressed that in the past five years since the breakout of the Syrian crisis, there has been ups and downs as well as gain and loss in the political process. We should sum up the successful experience and draw lessons from the failures to steadily advance the political process in the next stage and push the political solution process of the Syrian issue onto an irreversible path.

First, adhere to the political solution of the Syrian issue. In solving the Syrian crisis, military means are no way out while political negotiations are the right path. All conflicting parties in Syria must cease fire immediately. The UN Security Council should send out a clear and strong signal to this end. Relevant countries especially regional nations should exert their own influence, and conduct mediation work on all parties in Syria separately to urge them to truly cease fire and stop violence.

Second, adhere to the principle that the future of Syria should be independently decided by the Syrian people. The political process in Syria should be "led and owned by the Syrian people", which not only conforms to the principles and purpose of the UN Charter but also accords with the universal norms governing international relations. The specific arrangements for Syria's political transition should be discussed by the Syrian government and its oppositions independently, Syria's constitutionalization ways should be decided independently by all parties and circles in the country, and the future Syrian leaders should be chosen by the Syrian people independently. Other countries should offer constructive help and the international community should provide a necessary environment and create favorable conditions to this end.

Third, adhere to the guideline that the UN plays the role as a main mediator. The intervention of the UN is more legitimate and authoritative and serves as the greatest common divisor acceptable to all parties. It is hoped that the UN will orderly advance the work according to the authorization and play a more active role in such aspects as integrating the oppositions and coordinating international counterterrorism actions. All countries should cooperate with and support the UN.

Wang Yi stressed that China always upholds an objective and just stance in solving the Syrian issue. China has no private interests and never pursues personal gains on the Syrian issue. No matter we cast an affirmative vote or a dissenting vote, we do it for avoiding wars and turmoil, offering tranquility and peace to the Syrian people, providing a way out for the political solution, safeguarding the fundamental and long-term interests of people in Syria and the rest of the region, maintaining the purposes of the UN Charter and basic norms governing international relations, and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of vast developing countries especially medium and small ones.

Wang Yi expressed that the current situation in Syria concerns all parties and affects its neighbors and the world at large, with its increasingly prominent spillover effect causing such severe global challenges as terrorism and refugee crisis. We call on all parties to truly put aside the competition for geopolitical interests, abandon the zero-sum mentality of win or lose, earnestly bear in mind the big picture of safeguarding global strategic stability and the welfare of the international community, make concerted efforts to advance the political transition, and unite as one to combat terrorism, join efforts to ease the humanitarian crisis and comprehensively address the refugee issue.

Yi meets with Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari of Iraq

Foreign Minister Wang Yi met in New York with Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari of Iraq. Wang Yi expressed that currently China and Iraq enjoy sound relations. China understands Iraq's legitimate and reasonable claims on such issues as safeguarding national security and progressing

economic reconstruction. China is willing to try its best to continue supporting Iraq in realizing its peace, security and economic reconstruction, and is also willing to witness Iraq playing its due part in regional stability and development. China is willing to work with Iraq to strengthen high-level exchanges and develop production capacity cooperation, so as to promote China-Iraq relations to a new stage. China also hopes that Iraq could provide strong security guarantee for Chinese personnel participating in construction of relevant projects in the country.

Ibrahim Al-Jaafari expressed that Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi of Iraq is looking forward to visiting China before long to further advance bilateral mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields. Iraq thanks China for offering assistance and humanitarian aid to Iraq to its security and reconstruction. Iraq will take practical measures to guarantee the safety of Chinese organizations and personnel.

Ibrahim al-Jaafari notified China of Turkey dispatching military forces into northern Iraq, stressed that such act infringes Iraq's sovereignty, and expressed the hope that China will support the UN Security Council to convene an urgent meeting to urge Turkey to withdraw its army immediately.

Wang Yi expressed that Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected and protected, and that any anti-terrorism action should be conducted within the framework of the international law and in accordance with related resolutions of the UN Security Council, especially with the approval of the countries involved, and should be conducive to regional peace and stability.

Yi meets with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif Khonsari of Iran

On the afternoon of December 17, 2015 local time, Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif Khonsari of Iran in New York.

Wang Yi expressed that the 3rd foreign min-

isters' meeting of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) to be held tomorrow is at a critical time point of politically solving the Syrian issue. Some progress has been made in the last two meetings, yet missions such as integration of oppositions and screening of terrorist organizations remain uncompleted. Wang Yi highlighted that the momentum of political settlement was gathered painstakingly. The process of political settlement may retrogress if we fail to forge ahead. Considering the big picture, the Chinese side decided to participate in the meetings and is willing to, with an objective and impartial stance, make constructive contributions to advancing political settlement of the Syrian issue. It is hoped that all parties can reach new consensus on solving the remaining issues at tomorrow's meeting so as to inject new impetus into the political settlement

Mohammad Javad Zarif Khonsari expressed that the Iranian side is committed to enhancing comprehensive cooperation with the Chinese side. At present the Syrian issue is on the critical moment of political settlement with progress and differences interwoven. Iran stands ready to maintain close communication with China throughout the whole process.

Yi meets with Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia

On December 18, 2015, Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir of Saudi Arabia when attending the third foreign ministers' meeting of the International Syria Support Group in New York.

Wang Yi expressed that China attaches importance to China-Saudi Arabia relations and is willing to strengthen comprehensive strategic cooperation with Saudi Arabia in various fields. The Middle East has suffered wars for long, which is not in line with the overall interests of Saudi Arabia and other countries in this region. China hopes that Saudi Arabia, as a regional power, can play a positive and constructive part in appropriately solving related issues.

Wang Yi said that China has no private interests in the Middle East, and has always adopted an objective and impartial stance. China is willing to strengthen communication with Saudi Arabia and make efforts to advance the political settlement of hotspot issues like the Syrian issue, which is not only in accordance with the fundamental interests of the countries in this region but also conducive to world peace and stability.

Adel Al-Jubeir expressed that the relationship with China is one of the most important bilateral relations for Saudi Arabia and the two countries enjoy a strong bilateral relationship in politics, economy, trade, security and other fields. The leaders and people of Saudi Arabia regard China as a great country and friend and look forward to strengthening high-level exchanges with China to promote bilateral relations to a new stage. Saudi Arabia is willing to enhance communication and cooperation with China in resolving regional hotspot issues. — **Courtesy of Chinese Embassy Kuwait**



KABUL: Afghan firefighters wash a road at the site of a suicide car bomb near the international airport. — AFP

TALEBAN BOMBER TARGETS NATO CONVOY NEAR TO KABUL AIRPORT

SECURITY SITUATION WORSENS IN AFGHANISTAN

KABUL: A Taleban bomber detonated an explosives-packed vehicle near Kabul airport yesterday, killing one civilian in an attack targeting a NATO convoy the day after Pakistan's army chief visited the city to try to revive peace talks. At least 33 others, many of them children, were wounded in the assault, which occurred as the security situation worsens in Afghanistan with the Taleban ramping up their nationwide offensive.

The explosion, which left wreckage of mangled and smoldering vehicles, comes despite a renewed international push to jumpstart stalled negotiations with the insurgents. "The bombing left one person dead and 33 others wounded," an Afghan health ministry spokesman told AFP. "Among the wounded were 18 children and four women."

Officials said the target of the powerful blast, which blew out windows of a local bakery, appeared to be a NATO convoy that passed through the area. In a brief statement, the international military coalition ruled out any NATO fatalities. Taleban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid

said they were behind the attack on a foreign convoy, claiming that "several invading forces were killed and wounded".

The Taleban are known to exaggerate battle-field claims. The attack comes a day after Pakistan's powerful army chief General Raheel Sharif visited Kabul to try to prepare the ground for fresh peace talks with the Taleban. "Both sides agreed that the first round of dialogue between Afghanistan, Pakistan, US and China will be held in January to lay out a comprehensive roadmap for peace," the Afghan presidential palace said in a statement.

Historic backers

Asim Bajwa, a Pakistani military spokesman, said on Twitter that the talks would be held in the first week of January but did not disclose the venue. There was no immediate reaction from the Taleban to the announcement of the fourparty talks. Pakistan-the Taleban's historic backers-hosted a milestone first round of talks in July but the negotiations stalled when the insurgents belatedly confirmed the death of longtime

leader Mullah Omar.

Afghanistan sees the support of Pakistan as vital to bring the Taleban to the negotiating table. But despite the growing bonhomie with Islamabad, analysts caution that any substantive talks are still a long way off. Afghan forces are currently battling to push out Taleban insurgents who seized large swathes of the key opium-rich district of Sangin in the southern province of Helmand.

Observers say the intensifying insurgency highlights a push by the insurgents to make more military gains in a bid to achieve greater concessions during talks. The offensive has prompted the first British deployment to the volatile province in 14 months.

The deployment, in addition to a recent arrival of US Special Forces in the region, comes a year after NATO forces formally ended their combat operations in the country. The British and US intervention has fuelled the perception that foreign powers are increasingly being drawn back into the conflict as Afghan forces struggle to rein in the Taleban. — AFP

PAKISTAN WALLS OFF GLACIAL LAKE TO STOP FLASH FLOODS

BAGROT VALLEY: Nestled at the foot of five snow-capped mountain peaks in Pakistan's northern Gilgit-Baltistan province, the villages of the Bagrot valley face fearsome flooding risks. As glaciers retreat, they leave behind lakes supported by ice dams or accumulations of rock and soil. Inherently unstable, these dams often burst, sending huge volumes of water rushing into the villages below them.

But a project to build protective structures around vulnerable villages has found a way to lessen the risks and the damage. "Outbursts can trigger a release of millions of cubic metres of water and debris in a few hours," said Khalil Ahmed, national manager of the Pakistan GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flood) project. But walls can help divert the water, he said.

The four-year, \$7.6 million project, which focuses on Bagrot valley in Gilgit-Baltistan and Bindo Gol valley in the northwestern Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, has since 2011 built flood diversion walls around more than 10 vulnerable villages. Some of the barriers are made up of concrete steps, while others use stone-filled wire-mesh cages to divert floodwater, debris and ice away from buildings and land and instead direct it into the rivers flowing through the valleys

Diverting the water

With funding and logistical support from the U.N.'s Adaptation Fund, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Pakistan government, the project is already producing promising results, experts say.

When a glacial lake burst in April 2014 and another in July 2015, both triggering flash floods in the Bagrot valley, the walls saved village properties and maize and vegetable crops from being washed away, said Shahadat Noor, a potato farmer in Bagrot. "The structures veered the floodwater flow off the settlements and croplands, sending it gushing safely through the valley," he told Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Local people say the project has also helped mountain communities regain confidence in their ability to withstand such floods. "We do know we cannot control glacial melt and erratic or intense rains," said Mazhar Hussain, a community development specialist who runs the Dubani Development Organization, which works on the Pakistan GLOF Project. "But we can, at least, minimize the risk of GLOF, (flash) floods, landslides or land erosion by adapting to the impacts of global warming on the valley's glaciers," he said.

As well as bolstering Bagrot's defenses against glacial flooding, said Hussain, the project has designated nine safe havens from flooding: high, open and flat areas, equipped with toilets and access to drinking water, that villagers can use as temporary shelters when floods hit.

Over the last three years, construction on such defenses has begun in 15 different Bagrot mountain villages identified by the communities as vulnerable to glacial lake outburst floods or flash flooding, Hussain added. Sajid Ali, a young farmer in the Bagrot valley, said his village used to fear flash floods that threatened to sweep away homes, farm plots and centuries-old irrigation channels. "But such is the case no more," he said, standing in the shadow of the Hinarchi glacier.

Adapting to the inevitable

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, in 2010 there were about 2,400 glacier lakes in Pakistan's north. Now there are over 3,000, according to the department, and the number is expected to keep growing as temperatures continue to rise, summers grow longer and warmer, and winters get shorter.

Ghulam Rasul, the meteorological department's director-general and former senior climatologist, said more than seven glacial lake outbursts have been recorded in the last two years in the country's north. The department currently has 52 glacial lakes in the north flagged as likely to burst at any time, he said. And the problem isn't limited to Pakistan. Nepal, Bhutan and India are also critically vulnerable to glacial lake outburst floods and flash floods, climatologists say.

In June 2013, devastating flooding in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand killed more than 5,000 people, and the Sunkoshi landslide tragedy in Nepal in August 2014 left at least 150 dead. Climatologists at Pakistan's Global Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC) and the Pakistan Meteorological Department warn that as the number of glacial lakes continues to grow, outbursts will be hard to avoid. The focus should be on finding ways to protect communities from the inevitable, they say.

Replicating the measures in the Bagrot valley could "help stave off loss of life and livelihoods in the mountain communities and downstream areas," said Munir Sheikh, former head of climatology and environment at the impact studies centre in Islamabad. — Reuters

TWO DEAD IN BANGLADESH MILITANT HIDEOUT BLAST

DHAKA: Two suspected followers of a banned Bangladeshi Islamist outfit were killed yesterday in an explosion outside the capital Dhaka as security forces raided a third extremist hideout in four days. The Rapid Action Battalion launched the raid on an abandoned house at Gazipur, 40 kilometers north of Dhaka, just after midnight, said a spokesman for the elite police unit

Suspected members of Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) hurled bombs towards the raiding party before an explosion in the building. Two bodies were later recovered. "We opened fire at them after a law enforcer was injured as the JMB militants hurled an IED (improvised explosive device) at our officers when we surrounded the house," said RAB spokesman Major Rumman Mahmud.

"After we shot several rounds of bullets we heard an explosion inside the den. Later we found two bodies lying on the floor," he said. Unexploded IEDs, grenades, a pistol, bullets and JMB propaganda leaflets were found at the premises. It was the third raid on a suspected militant hideout in four days as security forces intensify a hunt for extremists following a series of deadly attacks on foreigners as well as an attack at a mosque at a naval base.

The raid came hours after three alleged JMB militants were arrested in the port city of Chittagong. Police found a modern assault rifle, a huge cache of bullets, bombmaking equipment and army uniforms during the operation. "The worst part of our concern is they have local military fatigues, which makes it harder for the police to monitor their movement," Chittagong Metropolitan Police Commissioner Abdul Jalil Mandal said.

Last Thursday police raided a multistorey building in Dhaka's Mirpur suburb and arrested seven suspected JMB men after a 15-hour operation. Police said they recovered hand grenades and suicide bombers' vests. The high-profile raids and arrests have raised fears Islamist militants have regrouped a decade after they carried out a series of bombings.

The nationwide blasts coincided with the launch of a campaign to introduce Sharia law in the Muslim-majority but officially secular nation. In recent months a string of attacks and murders of foreigners, secular bloggers, publishers, Sufi leaders, Shiites and Ahmadi Muslims were claimed by the Islamic State group.—AFP



 $\textbf{CHANDIGARH: Indian rescuers search for victims in the rubble of a collapsed building.} \\ \textbf{--} \textbf{AFP}$

SIX DEAD AFTER LIQUOR SHOP COLLAPSES IN INDIA

CHANDIGARH: A two-storey liquor store collapsed yesterday killing six laborers in northern India, police said, the latest deadly accident to highlight shoddy construction standards in the country. The building in Chandigarh city crumbled as construction workers in an adjoining plot were digging a basement, triggering the wall of the liquor store to cave in. "Six people are confirmed dead and 11 have been injured. They have been taken to hospital for treatment," Chandigarh's senior superintendent of police, Sukhchain Singh Gill, said. He added that no one else was feared trapped after rescuers helped by residents plucked out survivors using shovels and bare hands to shift mangled heaps of steel and concrete.

The accident is the latest in a long line of deadly building collapses in India, some of which have highlighted shoddy construction standards. In July, seven people died when a three-storey building collapsed in heavy rains in Mumbai just a year after an 11-storey apartment tower in Tamil Nadu came crashing down killing 61 people, mostly

A massive influx of people to cities in search of jobs and a shortage of cheap housing have fuelled the construction of illegal buildings across the country, often with sub-standard material. Millions also live in dilapidated old buildings, many of which cave in during heavy rains. — AFP

MYANMAR ACTIVIST JAILED FOR SATIRICAL ARMY FACEBOOK POST

YANGON: A Myanmar court sentenced a female activist to six months in jail yesterday for a Facebook post satirizing the powerful military, the latest crackdown against free speech in the former junta-ruled country. Freedoms have flourished since the junta ceded full control to a partly civilian government in 2011, culminating in landmark elections last month.

But there have been growing concerns over renewed breaches of civil liberties. Criticism of the still powerful military remains fraught with risk. Chaw Sandi Tun, 25, was arrested in October after a post on her Facebook page made fun of the army. "My daughter was sentenced to six months' imprisonment at Ma U Bin township court this morning under Section 66(d) of the telecoms law. We will appeal as we are not satisfied," her mother Ei San told AFP.

She was referring to a broadly worded law which bans the defamation or "disturbing" of people through any telecommunications network. The maximum penalty she faced was three years in jail. Her lawyer confirmed the sentence but said his client denied making the post. "She said her Facebook account had been hacked several times and that she didn't post that post," Robert San Aung said.

The post compared the color of a new uniform for army officers with that of a "longyi" (traditional skirt) worn by National League for Democracy (NLD) leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose party swept last moth's polls and will form a government next year. "If you love mother that much, why don't

you wrap mother's longyi on your head?' the post said.

The United States embassy has previously called for the release of Chaw Sandi Tun and Patrick Khum Jaa Lee, another activist who has been arrested over Facebook posts critical of the military. Myanmar has come a long way since the decades of brutal rule under a junta which tolerated little dissent, jailed critics, ran vast informant networks and kept the nation closed off as its economy collapsed.

The quasi-civilian government which replaced outright junta rule in 2011 was widely praised for a series of political and economic reforms, with most international sanctions dropped. In recent years social media has also exploded, a new phenomenon in a country where owning a mobile phone just five years ago cost thousands of dollars. But in recent months the military and its incumbent army-backed government have been accused by rights groups of returning to junta-era tactics. There was widespread criticism of a violent police crackdown on student protesters earlier this year.

In February a freelance photojournalist was arrested for uploading a satirical post on Facebook mocking the military. And in October 2014 another freelance journalist was shot dead by the army in a case raised by US President Barack Obama during his official visit to Myanmar. Two soldiers were later acquitted of the murder in a country where the powerful military remains shielded from civilian oversight. — AFP



MEGHALAYA: In this photograph taken on November 8, 2015, an Indian Khasi tribal villager walks along a lane in the village of Mawlynnong in the north-eastern state of Meghalaya. Mawlynnong village is the cleanest village in Asia. — AFP

FAMILIES SEEK APOLOGY ON AIRASIA CRASH ANNIVERSARY

SURABAYA: Families of those killed in an AirAsia plane crash in Indonesia demanded yesterday the airline apologize for negligence after a probe showed faulty equipment contributed to the accident, a year on from the tragedy that left 162 dead. Flight QZ8501 plunged into the Java Sea in stormy weather on December 28 last year during what was supposed to be a routine flight from the Indonesian city of Surabaya to Singapore.

Relatives of some of the passengers, AirAsia officials and the head of Indonesia's search and rescue agency gathered yesterday in Surabaya, the country's second-biggest city, for a private ceremony to remember those killed in the crash. It came just weeks after Indonesian investigators' final report showed a chronically faulty component in a rudder control system, poor maintenance and the pilots' inadequate response were major factors in the crash.

Ahead of the ceremony, an association set up by victims' relatives to push for reform of Indonesia's beleaguered aviation sector demanded an apology from AirAsia. "We the families demand AirAsia apologise openly to victims' families for the negligence that has resulted in fatalities," said a statement from the group.

The statement added that the families were "surprised and shocked" the report showed the chain of events that triggered the accident was set off by "negligence" with

regard to the faulty component. Sunu Widyatmoko, chief executive of AirAsia's Indonesian affiliate, refused to comment on the accident report following the ceremony.

The crash of the Airbus A320-200 was the first major setback for the Malaysia-based budget carrier after a spectacular 13-year run of success. The families also demanded the government stop AirAsia from flying the Surabaya to Singapore route, and called on Indonesian authorities to improve aviation safety following a series of air disasters in the country in the past year. The Indonesian probe found the component, which had cracked soldering, suffered problems 23 times in the 12 months before the crash, and cited issues with maintenance.

During the ill-fated flight, the component malfunctioned several times, prompting the pilots to reset a computer system in a bid to fix it. But the plane's autopilot was disabled in the process, leading the crew to lose control. The crash was one of several aviation accidents in the sprawling archipelago over the past 12 months. In August, a turbo-prop plane operated by Indonesian domestic carrier Trigana crashed in the remote eastern region of Papua during a short flight in bad weather, killing all 54 people on board. And in June an Indonesian military plane went down into a residential neighborhood in the city of Medan, exploding in a fireball and killing 142 people. — AFP



SURABAYA: Families of AirAsia victims wait for a meeting with AirAsia management and police at a local police headquarters. — AFP

CHINA MEDIA HEAP SCORN ON EXPELLED FRENCH REPORTER

BEIJING: Chinese media yesterday celebrated the imminent expulsion of a French reporter accused of supporting terrorism, with a poll purporting to demonstrate overwhelming support for the decision. Beijing refused to renew Ursula Gauthier's visa after she published an article criticizing government policies in Xinjiang, home to the mostly Muslim Uighur minority and a region which regularly sees violent incidents.

The foreign ministry last week said her essay in French news magazine L'Obs "flagrantly championed acts of terrorism and acts of cruelly killing innocents". In her story Gauthier suggested that violence by Uighurs against civilians might, in part, be driven by

resentment of government policies. She also questioned China's motives in expressing sympathy for the victims of the November 13 Paris attacks, writing that they could be part of a calculated plan to tie Beijing's strict handling of Xinjiang into the broader fight against global terrorism.

With her departure imminent, Gauthier insisted the government simply misunderstood her article. "I didn't write that I supported terrorism, I never supported terrorism in my article," she told AFP at her home in Beijing. "I was simply explaining that the Uighurs' anger came from somewhere, just like we can explain the origin of the anger of young Arabs who become radicalized, there are roots to it," she added.

'Fact-distorting'

Gauthier previously said that her treatment was an attempt "to intimidate foreign correspondents in China, particularly on issues concerning minorities, especially in Tibet and Xinjiang". China's official Xinhua news agency said in a commentary yesterday that her piece

was "as immoral as it is sensational". "Whether Gauthier admits or not, her factdistorting article equates to justifying terror attacks in Xinjiang," it said. "By falsely describing certain ethnic groups in Xinjiang as the oppressed, the article may also incite hatred and confrontation between different ethnic groups in China."

The government's decision to expel her was approved by 95 percent of respondents to a poll on the website of the Global Times, an often incendiary publication with close ties to the ruling Communist Party, which was one of the first to object to her article. The poll, which asked "Do you support expelling the French journalist who supports terrorism?", had more than 200,000 respondents by yesterday afternoon.

Among those who disagreed, many felt that the punishment was not harsh enough: "This kind of terrorist sympathizer should be arrested and sentenced to prison," read one posting. China commands a vast army of Internet commentators it can deploy to express vocal support for controversial deci-

Freedom of speech

The foreign ministry suggested yesterday that Gauthier's article was particularly offensive and justified the drastic action of expelling her. "Some people said that China didn't extend her press credentials because she criticized the Chinese state policies," Lu Kang, a foreign ministry spokesman, told a regular briefing.

"She's been working in China for over a decade. During this period of time she's often criticized China's policies on ethnic groups and she was still allowed to work here." The damage to China's international image resulting from Gauthier's expulsion was trumped by the Communist Party's domestic priorities, Chinese University of Hong Kong professor Willy Lam said. "The expulsion of a Western reporter will affect Beijing's reputation as an open society, as a society which is modernizing its ideas about freedom of speech and so forth," Lam said.

At the same time, he added, "From the Communist Party's point of view, their top priority is to prevent people from knowing what's happening in Xinjiang." Gauthier's article, the Global Times wrote in a November editorial, "severely distorted the reality in Xinjiang" and represented a double standard on terrorism. The piece was part of a tidal wave of criticism that the journalist said led to death threats against her from angry readers.

The Global Times is known for its nationalistic and hard line stance. Following the Charlie Hebdo killings in Paris earlier this year it said the murders were "payback" for the West's "historical acts of slavery and colonialism". — AFP



BEIJING: Ursula Gauthier, the Beijing-based correspondent for French news magazine

L'Obs, looks on during an interview in her apartment. — AFP



TOKYO: In this photo taken Dec 3, 2015, Syrians living in Japan, Mohammed, right, and Jamal speak during an interview. — AP

Wary of outsiders: Japan CLOSES DOOR TO REFUGEES

HANDS-OFF RESPONSE TO GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS

TOKYO: For Mohammed, the perils of staying in Damascus crystallized when a sniper's bullet whizzed past his head while he and his cousins were on his rooftop, watching the Syrian air force bomb rebel forces.

The same roof where Mohammed and his lifelong friend Jamal used to sit in a tent and play video games. Now, instead of studying for a law degree, Mohammed is working as a fitness instructor in Tokyo, trying to squeeze in some language study and hoping that like Jamal, he'll beat the odds and win official status as a refugee in Japan. The odds aren't good. Out of the 7,533 people who applied for refugee status in 2014, or appealed earlier refusals, only 11 were approved. That includes Jamal, his mother and sister, whose approvals came after a year-and-a-half wait.

For most, the approval never comes: In the past five years, the proportion of applicants granted refugee status in Japan has dropped to below 1 percent - in 2014 it was just 0.2 percent. In contrast, Germany has accepted nearly 40,000 Syrian asylum-seekers since 2013, while the US has pledged to accept 10,000 Syrian refugees and has resettled 2,234 since 2010.

Deep unease

Japan's hands-off response to the global refugee crisis, despite its generous humanitarian aid, reflects deep unease over allowing in outsiders given the insular customs of this island nation. Despite growing concerns over a shrinking labor force, the government has so far resisted calls to open the door wider, both for humanitarian and economic reasons.

Immigration officials say they suspect many applicants of being job seekers, not true refugees fleeing persecution or conflict. But for Mohammed, the reason was "just surviving," he said. "I was on my roof, in my favorite spot," the 24-year-old said. "Then I heard, like, fuhfft, next to my ear. A sniper just missed me. So we laid down on the floor, me and my brother and two of our neighbors and we started laughing, but this kind of laughing is like, ah, OK, we're alive."

Mohammed is among 50 Syrians in Japan who have applied for asylum. Ten left the country voluntarily. Asylum-seekers are allowed to work while their applications are being processed. In the past, Japan in some instances has allowed in refugees. During World War II, Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat stationed in Lithuania, granted transit visas to thousands of Jews, defying requirements that they have proper funds and a clear final destination after Japan. Another official, Tatsuo Osako of Tsuruga, helped many Jews and Europeans who arrived to stay on. And in the 1980s, Japan resettled more than 10,000 Indochinese refugees, mostly Vietnamese boat people. But for the most part, Japan has shut its doors. Of the 22,559 people of all nationalities who have sought political asylum in Japan since 1982, immigration figures show, only 633 were granted refugee status.

Immigration officers to do not provide reasons for their decisions, but Nobuhiro Tsuru, assistant director of refugee recognition at the Immigration Bureau, admits approvals are slowed by the volume of applications that must be handled by only 130 screening officers. "As a result, those people who most need quick protection are affected. That's a fundamental problem," Tsuru said. "We haven't caught up with all kinds of recent developments, but we are trying to figure out how we can help those who really need help."

Limited support

Limited public support for allowing in more displaced people weakened after the November attacks in Paris, "but we do take the criticisms seriously," he said. To alleviate labor shortages in the construction sector and other industries, the government has expanded a program that brings in foreign technical trainees. The understanding is that those trainees will go home; in reality, many escape the menial, low-paying jobs they are sent to fill, in some cases seeking refugee status. The program is now being reviewed after being criticized as a cover for slave-like labor.

As of the end of 2014, there were 59.5 million individuals forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence or human rights violations, and is on track to exceed 60 million this vear for the first time.

During a recent visit, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres appealed to the government to increase the number of people allowed to resettle in Japan, "and especially now to look into the humanitarian admissions of Syrians." Guterres also urged Japan to improve its asylum system, which many working with refugees say is flawed, and to do a better job of integrating those its accepts into their new communities.

Japan's Refugee Recognition Act does not include war refugees in its narrow interpretation of the international Refugee Convention. That excludes most of the millions fleeing the 5-year-old conflict in Syria, said Eri Ishikawa, who chairs the board of the Japan Association for Refugees, a group that helps asylum seekers with legal issues,

the Japan Tourism Bureau's office in the port of food, housing and other needs. "The government understands that everybody in a war zone would be in danger," said Ishikawa. "The Japanese interpretation of the refugee convention is unique and needs to be changed."

Shogo Watanabe, a lawyer who has been helping refugees seek asylum for years, says the biggest problem is that Japan's immigration policy geared toward keeping people out. "The immigration bureau's main focus is to prevent undesirable foreigners from entering the country," he said. "So accepting refugees is contrary to their main mission. They have little motivation to accept outsiders."

Arbitrary policies

Most of those refused asylum are not sent back straight away; dozens each year - 110 in 2014 - are granted special protection on humanitarian grounds. But heavy reliance on such arbitrary policies leaves many newcomers in a state of limbo, preventing them from getting language instruction, health insurance and other help they need to cope in their new home.

Maung Aung Thura Myint, a dapper, intense man who fled Myanmar as a 20-year-old political dissident, has lived with that uncertainty for half his 41 years, appealing repeated rejections of his requests for asylum, never knowing if or when he might be detained, yet again, or deported.

"Japan says it is supporting countries overseas. But it already has people in its own country seeking help," Maung said. "People who are seeking help need to be treated properly regardless of their religion or color." Like many other exiles from Myanmar, Maung says he hopes to return home if the Southeast Asian country's shift in 2011 to a civilian, democratic government proves to be stable. But he fears leaving Japan without gaining a

egal status guaranteeing he can return. Distant Japan is an option for only a few of the more than 4 million Syrians who have fled their country, often ending up in overcrowded refugee camps, risking perilous voyages across the Mediterranean and treks through the mountains to enter Europe. Mohammed and Jamal, who asked that their last names not be used out of concern for family members still in Turkey and Syria, managed to get tourist visas with the help of one of Jamal's relatives who lived in Japan for years.

A change in the policy toward Syrian refugees would require better planning on how to provide housing, education and jobs, says Tsuru, of the Immigration Department. But he said, "I think Japan should consider taking a share in accepting the refugees." — AP

THAI JUNTA LEADER **DEFENDS VERDICT IN** BRITONS MURDER

BANGKOK: Thailand's junta chief hit out yesterday at critics of a controversial court verdict which sentenced two Myanmar migrant workers to death for murdering a pair of British tourists last year. Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Tun were found guilty on Thursday of killing David Miller, 24, and the rape and murder of Hannah Witheridge, 23, whose battered bodies were found on a beach in the southern diving resort of Koh Tao in September 2014.

The killings have sullied Thailand's reputation as a tourist haven and raised questions over its justice system after the defense accused police of bungling their investigation and using the men as scapegoats-a charge authorities deny. The verdicts have sparked anger in neighboring Myanmar, with daily protests there. The country's powerful army chief has urged Thailand to review the case. But Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha angrily dismissed those calls in his first comments on the case since Thursday's verdict.

"They have the right to appeal, right? Laws all over the world have this. Or should Thai law not have this? Is it the case that we should release all people when pressured?" a visibly angry Prayut told reporters. Prayut, who seized power in a coup last year, is known for his mercurial outbursts and often colorful statements.

In the days and weeks after the Koh Tao murders, Prayut ordered police to make swift arrests, fearful of the impact the killings might have on the vital tourism industry. He frequently aired his own opinions about who might be guilty, saying it was unlikely a Thai could carry out such a grisly murder. Prayut also later apologized for comments suggesting beautiful foreign women wearing bikinis should not expect to be safe. Thai prosecutors and police insist their evidence against the men, both aged 22, was rock-solid, including DNA found on Witheridge's body.

At a press conference Sunday police insisted their investigation was above board and hit out at the recent protests in Myanmar. But the defense, which has vowed to appeal the verdict, disputed the forensic evidence, saying it was improperly collected and processed. They also accused the police of torturing their clients into signing confessions which they later retracted. The court in Koh Samui dismissed the defense's torture allegations and ruled that the DNA evidence proved guilt. Lawyers for the two men say they will appeal. — AFP

CHINA LEGALIZES RIGHT TO **MOUNT ANTI-TERROR OPS**

BEIJING: China has legalized overseas counter-terror operations by its military, details of a controversial new law showed, as it tries to tie violence linked to mainly Muslim Xinjiang into global concerns about extremism.

Under the counter-terrorism legislation passed at the weekend Beijing "may send personnel outside the border to carry out antiterror activities" when the "relevant country agrees, according to the text published by the official Xinhua news agency. The measure applies to the People's Liberation Army, the People's Armed Police and employees of the country's public security organs, Xinhua said.

In recent years the People's Republic has increasingly moved away from Deng Xiaoping's dictum of "keeping a low profile" in foreign and military affairs. It is expanding the reach of its armed forces far around the world, seeking to build a "blue water" navy capable of operating in distant seas and commissioning its first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, in 2012.

In November Beijing announced it would build a logistics hub in the African nation of Djibouti to support its units on United Nations and anti-piracy missions in the region. China is a top contributor of peacekeepers to the continent and has helped patrol the waters off the lawless Somali coast.

Beijing has long proclaimed its belief in non-interference in other countries' domestic affairs, but two years ago a top public security official said it had considered a drone strike against a drug lord in Myanmar linked to the murders of 13 Chinese sailors. The new legislation could apply to similar actions in the face of situations such as the November murder of a Chinese citizen by the Islamic State

New rules

The law establishes a co-coordinating body to "direct national counter-terrorism

work", the text published overnight read. Within China, the government has tightened social controls both online and on the ground, and the counter-terrorism bill could further reduce space for dissent. Critics say the new rules give authorities wide scope for interpretation over what is harmful to state security.

The law is "terrible news for peaceful govt critics, the rule of law, ISPs (Internet service providers), businesses and many others in China", Sophie Richardson, China director for overseas campaign group Human Rights Watch, said on Twitter. The measure compels companies to cooperate with requests from the government to hand over data or communications related to terror investigations, fining or jailing anyone who does not comply.

But provisions in earlier drafts that would have obliged them to install "back doors" in products or turn over encryption keys to Beijing-over which US President Barack Obama raised concernsdid not appear in the final version.

Beijing has tightened social controls as it seeks to silence critics of its policies in Xinjiang, particularly those who say violence by ethnic minority Uighurs is a reaction to government discrimination and to controls over their culture and religion.

Last week a court imposed a threeyear suspended prison sentence on civil rights lawyer Pu Zhiqiang, for offences including having "incited ethnic hatred" between Uighurs and the Han majority. The accusation related to posts on his social media account suggesting Beijing was partly to blame for inter-ethnic violence. Days later Beijing declined to renew the visa of French journalist Ursula Gauthier after she refused to apologize for writing an article expressing similar sentiments. — AFP





ROCKWALL, Texas: A car sits destroyed on Shipman Street on Sunday after a tornado hit the town. — AFP

WILD US WEATHER KILLS 43

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Hardest-hit was the Dallas suburb of Garland, where authorities confirmed eight fatalities after a tornado packing winds of up to 320 km per hour bore down on the city. City officials said this was only the second time since 1950 that such a powerful twister struck the area. Aerial footage showed rows of flattened homes, while others had roofs ripped off and windows shattered. Some 600 buildings were damaged or destroyed, officials said. "The fact that people survived it, it's amazing," Garland police lieutenant Pedro Barineau told CNN. "It's a resilient city and we have plans in place to make the community strong once again."

Three other storm-related fatalities occurred northeast of Dallas, the Collin County sheriff's department told AFP.

Governor Greg Abbott told reporters that snow and ice caused power outages in northwest Texas, while central parts of his state were facing flood risks and the east was bracing for the possibility of more tornadoes.

Missouri Governor Jay Nixon said that at least eight fatalities due to flash flooding were reported in his state. "I urge Missourians in flood-affected areas to stay alert, avoid travel if possible and never drive into a flooded roadway," he said. In Mississippi, where Governor Phil Bryant declared a state of emergency to deal with flooding, "severe storms" are forecast through yesterday, the Emergency Management Agency said. The agency also reported 10 storm-related deaths. Illinois blamed five deaths on the weather, while six deaths were reported in Tennessee, two people were killed in Alabama and one person died in Arkansas, local officials said. — AFP

OUTRAGE AFTER EGYPT TROOPS KILL GAZA MAN

Continued from Page 1

Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood was overthrown. Cairo accuses Hamas, which is allied with the Muslim Brotherhood, of supporting attacks in Egypt. The blockade and the closed Egyptian border means 1.8 million Gazans are effectively trapped inside the small enclave hit by three wars with Israel since 2008.

Meanwhile, Turkey sees no normalization in ties with Israel unless its conditions for ending the Gaza blockade and compensation for the deaths of 10 Turkish activists in 2010 are met, a presidential spokesman said yesterday. Relations between Turkey and Israel soured when the activists were killed in a raid by Israeli commandos on a Turkish boat, the Mavi Marmara, which was trying to breach the blockade. Expectations of a breakthrough were intensified after senior officials met this month to try to repair ties. The talks have raised hopes of progress in negotiations to import Israeli natural gas, particularly since Turkey's relationship with major energy producer Russia has worsened over Syria.

But comments from Presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin suggest Turkey may be trying to play tough in the negotiations. "Turkey - Israel relations will not normalize until Israel realizes the three conditions. We have not given up on these," Kalin said at a regular news conference. Ankara wants an apology for the Mavi Marmara killings, and compensation for families. It also wants Israel to end the blockade of Palestinians living in Gaza, seen as a sticking point in the talks. "Turkey will continue to play its role until a two-state solution is reached, and the Palestinian people have their own state. There cannot be permanent peace in the region until the Palestinian problem is solved," Kalin told reporters in Ankara.

Asked to respond to the remarks from Ankara, an Israeli official declined to discuss Gaza policy, saying only: "We will not be conducting negotiations through the media." Israeli officials have previously described the blockade on Gaza, which is supported by neighboring Egypt, as a necessary means of preventing arms smuggling by Palestinian militants. Israel allows commercial goods into Gaza through its land crossings and said that nearly 128,000 tons of material, or 3,750 truckloads, entered the enclave last week. — Agencies

SAUDIS RAISE FUEL, UTILITY PRICES AMID \$98BN...

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The statement noted that the budget "comes amid challenging international and regional economic and financial conditions" including "very low oil prices". Riyadh maintained high spending this year, and launched a military intervention against Iran-backed rebels in Yemen, by tapping into the huge fiscal reserves it accumulated when oil prices were high. The finance ministry said it was planning a series of measures to contain spending including a five-year program to cut subsidies on electricity and fuel.

Authorities moved quickly after the budget figures were released, with the official SPA news agency reporting the increase of petrol prices and saying the government would also cut subsidies for electricity, water, diesel and kerosene. Such subsidies are a highly sensitive issue in Saudi Arabia, where residents have grown accustomed to low utility and fuel costs. The price of higher-grade unleaded petrol will rise to 0.90 riyals (\$0.24) per litre from 0.60 riyals, a hike of 50 percent, and for lower-grade petrol to 0.75 riyals (\$0.20) from 0.45 riyals per litre, a 67 percent rise.

National oil conglomerate Aramco said on Twitter it was immediately closing petrol stations until midnight yesterday, when it will resume sales at new prices. The finance ministry said it is also considering plans to raise charges on public services and to apply value-added tax (VAT) in cooperation with other Gulf Arab nations, which are facing similar pressure from the oil price drop. It unveiled economic and fiscal reforms to make the budget more sustainable, including a program to contain spending growth, especially for wages and benefits which accounted for half of the 2015 budget.

A quarter of next year's spending, or \$57 billion, has been allocated for defence and security expenditures, the ministry said. It was unclear how much the intervention in Yemen was costing as Saudi Arabia has not previously released figures on defence spending. The IMF has warned Riyadh that failure to cut spending and implement reforms will eat up the country's fiscal reserves in just five years. The kingdom withdrew more than \$80 billion this year from the reserves, which stood at \$732 billion at the end of 2014, and issued bonds worth around \$20 billion. — Agencies

BAHRAIN CABINET OKS NEW DIESEL, KEROSENE...

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Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates will lower domestic prices for gasoline and diesel in January, the ministry of energy said yesterday. The price of a litre of octane 95 gasoline will drop 6 percent to 1.58 dirham (\$0.4302) at the start of January from 1.68 dirhams in December, the ministry said on its Twitter account. The domestic diesel price

will fall to 1.61 dirhams in January from 1.83 dirhams in December, the ministry said. In July, the UAE said it was shifting from a system of fixed, subsidized fuel prices to adjusting prices monthly in response to global trends. It did not reveal details of its new formula nor say whether subsidies would be removed entirely, but announced that fuel prices would be "based on the average global prices with the addition of operating costs". — Agencies

IRAQI FLAG RAISED ABOVE RAMADI GOVT COMPLEX

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Several local officials said IS used civilians as human shields to escape the battle when it became clear their last stand in Ramadi was doomed. A senior army commander told AFP that his forces were still sweeping the outskirts of the city for potential pockets of jihadists. IS had an estimated force of around 400 fighters to defend central Ramadi a week ago. It is not clear how many were killed and how many were able to pull back to positions outside the city.

The Iraqi authorities did not divulge any casualty figures for federal forces but medics told AFP that close to 100 wounded government fighters were brought to Baghdad hospitals on Sunday alone. "The dead bodies are taken directly to the main military hospital" near the airport, said one hospital source, explaining why he could not provide a death toll. The US-led anti-IS coalition praised the performance of the Iraqi forces in retaking Ramadi, an operation in which it played a significant role, training local forces, arming them and carrying out what it said were 600 air strikes since July.

French President Francois Hollande called the liberation of Ramadi the "most important victory yet" in the fight against the jihadists. Germany's Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said "it shows once again that IS is not unbeatable". The jihadists' loss of Ramadi came on the heels of the recapture in neighboring Syria of a key dam on the Euphrates by an alliance of Kurdish and Arab rebels. The speaker parliament was one of the first top Iraqi officials to congratulate the security forces on their victory.

"This great victory has broken the back of Daesh and represents a launchpad for the liberation of Nineveh,"

Salim Al-Juburi said in a statement. Nineveh is home to Iraq's second city of Mosul, from which IS chief Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi proclaimed his "caliphate" straddling Iraq and Syria more than a year and a half ago.

Anbar residents account for more than a third of the 3.2 million Iraqis who have been displaced by conflict since the start of 2014. Ramadi is devastated and a return to normalcy is some way away. Sohaib Ali, 27, fled with his three children and the rest of his family to the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region Arbil nearly two years ago when violence first hit Ramadi. "We do not intend to return for now, although this liberation makes us very happy. We can see that huge damage was caused in the city and I don't think that basic services will return for a while, nor will security," he said.

Iraq's defence minister, Khaled Al-Obaidi, said a week ago that Iraqi forces had reconquered more than half of the territory lost to IS in June and August 2014. The victory in Ramadi follows others in Baiji, north of Baghdad, and Sinjar, the hub of the Yazidi minority in the northeast of the country. Ramadi was recaptured by federal forces, with the Popular Mobilisation - a paramilitary force dominated by Tehran-backed Shiite militia groups - remaining on the fringes.

Many of Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi's political rivals had questioned his strategy of excluding those groups and relying on the US-led coalition's air power. "The prestige goes to the Iraqi military," said political analyst Ihsan Al-Shammari. "As an institution, it's the first time since the Daesh invasion (in June 2014) it has achieved a victory without the support of the Popular Mobilisation force," he said. The Iraq army collapsed when IS attacked Mosul in June 2014 and swept across Iraq's Sunni Arab heartland virtually unopposed. — AFP

Syria towns see rare evacuations

Continued from Page 1

journalist at the scene said. The Zabadani residents were to fly from Beirut to Turkey, before travelling back into opposition-held areas in Syria, said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Another 335 people, also including civilians, travelled from two regime-controlled villages in northwestern Syria into Turkey yesterday, Abdel Rahman said. Residents of the mainly Shiite villages of Fuaa and Kafraya crossed through the Bab al-Hawa border point and are to fly into Beirut to travel overland to Damascus. According to a source close to the negotiations, national flag carrier Turkish Airlines will fly both sets of evacuees.

"We appreciate the cooperation of all sides, of the Syrian, Turkish, and Lebanese governments, and all the sides that have signed on to this humanitarian agreement," said UN humanitarian coordinator Yaacoub El Hillo in comments to Al-Mayadeen TV from the Syrian side of the border with Lebanon. It is the first time the neighboring countries are involved in such an evacuation deal. The next part of the deal, according to the Britain-based Observatory, would see humanitarian aid delivered into the towns. The Observatory's Abdel Rahman said Assad's regime was keen to reach such agreements as part of its "efforts to secure the capital by seizing control of rebelheld areas or through ceasefire deals".

Al-Manar, a Lebanese television station affiliated with pro-Assad Shiite group Hezbollah, broadcast live footage of the Zabadani convoy entering Lebanon. Dozens of people gathered at the Masnaa crossing rushed the buses as ambulance sirens wailed. The station had provided coverage earlier of bearded fighters wearing militarystyle fatigues boarding the buses amid bombed-out ruins in Zabadani.

Similar ceasefire deals have been implemented in oth-

er parts of the country throughout Syria's war, often after crippling sieges of rebel-held areas. Government figures and local leaders reached a deal last week to evacuate thousands of jihadists and civilians from southern Damascus, but the agreement was apparently derailed after the death of rebel chief Zahran Alloush on Friday. Alloush, the head of Jaish al-Islam, the foremost rebel group in Damascus province, was killed in an air strike claimed by Syria's government.

In one of the most significant such deals so far, antigovernment rebels earlier this month quit the last opposition-held district of the central city of Homs, once dubbed "the capital of the revolution". But violence has since rocked the city. Yesterday, at least 19 people were killed and dozens wounded in large bomb blasts in the city's Al-Zahraa neighborhood, Syria's state news agency SANA said. State television said two explosions caused by car bombs and a blast caused by a suicide attacker wearing an explosives-laden belt hit Al-Zahraa's main square.

The station broadcast scenes of chaos in the central city, as fire trucks tried to extinguish flaming cars and rescue workers carried bloodied victims. The residents of Al-Zahraa are mostly Alawites, the minority sect of Syria's ruling clan. "These terrorist, cowardly, and desperate attacks come in response to the growing spirit of national reconciliation throughout Syria," Prime Minister Wael Al-Halqi said in comments carried by state news agency SANA.

The Observatory confirmed the blasts and reported at least 32 dead. The attack came less than three weeks after the Islamic State jihadist group claimed explosions in the same neighborhood that left 16 people dead. Elsewhere in Syria, at least 11 people were killed and 40 wounded in rebel shelling of a government-controlled neighborhood in the northern city of Aleppo, state TV reported. —AFP



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Focus

BALMY WINTER HITS FRENCH SKI WORKERS IN WALLET

By Benoit Pavan

he spring-like temperatures that have disappointed many skiers hoping to find a blanket of fresh powder in the French Alps is having a far more painful impact on resort workers: Unemployment. Seasonal workers set to run ski lifts and clean hotel rooms across France's assortment of world-famous slopes have seen jobs delayed or cancelled as employers wait to see if snow will fall. "There are a lot of people in my position," said Julien, a ski patrolman, who had just learned his job offer in Aussois in the French Alps had been deferred by 12 weeks. The 23-year-old, who is also a nurse, said the uncertainty was "tough to handle".

Temperatures have hit record highs around Europe in recent weeks, reducing usually sparkling snow-dusted mountains from France to Russia to muddy tracks or requiring that they be covered in manmade powder. It has been an unusually hot year so far. According to experts at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the United States, the period worldwide from January to November 2015 was the hottest recorded since 1880.

At Aussois, a resort perched at an altitude of 1,500 m, the dearth of snow has meant that six seasonal workers who were promised jobs have yet to start drawing a wage. Julien said he had pre-paid for a month's lodging in the mountains that he could not use because his starting date was postponed. The union representing workers at the resort has asked local authorities to pressure management to create part-time positions in order to get more people to work. But like abundant snow, a helping hand from management at the small-scale resort has yet to materialize.

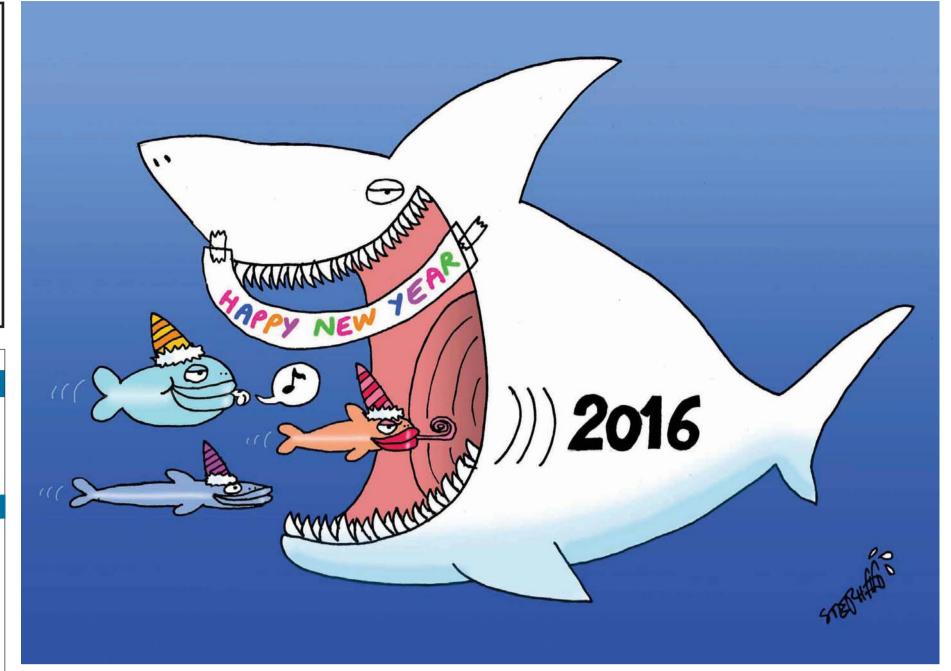
'Don't Exaggerate the Situation'

"We all offered to do fewer hours so that the others would be hired, but management refused," said Francois Xuereb, 32, a seasonal worker and union delegate at Aussois. The situation is better at bigger resorts like Menuires or Meribel a little further north, where unions reported that everyone who had been promised a job had got one. At L'Alpe d'Huez, another resort popular with both French and foreign snow aficionados, around 300 seasonal workers are already on the job, after some "minor" adjustments to their duties, said Christophe Monier, general manager of the company that operates the property.

In Dec 2014, unseasonably warm temperatures already prevented the ski season from getting into full swing in Austria and Switzerland, home to some of Europe's most popular slopes. Then a massive storm dumped heavy snow just days after Christmas, stranding some 15,000 people overnight in the French Alps while skiers revelled in the fresh powder blanketing the slopes

Some workers on the French slopes are holding out hope that Mother Nature will come through again in the end. "We shouldn't exaggerate the situation," said Carole Pierre, a seasonal worker at Valmorel, where staff have accepted a 30 percent cut in working time and pay in order to keep their jobs. "If in three weeks the snow still hasn't arrived and the mild weather prevents us making artificial snow, we'll go to half-time work," she said. "In the long run, the situation will favor high-altitude resorts," she said, referring to spots with cooler climes. —AFP

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MAJOR CHALLENGES STILL LOOM FOR CAR

By Crispin Dembassa-Kette and Joe Bavier

s General Bala Keita, the military head of Central African Republic's UN peacekeeping mission, fended off militia attacks on a polling station in a besieged Muslim enclave in the capital Bangui earlier this month, he was surprisingly optimistic. It certainly wasn't an auspicious start to a constitutional referendum meant to pave the way for pivotal general elections. But amid the machinegun fire and incoming rocket-propelled grenades, the battle-tested Senegalese officer saw hope. "What's extraordinary is that people are here. And we're trying to provide security," he shouted down a crackling phone line during the Dec 13 referendum. "The population is saying 'We need to vote.""

Less than three weeks later, Central African Republic's beleaguered people are preparing to head to the polls again on Wednesday for presidential and legislative elections to restore democratic rule under the newly approved constitution. They hope this second round of voting will bring them a step closer to ending years of violence. But while doubts still loom over the authorities' capacity to hold polls in a country carved up by warlords, a more important test will come after, when a new president seeks to rebuild and reunite a nation that now exists in little more than name.

Since mainly Muslim Seleka rebels seized power in the majority Christian country in early 2013, deposing then-President Francois Bozize, the former French colony has slid ever deeper into chaos. Abuses by Seleka - "Alliance" in the country's most widely spoken language, Sango - fuelled the rise of Christian militias who launched reprisals against Muslim civilians in a campaign of ethnic cleansing. Thousands have died and nearly one in five of the 5 million Central Africans has fled the violence. The unrest also repeatedly delayed the

After the referendum exposed shortcomings in the training of election workers and ballot papers arrived late, the latest delay saw the election postponed by three days. While the delay may help smooth over some of the logistical issues, security remains a major concern. "They're going forward with these elections, and in many areas it's a war zone," said Lewis Mudge, a researcher with Human Rights Watch who has worked extensively on Central African Republic.

Too Many Guns

Despite initial agreements, there has been almost no progress towards disarming thousands fighters loyal to rebel and militia leaders ahead of the vote. During the referendum, gunmen attacked voters in Bangui and the polls were also disrupted in Bossangoa, a Bozize stronghold, as well as in some areas in the northeast under the control of Seleka factions. The United Nations has promised a heavy security presence on election day. But even if the polls go ahead without violence, critics argue the thorny issue of disarmament has simply been dumped in the lap of the future president.

"The winner will probably be able to rule Bangui and rule in parts of the west and the southwest of the country, but in the east and the northeast, I have no idea," said one senior UN official, on condition of anonymity. Having withdrawn from the capital after their leader Michel Djotodia stepped down from the presidency under international pressure in 2014, the various factions of the former Seleka coalition have entrenched themselves in the northeast.

Some, including the movement's former number two Noureddine Adam, have flirted with formal secession. Convincing them to hand back territory won't be easy, particularly if the new president is deemed a threat to Muslims. Dealing with the Christian militia - known as "anti-balaka" (anti-machete) groups - who control the south and southwest, could be even more complicated. "There are not two or three separate anti-balaka leaderships but a galaxy of local chiefs without either a political or stable allegiance and the only thing they have in common is a taste for banditry," the International Crisis Group said in a September report.

Without a functioning army of his own, the new president will be heavily dependent upon the UN mission, MINUSCA, and a small contingent of French troops to bolster security. However, MINUSCA has yet to show that it is prepared to use the threat of force to push disarmament. And Paris will likely seek to resume a troop withdrawal next year after the pull-out was suspended during a spike in violence that began in September. Without a stick, the new leadership may be forced to fall back on an old carrot and offer militia chiefs government or army posts, perpetuating a decades-long cycle of rewarding insurrection that critics say helped spawn the current crisis. "Our history has seen too many blunders and wrong turns. We must

avoid falling into the same old traps," said Richard Ouanga, a law professor at the University of Bangui.

Moving Beyond Religion

If and when the guns are silenced, any long-term strategy for maintaining stability must include a revival of the economy. "You can make all the reconciliation speeches you want ... but as long as you haven't fed your people, the conditions of this crisis will still be there," said former Prime Minister Anicet-Georges Dologuele, a leading contender for the presidency.

Other top candidates include former Foreign Minister Karim Meckassoua, Former Prime Minister Martin Ziguele and Bilal Desire Nzanga-Kolingba, the son of a former president. Central African Republic's economy was in trouble long before the crisis that began with the 2013 Seleka takeover. With investors balking at the risky prospect of ploughing money into the chronically unstable nation, potentially lucrative uranium deposits went undeveloped.

The cotton sector, once a pillar of the economy, crumbled as roads needed to bring production to market fell into disrepair. As state authority receded, diamond and gold mines fell under the control of militia bosses. Turning all that around will take time, and it will also require the participation of all Central Africans, particularly Muslims who, despite constituting a minority, have traditionally played an outsized role in trade and transportation.

Unfortunately, they make up a large part of Central African Republic's roughly 900,000 displaced, having either fled abroad or moved to the northeast after coming under attack from anti-balaka or their Christian neighbours. "Muslims are discriminated against ... They are not seen as sons of this country. That's the real problem. Most of our Christian compatriots think all Muslims are foreign," said Ali Ousman, head of the Coordination of Muslim Organisations. Creating conditions for their return when many of their homes have been either destroyed or are now occupied by Christians, will likely prove one of the new government's most difficult challenges.

Bangui's Archbishop Dieudonne Nzapalainga, however, is confident reconciliation is possible. It has to be, he says, because without it Central African Republic as a nation will fail. "I cannot build this country by excluding my brother from another religion or political party. We must instead include our brothers ... The moment has come to move beyond our religions."—Reuters

MERKEL CENTER STAGE IN EU'S YEAR OF CRISES

By Frank Zeller

n a year of crises for Europe, from the Ukraine war to Greece's debt turmoil to the historic refugee influx, Germany's Angela Merkel emerged as the continent's de facto leader, drawing more praise and fire than ever. Whether spearheading EU diplomacy with Moscow, bargaining with Athens over tough bail-out terms or responding to the world's biggest refugee wave since World War II-Merkel was in the middle, again and again.

At a time of growing uncertainty and division in Europe, the pragmatic quantum chemist whom Germans call "Mutti", or mummy, preached fiscal rectitude and humanitarian principles, often drawing a mixed response. Her unusually bold move to throw open Germany's doors to Syrian refugees has particularly battered her long-stellar poll ratings at home, and left the leader of Europe's top economy isolated on key issues in the 28-member EU.

"2015 has been an incredible year, hard to comprehend really," said the 61-year-old chancellor, who is not usually given to hyperbole, at a congress of her centre-right party this month. "I've never experienced such a rapid sequence of highly significant events." That was quite a statement for the Protestant pastor's daughter, who grew up behind the Iron Curtain and lived through the fall of the Berlin Wall a quarter-century ago.

'We Can Do This'

The rise of Germany's influence during Merkel's decade in power has often unset-

tled European neighbours. When an unyielding Merkel told debt-hit eurozone members to slash public spending, she was caricatured as an austerity dominatrix in Nazi garb who deployed accountants rather than tanks. Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, more politely, stressed that while he had esteem for Merkel, "Europe has to serve all 28 countries, not just one."

Merkel won over some of her harshest critics with her decision in September to open the doors to a record wave of refugees who were heading in, many on foot, from Budapest. The country that once sent rail carriage-loads of people into concentration camps was now cheering as trains arrived packed with refugees from wartorn Syria, in moving TV footage seen around the world. "We can do this," has been Merkel's mantra ever since, as she has sought to instill courage in a country scrambling to welcome the one million newcomers who arrived this year.

Merkel was hailed as "Mama Merkel" by refugees who flocked to take selfies with her, and pictured as a Mother Teresa figure on the cover of Spiegel magazine. In rare unanimity, media organisations including Agence France-Presse, Time magazine and the Financial Times declared the long-time "Queen of Europe" the world's most influential person of 2015.

New York Times columnist Roger Cohen wrote that "she has become a towering European figure, certainly the equal of such postwar German giants as Konrad Adenauer, Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl - perhaps

even surpassing them". Even Greece's leftwing former finance minister Yanis Varoufakis, long the arch-nemesis of Berlin, told news weekly Stern that "maybe, if I was German, I would vote for Merkel".

'Historic Challenge'

Many Germans, however, now have doubts, fearing that Merkel, their trusted guarantor of stability,

is plunging the countries of the countri

try into chaos. Polls point to growing fears about the influx of mostly Muslims, a rightwing populist party has been gathering steam and there has been a spike in racist hate crimes. "Germany is definitely split," said Oskar Niedermayer of Berlin's Free University. "In general, Merkel and her work are still very highly regarded, but on the refugee crisis a majority think she is

pursuing the wrong policy."

Merkel's plan to avoid a million more arrivals next year is based in large part on convincing other EU members to accept more refugees. Yet the response so far has ranged from deafening silence to howls of protest. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban rejected Germany's "moral imperialism" and sealed national borders with razor wire, while Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka charged that Merkel had "encouraged illegal migration" to Europe. Even European Council president Donald Tusk labelled Merkel's migrants

policy "dangerous".

At the party congress, Merkel conceded that the refugee influx - "a rendezvous with globalisation" - presented an "enormous" task and would change the country forever. "It is a historic challenge for Europe, and I say we want Europe to meet this challenge," she said, to thundering applause. "And I am convinced it will." Niedermayer said that Merkel, in her best speech so far, had "bought herself a few months, but not more" while voters and her own party base would likely grow more impatient. "That's why 2016 will be the true acid test." —AFP

INNERHOFER LEADS DOWNHILL TRAINING

SANTA CATERINA VALFURVA: Taking advantage of a course that he's been practicing on, Christof Innerhofer of Italy led the final training

session yesterday for a World Cup downhill. Innerhofer clocked 1 minute, 47.41 seconds down the Deborah Compagnoni course for a 0.24-second lead over Hannes Reichelt of Austria, who led Sunday's opening training session. Adrien Theaux of France stood third, 0.50 seconds behind.

The Italian and Austrian teams trained here last week and appeared to have an advantage over other teams. Aksel Lund Svindal, the Norwegian who has swept the opening three downhills this season, was only 19th, 2.65 seconds behind.

With little sunlight, skiers had a tough time seeing the course, which features one section where racers get up to nearly 150 kph (above 90 mph). The race is scheduled for today.— AP

GCC SPORTS MEDIA **BODY ALLOCATES** ANNUAL AWARDS

RIYADH: GCC Association for Sports Media announced designating annual awards to outstanding media figures and institutes in the GCC countries. Chairman of the Association Salem Al-Habsi told the press, yesterday, that the awards will be under four categories: golden star, silver star, golden feather and silver feather. The first and second categories will be given to media figures, while the third and fourth categories will be assigned to TV, radio programs and printed press. These awards aim at raising the standards of sports in the region and encouraging societies and governments to give more to the sports sector, Al-Habsi noted. He added that these awards will be given out once a year or more than once a year, as the association sees fit.— KUNA

LEGENDARY NORWEGIAN SKIER ERIKSEN DEAD

LOS ANGELES: Stein Eriksen, a Norwegian credited as the founder of modern skiing, died on Sunday at his home in Utah, the ski resort he was long associated with said. He was 88. Eriksen, a well-known figure in the skiing community, rose to fame winning gold and silver in the giant slalom and slalom at the 1952 Oslo Winter Olympics. He then went on to win three gold medals at the 1954 World Championships in Sweden, "making him the first alpine skier to win the world championship 'triple gold," the Deer Valley Resort said in a statement. Eriksen's status "was enhanced by his spectacular forward somersault.....credited as the forerunner of the inverted aerials performed by freestyle skiers today," Deer Valley said. Eriksen had been living in the United States for the last six decades, including stints in ski-related ventures or as an instructor in Colorado, California, Michigan and Vermont. He had been at the upscale Deer Valley ski resort since it opened in 1981. "Stein has been an integral part of the Deer Valley family since the resort's inception and his presence on the mountain will be profoundly missed," said Bob Wheaton, the current head of the resort located just outside Park City, Utah. — AFP

OMANCHE WINS SYDNEY TO HOBART RACE

HOBART: Badly damaged but still able to sail, the giant American yacht Comanche crossed the finish line yesterday to take line honors in a storm-hit Sydney to Hobart race.

The 100 foot supermaxi, owned by Netscape founder Dr. Jim Clark and skippered by Ken Read, reached the line off Hobart's Constitution Dock at 10pm local time (1100 GMT) to complete the 628 nautical mile race in 2 days, 8 hours, 58 minutes. It was the first American winner since 1998.

Comanche was about 50 nautical miles ahead of American rival Rambler 88 which also suffered serious damage during a race from which a third of the fleet withdrew, including favorite and eight-time line honors winner Wild Oats XI. Read also came close to withdrawing from the race on its first night Saturday when Comanche turned back to Sydney after striking an unknown object, damaging its port rudder and dagger board.

"All of a sudden (there was) a big bang and a lot of crunching carbon fiber," Read told Australia's Seven Network on Monday. "Before you know it we had a dagger board that was trying to break a hole in the bottom of the hull and trying to rip our rudder out at the time same time. "It wasn't ideal. We really thought we were out of the race at the time." Read radioed the race director at the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia in Sydney to say Comanche would be pulling out, then had second thoughts and decided the yacht and crew had come too far to give up.

"We've learned how to sail the boat a little differently, without a dagger board (and) with only part of a rudder," Read said. "Fortunately, we've got an incredible crew on board this boat that figured out a couple of little tricks and kind of fixed the steering system and we figured out how to sail the boat a little better on starboard tack without a board, and off we go." Comanche's chief designer, Frenchman Xavier Guilbaud was consulted on running repairs and sailing master Casey Smith went into the water to cut free the damaged section of rudder.



SYDNEY: Photo taken on December 26, 2015 shows Supermaxi yachts Comanche (L) and Wild Oats XI (R) before the start of the Sydney to Hobart yacht race. Badly damaged but still able to sail, the giant American yacht Comanche crossed the finish line yesterday to take line honors in a storm-hit Sydney to Hobart race. — AFP

Comanche slide slowly past. With about 100 the island state of Tasmania.

Rambler also suffered serious dagger board miles to run, Rambler was only 16 miles damage when it struck a submerged object on behind Comanche but the gap broadened as hope of line honors fade while it remained in Saturday night as it led the race, before seeing the leading yachts approached the finish in contention to win the overall race prize on

Rambler slid further behind and saw its handicap, which factors in a yacht's size.

The third-placed yacht, Australian supermaxi Ragamuffin also sustained damage after high winds and heavy seas struck the fleet on the first night out from Sydney. Ragamuffin lost its port dagger board when it crashed heavily off a wave and also had to improvise to continue in the race, gradually losing ground on Comanche and Rambler.

"Basically you can't sail without it, so what we've done, which is quite dangerous, is we pulled the starboard dagger board out and drilled a hole in it and then we turned it upside down and dropped it in the other side," sailing master David Witt said.

"So tacking is a bit of a process for us and a little bit dangerous for us at times." Italian yacht Maserati was in fourth place Monday, about 120 miles from the race winner and 40 miles behind Ragamuffin.

About 32 of the 108 yachts entered in the race had withdrawn by yesterday, mostly because of damage. The Australian yacht Victoire pulled out Sunday when skipper Darryl Hodgkinson suffered broken ribs and a suspected punctured lung in a fall.

Meanwhile, the German yacht German boat Haspa Hamburg rejoined the race Monday, a day after pulling into the coastal town of Eden to make repairs. Comanche made its race debut in last year's Sydney to Hobart race, finishing second behind Wild Oats XI. More recently it won the Fastnet Race from Rambler and took line honors in all four races in the Maxi Rolex Cup.

Rambler, owned by George David, the former chairman and chief executive of United Technologies Corporation, won the Les Voils de St-Barthes race in France and took line honors in the RORC Caribbean 600.

After taking line honors in the Fort Lauderdale to Key West Race, Rambler finished second behind Comanche in the 2015

Q & A ON DRUG TESTING WITH NCAA MEDICAL CHIEF

LINCOLN: The NCAA has been randomly testing athletes at its championship events and football bowl games for performance enhancing and recreational drugs since 1986. In 2014, the penalty for testing positive at either of those events for a recreational drug such as marijuana was reduced from a suspension of one year to six months.

Now NCAA chief medical officer Dr. Brian Hainline wants to end NCAA testing for recreational drugs. Hainline said the NCAA should focus on catching cheaters who gain a competitive advantage by using performance-enhancing drugs year-round testing is still in place with a one-year suspension the punishment for a positive test - and leave it mostly to the schools to deal with athletes who are caught using rec drugs. Hainline discussed the issue in an interview with The Associated Press.

AP: Why was the NCAA penalty for recreational drug use cut from a suspension of one year to six months?

Hainline: Our competitive safeguards committee said we should decrease the ban because (athletes) really aren't doing it because of cheating. Maybe we look at recreational drugs differently, that we don't test for them at championships anymore but that we look at recreational drugs as an issue that really is a social issue, moral issue, health issue. It's not a cheating issue.

AP: What would the NCAA do with regard to rec drugs if it doesn't test athletes?

Hainline: The best place to work with that is on each individual campus. So what I have pledged is that we would give the member institutions the tools and the best practices to work with recreational drug use. That does include testing, so for example, if I'm at Campus A and I think there is a tremendous marijuana abuse problem, you can actually test for marijuana. But then when you come up with a positive, it's not kicking the person off the sport for a year; it's addressing the core issue like why are you using marijuana and is there a therapy and intervention we can make? Testing can be part of it, but it's not the national office coming in and being the moral

police on campus. It's us giving the member institutions tools for working with opiate and alcohol use at the campus.

AP: When do you think the NCAA would stop testing for rec drugs at championship events?

Hainline: I'm not a legislative person, but I think we're on the timeline for that happening probably in a year. There was a thought it might happen sooner, but I think the membership is asking me to get them better infrastructure so they can take this on at the campus level.

AP: Do you think schools would stop doing their own testing?

Hainline: What I wouldn't want to see happen ... is that we say, 'OK, we're no longer testing for pot' and then others say, 'OK, we're not, either.' That's not the right answer.

The answer is we're not going to do it at championships because we don't think that's an effective strategy and doesn't make sense. We still want there to be a policy at the campus level that addresses this more holistically.

AP: Of the 146 football players tested at bowl games last year, 21 turned up positive for pot. Did that surprise

Hainline: Let's put it this way: It's astonishing to me, and I think there's a communication breakdown about how pot is being tested. Either (players) don't know it, or more likely it's like two weeks before the bowl game and they're not really thinking about it and they're at the usual kind of parties they're at and people are passing around a joint and they take a hit.

AP: So 14 percent of the players testing positive for pot seems like a lot to you?

Hainline: It seems high. I also know the inside of that because part of that and I can't say any more than this - but one entire team, virtually the entire team tested positive out of everyone that was tested. That was a team that wasn't expecting to be tested ... It's a telling story in and of itself, and again, it's a telling story about where we are with marijuana in this country, which I think we are still coming to terms with. — AP

SCHOOLS EASE ATHLETE PENALTIES FOR MARIJUANA

LINCOLN: At least one-third of the Power Five conference schools are not punishing athletes as harshly as they were 10 years ago for testing positive for marijuana and other so -called recreational drugs, according to an investigation by The Associated

The NCAA last year cut in half the penalty for athletes who fail screenings for substances like marijuana at its championship events, and its chief medical officer is pushing for college sports' governing body to get out of the business of testing for rec drugs altogether. The AP found that some of the nation's biggest universities, from Oregon to Auburn, have already eased their punishments as society's views on marijuana use have changed. Marijuana use among U.S. adults has doubled over a decade, according to government surveys, and

recreational use is now legal in four states. The AP analyzed policies for 57 of the 65 schools in the Southeastern, Atlantic Coast, Big 12, Big Ten and Pac-12 conferences, plus Notre Dame. Of the 57 schools, 23 since 2005 have either reduced penal ties or allowed an athlete to test positive more times before being suspended or dismissed. Ten schools have separate, less stringent policies

addressing only marijuana infractions. In the Pac-12, five schools do not suspend athletes for as long as they once did. At Utah, for example, a third failed test used to mean dismissal; now it's a half-season suspension.

"It's a moving target, and we have to find that balance between being too punitive and not punitive enough, and making sure that we help people that have a problem," Utah athletic director Chris Hill said.

Recreational use of pot is allowed for adults in Oregon and Washington but is against the rules at Pac-12 schools in those states. At Oregon, an athlete doesn't lose playing time until a third failed test; at Oregon State, a third failed test used to mean dismissal, but athletes are now given one more chance. At Washington, a third failed test used to be a one-year suspension but is now just 30 days. "The change was intended to make the policy more rehabilitative," Washington spokesman Carter Henderson said.

Northwestern, Penn State, Pittsburgh, Southern California, Syracuse, Vanderbilt and Wake Forest did not provide copies of their drug policies despite repeated requests, citing privacy laws. Stanford does not test its athletes. Illinois has a separate pot policy that has become more strict but isn't as punitive as its policy for drugs like cocaine or heroin.

ATHLETES PUNISHED

The Big Ten and Big 12 are the only Power Five conferences that do their own testing in addition to the testing done by the schools and NCAA. Those two conferences punish athletes who test positive for performance-enhancing drugs. The Big 12 is the



SALT LAKE CITY: File photo, Utah athletic director Chris Hill speaks at a news conference in Salt Lake City. The NCAA last year cut in half the penalty for athletes who fail screenings for substances like marijuana. and its chief medical officer is pushing for college sports' governing body to get out of the business of testing for recreational drugs altogether. Some of the nation's biggest universities, including Utah, have already eased their punishments as society's views on marijuana use have changed. — AP

only conference that screens for recreational drugs, but it does not sanction athletes who test positive. Instead, the Big 12 notifies the school of a positive test and leaves any discipline to the school.

Alcohol remains by far the most abused substance on college campuses, with marijuana ranking second. In the most recent NCAA survey of athletes (2013), 70.9 percent of Division I football players acknowledged using alcohol in the previous 12 months and 19.3 percent acknowledged using marijuana or synthetic marijuana. In men's basketball, reported use was 58.1 percent for alcohol and 11.3 percent for marijuana/synthetic marijuana.

While schools come down hard on athletes caught using performance-enhancing drugs - a first positive test typically results in a one-year suspension - they are much less punitive for marijuana and other so-called street drugs.

Athletes who test positive a first time typically receive counseling but lose no playing time. Also, athletes who come forward and acknowledge drug use before they are tested are offered help under "safe harbor" programs. Second positive tests typically result in some lost playing time. Suspensions generally start kicking in after a second positive, though Kansas, Mississippi, Purdue and Oregon don't mandate a suspension until a third offense.

Football coach Mike Riley, in his first year at Nebraska after 14 years coaching at Oregon State, said he becomes suspicious marijuana is being used when he notices a player who misses or is late for meetings or is not fully engaged on and off the field. "Through my years in coaching, I can almost pick out the guys who have a marijuana problem," Riley said. "You give me three weeks with a team and, if you've got five guys, I could get three or four

Former Nebraska defensive end Randy Gregory failed a marijuana test at the NFL scouting combine last February and later publicly acknowledged his use in college. Once considered a high first-round draft pick, he wasn't selected until late in the second round by Dallas.

FAILED TEST

Gregory said he and his Nebraska teammates didn't worry a lot about being tested. Nebraska, under a policy effective since September 2014, suspends an athlete for 10 percent of his or her sport's season after a second failed drug test and 20 percent after a third failed test. A fourth failed test results in dismissal. The previous policy, in place when Gregory initially enrolled, didn't take away playing time until a third failed test.

"I'm not saying that we were kind of like invincible," said Gregory, who played under former Huskers coach Bo Pelini. "But they don't make it a big deal. ... They didn't really test you unless you had failed one and then after that, they test you weekly almost."

Dr Lonnie Albers, Nebraska's associate athletic director for athletic medicine, declined an interview request through the sports information department. In addition to school testing for a wide range of drugs, Gregory and his teammates were subject to random screening for PEDs by the Big Ten and NCAA. "Did I know folks that were abusing it? Yeah, on different ends of the spectrum. I think you know what I mean, smoking and other performance-enhancing drugs," Gregory said. "Sometimes guys get lucky. The Big Ten comes in, we're testing steroids, might be a guy on steroids but he may say, 'You know what, I don't think I'll be one of the 12 guys that they're testing out of the 100-and-how-many guys we have on the team. And they'll get lucky and not get tested. It's kind of

hit or miss, I think." The NCAA has been testing for marijuana and other street drugs at championship events since the 1980s. The NCAA suspends athletes for a full season for a failed PED test. Starting in August 2014, however, the penalty for failing an NCAA street-drug test was reduced from a suspension of one full season to a half season.

NCAA medical chief Dr. Brian Hainline said his organization should concentrate on busting athletes who use PEDs and leave it to the schools to deal with the rest, preferably through treatment





DURBAN: England's batsman James Taylor, plays off South Africa's bowler Kyle Abbott's delivery on the third day of the first test cricket match between South Africa and England, at Kingsmead in Durban, South Africa, yesterday. — AP

ENGLAND GRIND TOWARDS BIG LEAD

DURBAN: England tightened their grip on the third day of the first Test at Kingsmead yesterday against a South African team weakened by an injury to fast bowler Dale Steyn. England built on a first innings lead of 89, reaching 172 for three in their second innings at the close of play, an overall lead of 261 runs. With plenty of time remaining in the match, England were prepared to grind out their runs with risk-free batting in the second innings, scoring at just over two-and-a-half runs an over on a slow, dry pitch which made fluent stroke play difficult.

Joe Root made 60 not out off 109 balls, while first innings top-scorer Nick Compton survived two dropped catches before being caught down the leg side by wicketkeeper AB de Villiers off Morne Morkel for 49. Both Compton's chances were off Morkel, who also had Root dropped by a leaping De Villiers on six. Dean Elgar carried his bat for South Africa, making a fighting 118 not out, but he had minimal support from his teammates as the hosts were bowled out for 214. Stuart Broad and Moeen Ali took four wickets each for England. South Africa suffered a blow early in the second innings when Stevn left the field with a right shoulder strain after bowling two balls of his fourth over.

He returned soon afterwards and bowled three balls of the 21st over, almost forcing Nick Compton to play on to his stumps, before crying off again. He went for a scan and was off the field for a lengthy period before returning to the field at the late afternoon drinks break. He did not bowl again.

INJURY

Steyn, who missed most of a recent series in India with a groin injury, took four for 70 in the first innings in his first match appearance since November 5. Off-spinner Dane Piedt took the first two wickets in the second innings, trapping England captain Alastair Cook leg before wicket for seven before having Alex Hales caught at long-on for 26.

The left-handed Elgar batted resolutely for more than six hours while his teammates struggled, reaching his fourth Test century off 211 balls, with eight fours and a six. He did not add to his boundary count before running out of partners after facing 246 deliveries. Elgar was the sixth South African to bat unbeaten through a Test innings. Fellow left-hander Gary Kirsten was the most recent to perform the feat before Elgar, making 100 not out in a total of 239 against Pakistan in Faisalabad in 1997/98. Broad followed up his three wickets on the second day with an early breakthrough on Monday, bowling Temba Bavuma off an inside edge with the second ball of the morning, without addition to the overnight total of 137 for four. Broad had figures of four for 25.

Ali took two wickets in successive overs, dismissing JP Duminy and Kyle Abbott, as South Africa crashed to 156 for seven before Steyn helped Elgar add 54 for the eighth wicket. Ali ended the partnership shortly before the second new ball was due when Steyn lofted a catch to mid-off. He took four for 69. Steven Finn wrapped up the innings, taking the last two wickets in the space of four balls in the second over with the new ball. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

DURBAN, South Africa: Scores at close on the third day of the first Test between South Africa and England at Kingsmead yesterday:

England, first innings, 303

South Africa, first innings	
(overnight 137-4)	
S. van Zyl b Broad	0
D. Elgar not out	118
H. Amla c Bairstow b Broad	7
A. de Villiers c Bairstow b Broad	49
F. du Plessis b Ali	2
T. Bavuma b Broad	10
J. Duminy c Stokes b Ali	2
K. Abbott c Taylor b Ali	0
D. Steyn c Woakes b Ali	17
D. Piedt c Bairstow b Finn	1
M. Morkel c Root b Finn	0
Extras (b4, lb3, w1)	8
Total (81.4 overs)	214
Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Van Zyl), 2-14	4 (Amla)
3-100 (De Villiers), 4-113 (Du	
Plessis), 5-137 (Bavuma), 6-150 (Du	miny), 7

Bowling: Broad 15-6-25-4, Woakes 14-1-28-0, Ali 25-3-69-4, Finn 15.4-1-49-2, Stokes 9-1-25-0 (1w), Root 3-1-11-0

England, second innings England, second innings A. Cook Ibw b Piedt A. Hales c Abbott b Piedt 26 N. Compton c De Villiers b Morkel 49 J. Root not out 60 J. Taylor not out 24 Extras (b3, lb3) 6 Total (3 wkts, 64 overs) 172 Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Cook), 2-48 (Hales), 3-119 (Compton)

Bowling: Steyn 3.5-0-10-0, Morkel 13.3-4-19-1, Abbott 13.4-2-36-0, Piedt 18-3-65-2, Elgar 7-0-19-0, Van Zyl 7-2-12-0, Duminy 1-0-5-0.

Match situation: England lead by 261 runs with seven wickets remaining in the second innings.

S AFRICA'S STEYN TO HAVE SCAN ON SHOULDER INJURY

DURBAN: South Africa fast bowler Dale Steyn will have a scan on a shoulder injury after he twice pulled up in the middle of an over and left the field on the third day of the opening test against England yester-

156 (Abbott), 8-210 (Steyn), 9-214 (Piedt)

Steyn, the world's top-ranked test bowler, clasped his shoulder on his follow through after two balls of his fourth over in England's second innings and was sent from the field by his captain Hashim Amla

for treatment. He came back on to the field and 50 minutes after the initial injury was brought on to bowl but managed just three balls before leaving the arena, throwing an object to the ground in obvious frustration as he walked to the dressing-room.

Steyn, only just back after a groin injury which kept him out of three tests in India last month, was diagnosed with a right shoulder strain but will get a more detailed diagnosis after a scan later on Monday, officials said.

Injury to their main strike bowler, who took four wickets in the first innings, would be a major blow to South Africa who are already struggling in the test. — Reuters

GUPTILL SMASHES NZ TO BIG WIN OVER S LANKA

CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum will have a nagging back injury reassessed today after he left the field during his side's comprehensive 10-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in their second one-day international yesterday. McCullum left the field midway through Sri Lanka's innings at Hagley Oval in Christchurch and with regular vice-captain Kane Williamson nursing a sore knee, turned the captaincy over to Ross

Test opener Tom Latham, who was brought into the side as cover for Williamson, played an anchor role in McCullum's place as Martin Guptill flirted with a world record to smash his side to their 118run victory target in 8.2 overs. The 34-year-old McCullum has been battling the back injury for years with it partially responsible for his decision to retire after the Australia series in February. "It's not too bad. It's a bit stiff so we will re-assess it tomorrow," McCullum said in a televised interview. The aggressive right hander had combined with Guptill in an 108-run opening partnership in a seven-wicket victory on the same pitch two days ago, but said he had been happy to put his feet up to watch Guptill destroy Sri Lanka yesterday. "It was a superb innings. You can't describe it," McCullum said. "It's something you witness only once or twice in your life.

AUSTRALIA NEXT

"There are very few guys in the world who can play like that. Martin is one of those guys. "I knew he struck the ball cleanly the other day and jeez he struck it better today. He did it with such composure and genuine stroke making as well." Guptill had flirted with AB de Villiers' world record of 16 balls for a half century, instead getting bogged down from 46 to 50, which he managed to pass on his 17th delivery. It still broke McCullum's New Zealand record of 18 balls, achieved earlier this year against England in the World Cup. Guptill, who scored 93 not out from 30 balls on Monday, is the world's leading run scorer in one-day internationals in 2015, moving to 1,459 with one match to play in Nelson on Dec. 31.

McCullum, who praised Guptill's career-best year, said he had asked his side to step up their performances throughout the series as they eye Australia in February and would do so again as they seek to seal the five-match series in the third game. "I asked the guys to go up another gear and they certainly did that so... we get to the third game with an opportunity to close out a series. "We know we have to keep turning up and putting up our best performance." — Reuters



CHRISTCHURCH: Martin Guptill of New Zealand plays a shot during the second one day international (ODI) cricket match between New Zealand and Sri Lanka at Hagley Park in Christchurch yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand: Completed scoreboard in the second one-day international urch yesterday.

between New Zealand and Sri Lanka in C	Christch
Sri Lanka	
D. Gunathilaka c Santner b Henry	17
T. Dilshan c Taylor b Henry	7
L. Thirimanne c Henry b McClenaghan	1
D. Chandimal Ibw Bracewell	9
A. Mathews c Ronchi b McClenaghan	17
M. Siriwardana c Nicholls b McClenaghan	12
C. Kapugedera run out (Guptill/ Nichol	ls/ sub
(Worker))	12
N. Kulasekera c Latham b Henry	19
S. Senanayake b Henry	0
D. Chameera c Ronchi b Sodhi	9
J. Vandersay not out	7
Extras (lb4, w2, nb1)	7
Total (10 wickets, 27.4 overs)	117
Fall of wickets: 1-20 (Dilshan), 2-29 (Thirin	nanne),

3-31 (Gunathilaka), 4-54 (Chandimal), 5-56 (Mathews), 6-81 (Siriwardana), 7-81 (Kapugedera), 8-81 (Senanayake), 9-94 (Chameera), 10-117 (Kulasekara) Bowling: Bracewell 6-2-31-1, Henry 9.4-2-33-4, McClenaghan 8-0-32-3 (w1, nb1), Santner 1-0-5-0, Sodhi 3-0-12-1 (w1)

New Zealand M. Guptill not out 93 T. Latham not out 17 Extras (lb2, w6) Total: (0 wickets, 8.2 overs) Bowling: Chameera 2-0-41-0 (w4), Kulasekara 2-0-19-0 (w2), Senanayake 2.2-0-22-0, Vandersay 2-0-34-0.Result: New Zealand win by 10 wickets.



MELBOURNE: West Indies batsman Kemar Roach (L) slams the ball to the boundary as Australian wicketkeeper Peter Nevill (R) looks on, on the third day of the second cricket Test in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

AUSTRALIA SWELL LEAD TO 459 IN WINDIES TEST

MELBOURNE: Australia amassed a formidable 459run lead over the West Indies and were heading for a series victory with two days left in the second Test in Melbourne yesterday. After dismissing the outgunned tourists for 271 and a 280-run first innings lead, skipper Steve Smith did not enforce the followon, preferring to recharge his bowlers and bat a second time. By close on the third day, Smith had led the Australians to 179 for three with his virtuoso unbeaten knock of 70 off 70 balls with the under-used Mitchell Marsh, elevated to fifth in the order, chipping in with 18. The Australians have been far superior and seemed intent on constructing a huge overall lead and bowling out the Windies for a fourth time in the one-sided series.

Australia crushed the Windies by an innings and 212 runs in the first Test in Hobart and have lost only 10 wickets for 1,313 runs in three incomplete innings. Smith had Sunday's third Test in Sydney and the extra bowling workload in mind when he decided not to put the Windies back in to bat. "It is going to reverse and as we saw in the first innings it's a big weapon when you get new batters in against a reversing ball," Australia paceman James Pattinson said.

"We've just got to keep bowling good areas. There's still a little bit in the wicket. We'll be bowling at some stage so we just have to be up for that." The Australians went about chasing quick runs and lost wickets along the way.

Both openers were gone by the 11th over as the Windies bowlers enjoyed their best spells of the series. Skipper Jason Holder had first-innings centurion Joe Burns caught by Kraigg Brathwaite at second slip for four. Debutant Carlos Brathwaite followed up with the prized wicket of David Warner. Warner attempted to steer a lifter behind the wicket only to be well caught by Holder in the gully to miss out again with 17 following his 28 in the first dig.

IMPROVISED SHOTMAKING

First-innings centurion Usman Khawaja played some improvised shotmaking for his breezy 56 off 61 balls before he was caught behind attempting to paddle Holder behind the wicket. But despite their dire position the Windies showed more resolve against the odds on the third day. The tourists' tail resisted for the first two sessions led by Darren Bravo top-scoring with 81 and all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite adding 59. "I tried to show some aggression," Brathwaite said. "It's a war between bat and ball and West Indies and Australia.

"I know I desperately want to represent the West Indies. Something I will hold dear to my heart every second I'm out there with that maroon cap on. Pattinson finally ended the West Indian resistance in the last over before tea, getting Bravo caught in the gully to finish with four for 72. Off-spinner Nathan Lyon collected four for 66 and now has 179 career Test wickets. It was the Windies' highest innings score in a Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground since 1988 as they kept the dominant Australians in the field for 100.3 overs. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

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

Australia 1st innings 551-3 declared (U. Khawaja 144, S. Smith 134 not out, J. Burns 128, A. Voges 106 not out) West Indies 1st innings (91-6 overnight) 17 K. Brathwaite c Burns b Lyon R. Chandrika Ibw b Pattinson 25 D. Bravo c Smith b Pattinson 81 M. Samuels Ibw b Pattinson J. Blackwood c and b Lyon 28 D. Ramdin c Burns b Siddle

(Ramdin), 6-83 (Holder), 7-173 (C. Brathwaite), 8-215 (Roach), 9-239 (Taylor), 10-271 (Bravo) Bowling: Hazlewood 21-6-49-0, Pattinson 22.3-1-72-4 (4nb), Lyon 29-8-66-4, Siddle 18-3-40-2 (1nb), Marsh 7-4-15-0, Smith 3-0-21-0

17

56

70

18

14

Australia 2nd innings J. Burns c K. Brathwaite b Holder D. Warner c Holding b C. Brathwaite U. Khawaja c Ramdin b Holder J. Holder b Siddle S. Smith not out 59 C. Brathwaite c and b Lyon M. Marsh not out K. Roach Ibw b Pattinson 22 Extras (lb7, w2, nb5) J. Taylor c Nevill b Lyon 15 Total (3 wickets; 32 overs) J. Warrican not out 11 Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Burns), 2-46 (Warner), 3-123 (Khawaja) Extras (b5, lb3, nb5) 13 Bowling: Taylor 3-0-24-0, Holder 11-1-49-2 (1nb), C. Total (all out: 100.3 overs) 271 Fall of wickets: 1-35 (K. Brathwaite), 2-50 Brathwaite 6-1-30-1 (1w), Roach 4-0-22-0 (1w), (Chandrika), 3-50 (Samuels), 4-82 (Blackwood), 5-83 Warrican 8-0-47-0.



RUSSIAN FED CONTACTS IWF OVER LOVCHEV CASE

Aleksey Lovchev's doping case with the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF), it said yesterday. "We've sent an official inquiry about the testing of Lovchev's B sample and an independent hearing of his case to IWF," the federation's vice-presi-

MOSCOW: Russia's weightlifting ruling dent Alexander Petrov told R-Sport positive for the banned growth hormone lations". Lovchev denies any wrongdoing in Lovchev's body."The latest scandal to hit body have taken up world champion agency. "The IWF will assign a day for the latest scandal to hit believe to the banned growth hormone saying he was innocent. He told Russian Russian sport comes hot on the heels of hearing by the federation's anti-doping committee, while the laboratory in Montreal will set the date for the B sample testing." Lovchev, 26, who won gold in the +105kg category at the world championships in Houston last month, tested

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

The IWF has provisionally suspended Lovchev for "violation of anti-doping regu-

television station Match he was in a state of "absolute shock". "There's too much ambiguity in this case," Petrov added. "This substance currently undergoes testing and does not exist as a medical product. It's absolutely unclear how it could appear

Russian sport comes 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



MEMPHIS: Lakers Jordan Clarkson pushes the ball up court in the first half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, in Memphis, Tenn. — AP

CONLEY, GREEN LEAD GRIZZLIES PAST LAKERS

MEMPHIS: Mike Conley scored 19 points, Jeff Green added 17 and the Memphis Grizzlies led from start to finish for a 112-96 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Sunday. Marc Gasol and Zach Randolph added 16 points apiece, while Courtney Lee contributed 13. Conley and Gasol both connected on 7 of 11 shots and Randolph missed only one of his eight attempts as Memphis shot close to 60 percent for the game before finishing at 56 percent. Kobe Bryant, playing in only the first and third quarters, scored 19 for the Lakers, with 14 in the opening quarter. Larry Nance Jr. had 17 points and 11 rebounds, while Jordan Clarkson scored 12 points and D'Angelo Russell finished with 10. Memphis snapped a two-game skid, while Los Angeles lost its third straight and fifth in the last six.

THUNDER 122, NUGGETS 112

Russell Westbrook had 30 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds, and Oklahoma City rallied from an 11-point, second-half deficit to beat Denver. Kevin Durant recorded his eighth dou-

ble-double of the season with 26 points and 10 assists for the Thunder, who have won 10 of their last 12 games but were coming off a Christmas Day loss at home to the Chicago Bulls. Oklahoma City shot a season-best 57.8 percent from the field. The Thunder trailed as late as the 8:13 mark of the fourth quarter before taking control with an 11-2 run that included seven of Enes Kanter's 21 points. Kenneth Faried had 25 points and 11 points for the Nuggets, who have lost five of their last six games. Denver has lost six straight trips to Oklahoma City.

CELTICS 100, KNICKS 91

Isaiah Thomas had a pair of key baskets and finished with 21 points, Evan Turner scored 19 and Boston won its fourth straight. Jae Crowder scored 18 points and Kelly Olynyk added 11 points and nine rebounds for Boston. Thomas added eight rebounds and six assists. Carmelo Anthony led the Knicks with 29 points despite shooting just 11 of 26. Kristaps Porzingis had 16 points and 12 rebounds. New York, which shot just 37.1 percent, lost its fourth straight. The Celtics opened an 88-78 lead on Turner's driving basket with 6:11 to play, but the Knicks cut it to 90-85 before Thomas had consecutive driving baskets to push the lead back to nine.

TRAIL BLAZERS 98, KINGS 94

CJ McCollum had 35 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists to lead Portland over Sacramento. The Blazers outscored Sacramento 18-14 in the fourth quarter to claim their second straight victory. They were coming off a convincing 105-76 win Saturday over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

DeMarcus Cousins had 36 points and six rebounds for the Kings. Omri Casspi had 14 points and 10 rebounds, and Rajon Rondo finished with nine points and 15 assists. Kings coach George Karl was denied his 1,155th victory, which would have tied him with Phil Jackson for fifth place on the career list. Meyers Leonard made four 3-pointers and had 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Blazers. Maurice Harkness added 13 points. — AP

NBA results/standings

Memphis 112, LA Lakers 96; Oklahoma City 122, Denver 112; Boston 100, NY Knicks 91; Portland 98, Sacramento 94.

Eastern Conference Atlantic Division				Western Conference Northwest Division					
	W	L	PCT	GB	Oklahoma City	21	10	.677	-
Toronto	19	12	.613	-	Utah	12	16	.429	7.5
Boston	18	13	.581	1	Portland	13	20	.394	9
NY Knicks	14	18	.438	5.5	Denver	12	19	.387	9
Brooklyn	8	22	.267	10.5	Minnesota	11	19	.367	9.5
Philadelphia	2	30	.063	17.5		Pacific	Divisio	n	
	Central				Golden State	28	1	.966	_
Cleveland	19	9	.679	-	LA Clippers	18	13	.581	11
Indiana	17	12	.586	2.5	Sacramento	12	18	.400	16.5
Chicago	16	12	.571	3	Phoenix	12	20	.375	17.5
Detroit	17	14	.548	3.5	LA Lakers	5	26	.161	24
Milwaukee	12	19	.387	8.5		outhwe			24
	Southea	st Divis	ion						
Atlanta	20	12	.625	-	San Antonio	26	6	.813	-
Miami	18	11	.621	0.5	Dallas	17	13	.567	8
Orlando	17	13	.567	2	Memphis	17	16	.515	9.5
Charlotte	16	13	.552	2.5	Houston	16	16	.500	10
Washington	14	14	.500	4	New Orleans	10	20	.333	15

CAROLINA PANTHERS LOSE FIRST GAME OF SEASON TO ATLANTA

LOS ANGELES: The Carolina Panthers' perfect season ended when they were beaten 20-13 by the Atlanta Falcons. With one mighty leap, Atlanta's star receiver Julio Jones jumped over two Carolina defenders and snagged a 70-yard pass from quarterback Matt Ryan for the go-ahead score. The Falcons handed the Panthers their first loss and, for now, kept them from clinching home-field advantage in the NFC playoffs. Carolina quarterback Cam Newton had two chances to lead comeback drives late in the fourth quarter but couldn't get the Panthers in the end zone.

JETS 26, PATRIOTS 20 (OT)

Quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick's 6-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Eric Decker 2:37 into overtime Sunday gave the New York Jets a dramatic-and potentially controversial — 26-20 win over the New England Patriots. The Patriots overcame a 14-point second-half deficit to force overtime on quarterback Tom Brady's 9-yard touchdown pass to running back James White with 1:55 left. Patriots wide receiver and special teams captain Matthew Slater apparently elected to kick off after New England won the coin toss, though he appeared to be arguing with officials as the teams left the field.Patriots coach Bill Belichick claimed in his postgame remarks that he intended to kick off and had "no regrets" about the decision.

VIKINGS 49, GIANTS 17

The Minnesota Vikings defense picked off Eli Manning three times and returned one of the interceptions for a touchdown in a dominating 49-17 win over the New York Giants. Minnesota (10-5) clinched a playoff spot for the first time since 2012 and also set up a game that will decide the NFC North title in Week 17. The Vikings will travel to Lambeau Field to play the Green Bay Packers next Sunday. The playoff berth is Minnesota's first under second-year coach Mike Zimmer. The Vikings have not won a division title since they captured back-toback NFC North championships in 2008 and 2009.

RAVENS 20, STEELERS 17

In his first game for Baltimore, quarterback Ryan Mallett threw for a career-high 274 yards and the Ravens shocked the Pittsburgh Steelers with a 20-17 victory. Mallett signed with the Ravens just 12 days ago after being cut by the Houston Texans earlier in the season. He completed 28 of 41 pass with a touchdown. Ravens running back Javorius Allen recovered from some costly fumbles over the past two weeks and finished with 79 yards on 18 carries with a touchdown.

CHIEFS 17, BROWNS 13

The Kansas City Chiefs won their ninth consecutive game, beating the Cleveland Browns 17-13. The Chiefs' winning streak tied the club record that was established in the 1969 season by a K.C. team that went on to win Super Bowl IV. Cleveland quarterback Johnny Manziel kept the Browns in the game. The Browns last chance came with 1:52 left as the Cleveland offense moved to the Chiefs 18-yard line. But Manziel did not have any timeouts left and could not stop the game clock.

BILLS 16, COWBOYS 6

Running backs Mike Gillislee and Karlos Williams combined for 169 rushing yards and a pair of touchdowns while leading the Buffalo Bills to a 16-6 victory over the Dallas Cowboys. Quarterback Tyrod Taylor also rushed for 67 yards for the Bills, who

entered the game leading the NFL in rushing. Taylor now has 517 rushing yards on the season, a record for Bills quarterbacks.

BEARS 26, BUCS 21

The Chicago Bears converted two fumbles into 10 points, leading the way to a 26-21 win over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Chicago (6-9) got strong running-and zero fumbles-from Jeremy Langford and Matt Forte in handing the Bucs (6-9) their third straight loss.

COLTS 18, DOLPHINS 12

Running back Frank Gore scored two touchdowns and the Indianapolis Colts kept their playoff hopes alive by defeating the Miami Dolphins 18-12. The Colts (7-8), already without injured starting quarterback Andrew Luck, lost backup Matt Hasselbeck (shoulder) with 5:33 left, and Indianapolis ahead 8-6 at the time. Charlie Whitehurst came in and played the rest of the game at quarterback.

TEXANS 34, TITANS 6

Houston quarterback Brandon Weeden snapped a personal 11-game losing streak as a starter as the Texans beat the Tennessee Titans 34-6. In improving to 8-7, the Texans moved one step away from an AFC South title.

LIONS 32, 49ERS 17

Matthew Stafford threw for 301 yards and two touchdowns and the Detroit Lions snapped a nine-game losing streak to the San Francisco 49ers with a 32-17 victory.

RAMS 23, SEAHAWKS 17

St Louis linebacker Akeem Ayers had two key



ATLANTA: Atlanta Falcons kicker Shayne Graham (6) celebrates his field goal against the Carolina Panthers during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, in Atlanta. The Atlanta Falcons won 20-13. — AP

fumble recoveries, one of which he returned for a first-quarter touchdown, sparking the Rams to a big early lead on the way to a 23-17 road win over the Seattle Seahawks. It marked only the second time, and the first since 2004, that St Louis swept Seattle in two divisional games in the same season. The Seahawks (9-6) saw their five-game winning streak end. They had already clinched a playoff berth and were out of contention for the NFC West title before the game started, so the defeat had very little bearing on Seattle's postseason outlook.

CARDINALS 38, PACKERS 8

The Arizona Cardinals secured a first-round play-

no less than the No. 2 seed in the NFC.

Playing on a sore foot, quarterback Drew Brees threw for 412 yards and three touchdowns, leading the New Orleans Saints to a 38-27 victory over the Jacksonville Jaquars. — Reuters

off bye thanks to a 38-8 demolition of the Green Bay

Packers. Quarterback Carson Palmer passed for two

touchdowns, rookie running back David Johnson

accounted for 127 yards from scrimmage and a

score, and the Cardinals registered nine sacks en

route to their ninth consecutive win. A franchise-

record 13th win of the season secured the Cardinals

SAINTS 38, JAGUARS 27



REAL MADRID'S EXPULSION FROM KING'S CUP CONFIRMED

for fielding an ineligible player was upheld yesterday by the Spanish government's Disciplinary Committee for Sports (TAD) following an appeal by the 10-times European champions.

Real included Denis Cheryshev in their starting line-

MADRID: Real Madrid's expulsion from the King's Cup up in a last-32, first-leg game at third-tier Cadiz in early December when he should have been serving a onematch ban. The Russia forward opened the scoring in a 3-1 victory. The TAD, which had already turned down attempts by Real Madrid to get their expulsion temporarily suspended, said in a written ruling it had reject-

ed the appeal and that the decision was final.

Read said they respected but disagreed with the decision, adding in a statement that they would now seek to appeal through the courts and were studying other legal options. Real president Florentino Perez had previously said they did not break the rules and that

neither Cheryshev, who incurred the sanction playing on loan at Villarreal last season, nor the club were notified that he was banned. As well as the disqualifying Real from the King's Cup, the Spanish football federation (RFEF) fined them 6,001 euros (£4334), saying they should have been aware of the ban. — Reuters

MATUIDI: PSG HAVE 'HIGH OBJECTIVES' FOR 2016

DOHA: Paris Saint-Germain's Blaise Matuidi said yesterday the runaway French Ligue 1 leaders had set "high objectives" for 2016 and aimed to go as far as possible in the Champions League.

Speaking in Doha at the club's winter tour in Qatar, Matuidi said PSG were also looking to break more records in the second half of the season. "We have high objectives and we do want the second part of the season to be great," he told reporters after a 90-minute training session in the Qatari capital.

"We started really well, breaking a record but we want to break more with the league and, of course, with the champions league our goal is to go as far as we can."

However he added: "There's a big game waiting for us." PSG have drawn English champions Chelsea for the third season in a row in the Champions League. Chelsea triumphed in 2014 but PSG gained revenge in last season's competition, before being knocked out by eventual winners Barcelona.

This time PSG will start as clear favourites not only because of their irresistible form but because the English champions have been dismal all season, losing nine matches and currently sit 15th in the English Premier League before the latest matches later on Monday.

PSG's Qatari owners hope the summer signing of Argentina winger Angel Di Maria from Manchester United can help propel them further in 2016, with president Nasser Al-Khelaifi declaring: "We are close to our dream."

The matches take place in February and March. In France, the league is all but won. PSG sit a massive 19 points clear at the top of Ligue 1 at the halfway mark of the season with 51 points, a record for the French league.

They have won 16, drawn three and remain unbeaten. Among the records the Parisians have a chance of breaking is for the most points in a Ligue 1 seasonthe current high is 89 held by PSG-and the most games unbeaten, which currently stands at 32, set 20 years ago by Nantes.

Midfielder Matuidi has just been named French footballer of the year 2015 by France Football magazine and said he was "really happy" about the award.

"It's a real honour. I was voted in by former award recipients so I'm really happy about that. I'm very proud," said the 28-year-old. PSG will play Italian league leaders Inter Milan in a friendly in Qatar on tomorrow before heading back to

Training yesterday took place in temperatures of around 22 degrees Celsius (71 Fahrenheit).

ISULT



CHICAGO: Marian Hossa #81 of the Chicago Blackhawks tries a wrap-around shot under pressure from Joakim Nordstrom #42 of the Carolina Hurricanes and Eddie Lack #31 at the United Center on Sunday. The Hurricanes defeated the Blackhawks 2-1. — AFP

BARKOV SCORES TO LEAD FLORIDA TO WIN OVER BLUE JACKETS 3-2

SUNRISE: Aleksander Barkov had a pair of goals as the Florida Panthers took over the top spot in the Atlantic Division with a 3-2 win over the Columbus Blue Jackets on Sunday night. Aaron Ekblad also scored a goal for the Panthers. Jonathan Huberdeau had two assists. Brandon Saad and Cam Atkinson scored for Columbus. Roberto Luongo made 15 saves for Florida. Columbus's Curtis McElhinney had 29 saves.

MAPLE LEAFS 3, ISLANDERS 1

Tyler Bozak and Michael Grabner scored 1:40 apart in the second period to lead the Maple Leafs to a victory over the Islanders. After going 1-7-2 in October, the Leafs are 12-7-5 in November and December. Toronto has recorded at least one point in seven of its last eight games (5-1-2). Overall, the Leafs are 13-14-7. Jonathan Bernier stopped 25 shots and James van Riemsdyk added an empty net goal. Thomas Greiss made 35 saves for New York, which has lost four of five. Nikolay Kulemin scored New York's goal.

SENATORS 3, BRUINS 1

Mark Stone scored twice, Craig Anderson stopped 38 shots and the Senators beat the Bruins. Mika Zibanejad had the other goal and the Senators snapped a two-game losing streak. Boston dropped its third straight. David Krejci had the Bruins' goal, and Tuukka Rask made 19

STARS 3, BLUES 0

Kari Lehtonen made 22 saves in his 33rd career shutout, Jamie Benn scored his NHL-leading 23rd goal and the Stars beat the Blues. Benn and Patrick Sharp each had a power-play goal and an assist. Cody Eakin scored into an empty net with 1:32 remaining. Lehtonen improved his season record to 12-2-0. He is 13-6-2 in his career against the Blues.

FLAMES 5, OILERS 3

Red-hot Johnny Gaudreau scored twice and Calgary beat Edmonton for its franchise-record 11th straight home win. Since last losing at the Scotiabank Saddledome on Oct. 30, the Flames have dominated at home with Gaudreau leading the way. The 22-year-old has scored in eight of the 11 wins with 15 goals and 22 points over that span, including a hat trick in a 4-1 win over Winnipeg last Tuesday night. Mark Giordano also

NHL results/standings

Ottawa 3, Boston 1; Florida 3, Columbus 2; Toronto 3, NY Islanders 1; Dallas 3, St. Louis 0; Carolina 2, Chicago 1; Winnipeg 1, Pittsburgh 0; Arizona 2, Colorado 1 (OT); Anaheim 4, Philadelphia 2; Calgary 5, Edmonton 3.

Detroit

Boston

Montreal

Central Division						
	W	L	OT	LGF	GA	PTS
Dallas	27	7	3	129	91	57
St. Louis	22	12	4	95	90	48
Chicago	20	13	4	97	89	44
Minnesota	18	10	6	92	83	42
Nashville	17	12	6	92	89	40
Colorado	17	17	2	100	99	36
Winnipeg	16	17	2	93	104	34
	Pac	cific	Div	ision		
Los Angeles	21	11	2	88	79	44
Arizona	17	15	3	95	109	37
Vancouver	14	14	9	93	104	37
San Jose	17	15	2	93	94	36
Calgary	17	16	2	96	116	36
Edmonton	15	19	3	95	113	33
Anaheim	13	15	6	66	87	32
E	Eastern Conference					
Atlantic Division						
Florida	20	12	4	98	83	44

Western Conference

scored twice and Matt Stajan had a goal for the Flames. Karri Ramo stopped 28 shots. Benoit Pouliot scored twice and Teddy Purcell added the other for Edmonton. The Oilers are 1-4-1 since a six-game winning streak ended.

HURRICANES 2, BLACKHAWKS 1

Justin Faulk and Victor Rask scored, backup Eddie Lack stopped 35 shots and the Hurricanes beat the Blackhawks. Chicago's Brent Seabrook spoiled Lack's shutout bid with 3 seconds left and Blackhawks goalie Corey Crawford on the bench for an extra attacker. Lack wasn't consistently tested until the Blackhawks outshot Carolina 19-9 in the third period. The Hurricanes' Jeff Skinner had two assists.

DUCKS 4, FLYERS 2

Corey Perry had the tying and go-ahead goals, Shawn Horcoff scored a short-handed goal and Ryan Getzlaf connected on a power play, leading the Ducks to their fitfh straight win over the Flyers. Defenseman Sami Vatanen had two assists and John Gibson made 24 saves in

18 12 6 108 105 42 Ottawa Tampa Bay 18 15 3 92 84 39 Buffalo 15 16 4 85 92 34 13 14 7 89 94 33 Toronto **Metropolitan Division** Washington 26 6 2 108 72 NY Rangers 20 12 4 104 93 44 NY Islanders 19 12 5 97 85 Pittsburgh 79 37 Philadelphia 15 13 7 76 96 37 Carolina 15 16 5 85 103 35 Columbus 13 22 3 92 120 29 Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).

18 10 7 92 91 43

43

42

20 14 3 106 92

19 12 4 108 94

his first career game against the Flyers. Jakub Voracek and Michael Raffl scored for the Flyers. Steve Mason stopped 33 shots in his fourth straight start.

COYOTES 2, AVALANCHE 1, OT

Mikkel Boedker scored at 4:17 of overtime and Anders Lindback stopped 38 shots, helping the Coyotes beat the Avalanche. Boedker corralled a loose puck at his own blue line and skated in all alone on Semvon Varlamov, lifting a shot over the stick of the Colorado goalie. Jarome Iginla scored his 599th career goal on a power play in the first period. He's one away from becoming the 19th NHL player to reach the 600-goal mark.

JETS 1, PENGUINS 0

Connor Hellebuyck made 30 saves in his first career NHL shutout to help the Jets beat the Penguins. The rookie goalie blanked Pittsburgh in his ninth NHL game. Bryan Little scored on a penalty shot in the first period. Penguins goalie Jeff Zatkoff made 27 saves. — AP

LEICESTER CAN BOUNCE BACK **AGAINST CITY: ALBRIGHTON**

LEICESTER: Leicester City winger Marc Albrighton reckons the Premier League leaders can bounce back after defeat to Liverpool against title rivals Manchester City at the King Power Stadium

While Leicester's 15-goal top scorer Jamie Vardy is expected to be fully fit after a virus City will be without injured captain Vincent Kompany. Albrighton has warned City that Leicester are not about to implode after suffering only their second defeat of the season on Boxing Day. "We see this as a test," the winger said yesterday. "There will probably be a lot of pundits and media that might think now we are going to lie down and relax with our 30-something points. "We're not a side to do that. We've got Manchester City on Tuesday and we look forward to bouncing back against them.

"We've got ourselves in a brilliant situation and we are doing fantastic. Everyone was tipping us to be down there at the start of the season, but we're right in the mix and we deserve to be where we are." Vardy's understanding with Algeria playmaker Riyad Mahrez has been crucial to the Foxes' success this season - between them, they have scored 29 of

Leicester's 37 goals. The fact that neither of them looked fully fit

against Liverpool will be of concern to manager worked through the whole week normally, but Claudio Ranieri ahead of another key fixture. "Mahrez was very, very tired," said Ranieri.

"The spirit in the camp now is not so good, but that is a good thing, because the players always want to try to win. "Now we have to clean our minds and think towards the next match. It will be another big test, but we are ready."

Ranieri is unlikely to make significant changes, as long as Vardy and Mahrez are both declared fit, and will look for his side to show the stamina he talked so positively about in the lead-up to the Christmas fixtures.

Kompany meanwhile was making his first appearance for seven weeks when he entered the field as a second-half substitute during City's 4-1 win over Sunderland on Friday, but lasted only nine minutes before hobbling off again. The bad news for manager Manuel Pellegrini is that the central defender has suffered a recurrence of the calf injury that has troubled him for much of the season, and the fear is that he will be out for several weeks.

"Vincent's injury is not the best news," Pellegrini said. "He was ready to return against Sunderland, but I did not want him to play the whole game. "He now we must wait to see what the doctor says. It is the same injury, to the same calf." Kompany's importance to City's defence is difficult to overstate; he has started eight of his team's 18 Premier League matches this season, during which they have conceded just once. By contrast, they have let in 19 league goals when the Belgium international has not been on the field.

In his absence, Nicolas Otamendi and Eliaquim Mangala must try to look more convincing than they have for much of the season, as Pellegrini's team seek a first away league victory since September 12.

It is perhaps a sign of how open this season's Premier League is that a team can go more than three months without winning away from home and still be in title contention. City were helped by the fact that, as they were beating Sunderland, Leicester were slipping to a 1-0 defeat at Liverpool, and that Arsenal were thumped 4-0 at Southampton later in the day. To capitalise on that good fortune, Pellegrini may decide to restore Sergio Aguero to the starting line-up, having rested the striker on Boxing Day following his recent return from a heel injury. — AFP



DUBAI: Barcelona striker Lionel Messi receiving the trophy for best player of the year

during the Dubai Globe Soccer award at the end of the Dubai International Sports

MESSI, BARCELONA WIN

AT GLOBE SOCCER AWARDS

Athletic Bilbao.

Spanish league title, the Copa del Rey,

Champions League, European Super Cup

and the World Club Cup. Only the Spanish

Super Cup eluded them with a loss to

best manager while Benfica took the award

for best club academy. Italy's Andrea Pirlo

and England's Frank Lampard were lauded

for their long careers. — AFP

Belgian coach Marc Wilmots was named

Conference on Sunday. — AFP

DUBAI: Barcelona and star player Lionel

Messi triumphed at the seventh edition of

the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai on

Sunday, taking home the prizes for best

team and best player. Messi had travelled

"It's very nice to receive these awards, but I

always say that the team makes it possible,"

said Messi. "It's been an extraordinary year."

Barcelona won five titles in 2015 — the

from Argentina to attend the ceremony.

Saudi player Yasser Al-Shahrani receives an award for best GCC player of the year.

NORWICH PAIR HOWSON, MBOKANI CUT VILLA ADRIFT



NORWICH: Jonny Howson and Dieumerci Mbokani ushered Aston Villa a step closer to Premier League relegation

as Norwich City recorded a 2-0 victory at Carrow Road yesterday.

Howson volleyed home in the 24th minute and Congolese striker Mbokani struck three minutes from time as Norwich drew three points clear of the relegation zone. Villa manager Remi Garde had warned his side that they had to win one of their next two games, but ahead of Saturday's trip to Sunderland, they are 11 points adrift of safety at the foot of the table and look increasingly

doomed. It was only Norwich's second league win over Villa in 13 attempts and came a day after the appointment of former British shadow chancellor Ed Balls as club chairman. Villa are now without a win in a club-record 18 league matches, but they could count themselves unfortunate to be trailing at half-time, having started the match on the front foot.

Leandro Bacuna saw an early 25-yard sighter parried unconvincingly by Norwich goalkeeper Declan Rudd, who

was also obliged to repel a header from Jordan Ayew.

But the visitors could not make their territorial advantage count and they duly fell behind, Howson volleying home crisply with his left foot after Bacuna partially cleared Nathan Redmond's left-wing cross. Now Norwich had their tails up and Graham Dorrans went close to doubling their lead when he shot wide after Villa switched off at a corner.

Howson spurned a good chance to

claim a second goal early in the second half, steering wide after Brad Guzan spilt a curling effort from Redmond.

Garde sent on Adama Traore, Rudy Gestede and Jack Grealish in his desperation for an equaliser, but instead Norwich sealed victory when Mbokani nodded in Wes Hoolahan's left-wing cross.

Even a consolation goal proved beyond the beleaguered visitors, with Rudd clawing away Ayew's stoppage-time free-kick.—AFP



LIVERPOOL: Everton's Romelu Lukaku, background, goes on to score his side's second goal, during the English Premier League soccer match between Everton and Stoke City, at Goodison Park, in Liverpool, England, yesterday. — AP

LATE PENALTY GIVES STOKE WIN IN SEVEN-GOAL THRILLER





LIVERPOOL: Marko Arnautovic scored a lastgasp penalty as Stoke City beat Everton 4-3 in a thrilling game at Goodison Park yesterday.

Arnautovic beat Tim Howard from the spot as the match moved into stoppage time after the Austrian forward had gone down under a John Stones challenge inside the area.

It was a dramatic end to a humdinger of a game as Everton came away with nothing despite Romelu Lukaku scoring twice to take his tally to 11 goals in his last 10 games and go level with Leicester City's Jamie Vardy atop the Premier League scorers' charts with 15 for the season.

It was a second straight home loss for Everton and a blow to their European hopes, while Stoke followed their 2-0 win against Manchester United on Boxing Day to go above their opponents and into eighth in the table.

Mark Hughes's side had beaten United thanks to goals by Bojan Krkic and Arnautovic and that duo were involved when the visitors opened the scoring on a blustery Merseyside afternoon. The game was just 16 minutes old when Bojan accelerated into the area down the left and found Arnautovic, the big Austrian help-

ing the ball on to leave Shaqiri with an easy finish for his first Stoke goal.

Everton were only behind for six minutes, though, as Ross Barkley and James McCarthy combined to set up Lukaku, who turned and fired past Jack Butland having been played on by Erik Pieters.

Brendan Galloway shot just wide and Seamus Coleman might have had a penalty when he went down under a Pieters tackle as the home side pushed forward, but Stoke were back ahead thanks to a stunning goal just before the interval.

Bojan's superb cross-field pass caught out the Everton defence and Swiss former Bayern Munich star Shaqiri outpaced Galloway before beating Howard with a sublime first-time chip that sailed into the net. Again Lukaku struck to bring Everton level just after the hour mark as he controlled a long ball forward from substitute Tom Cleverley before smashing past Butland to make it 2-2. It was his eighth goal in his last seven Premier League games at Goodison and he was involved again as Everton took the lead for the first time on 71 minutes, finding Barkley before the England man's ball across goal was turned in by Gerard Deulofeu.

Roberto Martinez's side looked set to go and win it but they were denied as Stoke hit back again with 10 minutes remaining.

Howard could only help on a cross from the left by Arnautovic and substitute Joselu volleyed in at the back post, the goal the 40th scored at Goodison in 10 games this season, but not the last of the day as Arnautovic won it. — AFP

SUPER-SUB SON SINKS 10-MAN WATFORD 2-1





WATFORD: South Korea forward Son Heungmin hit a dramatic late winner for Tottenham to earn a 2-1 victory over 10-man Watford yesterday. Son came off the substitutes' bench to backheel Kieran Trippier's cross home in the 89th minute at Vicarage Road.

Erik Lamela had pounced on a mistake to open the scoring before Nigerian striker Odion Ighalo scored for the sixth successive game to haul Watford level before half-time.

Tottenham looked set to be left frustrated despite having the numerical advantage for much of the second half. Nathan Ake had been red-carded for a high challenge on Lamela in the 63rd minute but instead of driving the visitors on it was Watford who appeared to rise to the challenge.

But Son had other ideas as he netted to ensure Tottenham kept up their charge towards the top of the Premier League. Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino would have taken one look at the video of Watford's previous home rout of Liverpool to know that they could not be taken lightly.

Watford had surpassed all expectations by climbing into the top 10 before the year was out. Survival appears a formality for the promoted side. Spurs, on the other hand, have loftier ambitions. A Champions League finish is a minimum target but a first top-flight crown since 1961 is certainly not beyond them.

To take another step towards achieving that aim, they would have to do what few sides have done and that would be to keep Troy Deeney and Ighalo quiet. The most prolific pairing in the league have combined to devastating effect and that might have been behind Pochettino's thinking as he switched to a three-man defence.

Watford have been strong at the other end



WATFORD: Tottenham Hotspur's South Korean striker Son Heung-Min controls the ball during the English Premier League football match between Watford and Tottenham Hotspur at Vicarage Road Stadium in Watford, north of London yesterday. Tottenham won the game 2-1. — AFP

but a glaring error from Craig Cathcart saw Lamela give the visitors a 17th minute lead.

The Northern Ireland defender was caught in possession by Dele Alli and Lamela broke to slot past Watford's former Tottenham goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes.

That goal came largely against the run of play but Tottenham appeared to be keeping the hosts at an arm's length, with Jurado only threatening with a long-range drive.

That was until Ighalo kept up his amazing goal record four minutes from the break. The Nigerian shrugged off Eric Dier and made the most of a fortunate rebound to tuck the ball

underneath Hugo Lloris.

Tottenham needed to respond but breaking down an organised and stubborn Watford side was no easy task. A concerted spell of pressure saw Harry Kane head Trippier's cross just wide.

Then came the game changing decision which saw left-back Ake, on loan from Chelsea, shown a straight red card by referee Anthony Taylor. Watford were furious but replays suggested it was the right call.

Spurs were now camped in the Watford half, but were struggling for ideas before Son struck late on to snatch a barely deserved win that cemented their position in the top four. — AFP

PALACE STRETCH UNBEATEN RUN WITH SWANSEA STALEMATE





LONDON: Crystal Palace stretched their unbeaten run in the Premier League to six matches following an uneventful 0-0 draw at home to Swansea City.

It was a second straight stalemate for Alan

Pardew's side after they were held at Bournemouth on Boxing Day, as the result kept Palace fifth in the table ahead of later games. Swansea, who recorded a first win in eight

Swansea, who recorded a first win in eight matches when they beat West Brom 1-0 on Saturday, continued their mini-revival as they pulled two points clear of the bottom three.

Moroccan striker Marouane Chamakh made his first start for Palace in the league this season, while Swansea caretaker boss Alan Curtis shuffled his pack as he made eight changes to the side that defeated the Baggies.

Palace midfielder Yohan Cabaye picked up his fifth booking of the season, ruling him out of Sunday's visit of Chelsea, in what was a quiet first half at Selhurst Park. The hosts nearly went in front just minutes after the restart when Brede Hangeland flicked on a Cabaye free-kick, but Swansea goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski thrust out his left hand to make a brilliant reflex stop.

Palace keeper Wayne Hennessey was forced to tip over a firmly-struck effort from Modou Barrow, with substitute Patrick Bamford then shooting straight at Fabianski at the other end.

Both sides have chances to snatch all three points late on, with Wilfried Zaha flashing a shot just wide before Gylfi Sigurdsson had an effort turned away by Hennessey. — AFP



LONDON: Crystal Palace's US-born Norwegian defender Brede Hangeland (R) tackles Swansea City's French striker Bafetimbi Gomis (L) during the English Premier League football match between Crystal Palace and Swansea City at Selhurst Park in south London yesterday. — AFP

DARLOW BLUNDER PILES ON MISERY FOR NEWCASTLE



WEST BROMWICH: Newcastle were plunged deeper into relegation trouble after rookie goal-keeper Karl Darlow's howler gifted West Bromwich Albion a 1-0 win yesterday. Darlow allowed Albion midfielder Darren Fletcher's header to slip through his grasp in the closing stages at the Hawthorns. The 25-year-old's mistake leaves Steve McClaren's third-from-bottom side two points adrift of safety after a second successive defeat. It was an equally significant result for Albion as former Manchester United star Fletcher's goal secured just a second win in their last nine games and lifted them six points clear of the bottom three.

Newcastle lost against Everton on Boxing Day after Tom Cleverley struck with virtually the last touch of the game. McClaren must have feared more bad luck would scupper his plans when goalkeeper Rob Elliot was forced to pull out after feeling unwell just before kick-off, giving Darlow his first Premier League start. After an emotional minute's silence for former Albion manager Don Howe, who died last week aged 80, the hosts nearly took an early lead when James Morrison drove in a shot that was hooked off the line by Newcastle captain Fabricio Coloccini.

Newcastle threatened for the first time when Ayoze Perez's effort was a fraction away from curling into the top corner.

Albion striker Victor Anichebe, making his first start since the opening day of the season, caught Newcastle's Vurnon Anita midway through the half and the midfielder had to be replaced by Cheick Tiote. As Newcastle adjusted to that change, Albion midfielder Morrison almost took advantage with a low shot that flashed wide. McClaren's men came close to breaking the deadlock early in the second half when Paul Dummett's header hit the crossbar.

Albion manager Tony Pulis sent on Saido Berahino for the last 20 minutes, but the striker's arrival was greeted by jeers from sections of the crowd who remain unhappy about his attempts to engineer a move to Tottenham. Anichebe appealed in vain for a penalty when he tumbled under a challenge by Darlow.

There was more frustration for the hosts when Anichebe's header hit the woodwork after a poor punch from Darlow led to a corner.

But Albion's pressure was finally rewarded in the 78th minute when Fletcher made a perfectlytimed run to head Claudio Yacob's cross through Darlow's weak attempted save. — AFP



WEST BROMWICH: Newcastle United's Paul Dummett (right) contests a header with West Bromwich Albion's Craig Dawson during an English Premier League football match at The Hawthorns yesterday. — AP

EPL results/standings

Crystal Palace 0, Swansea City 0; Everton 3, Stoke City 4; Norwich City 2, Aston Villa 0; Watford 1, Tottenham Hotspur 2, West Bromwich Albion 1, Newcastle United 0.

	Р	W	D	L	F	Α	Pts
Leicester City	18	11	5	2	37	25	38
Arsenal	18	11	3	4	31	18	36
Tottenham Hotspur	19	9	8	2	33	15	35
Manchester City	18	11	2	5	37	20	35
Crystal Palace	19	9	4	6	23	16	31
Manchester United	18	8	5	5	22	16	29
Watford	19	8	5	6	24	20	29
Stoke City	19	8	5	6	20	19	29
Liverpool	18	7	6	5	21	22	27
Everton	19	6	8	5	35	28	26
West Ham United	18	6	8	4	26	22	26
Southampton	18	6	6	6	25	21	24
West Bromwich	19	6	5	8	18	24	23
AFC Bournemouth	18	5	5	8	22	32	20
Norwich City	19	5	5	9	22	32	20
Chelsea	18	5	4	9	23	29	19
Swansea City	19	4	7	8	16	24	19
Newcastle United	19	4	5	10	19	34	17
Sunderland	18	3	3	12	19	37	12
Aston Villa	19	1	5	13	15	34	8

Guptill smashes NZ to big win over S Lanka



Super-sub Son sinks 10-man Watford 2-1



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COMANCHE WINS SYDNEY TO HOBART RACE

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MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Wayne Rooney (right) takes on Chelsea's John Terry during an English Premier League match at Old Trafford Stadium yesterday. — AP

CHELSEA DRAW GIVES VAN GAAL RESPITE



MANCHESTER: Manchester United bought beleaguered manager Louis van Gaal some much-needed respite with an improved display in yesterday's 0-0 draw at home to under-performing Premier League champions Chelsea. Van Gaal has admitted that he is contemplating leaving Old Trafford after a wretched slump in form, but although his team have now gone eight games without victory in all competitions, they avoided

sinking to five straight defeats for the first time since Dec 1936.

In a performance that will give United's board reason to hope the Dutchman may yet steer the club out of their dip, the home side played with greater enterprise than of late and hit the woodwork through Juan Mata and Anthony Martial. But Chelsea had their moments, too, and might have given Guus Hiddink the first win of his second spell as interim manager had David de Gea not saved smartly from John Terry, Pedro Rodriguez and Cesar Azpilicueta or Nemanja Matic not blazed over when clean through in the second half.

The result left Chelsea, unbeaten against United in nine encounters, three points above the relegation zone, while their opponents are five points off the top four in sixth place. Meanwhile, the spectre of Jose

Mourinho, sacked by Chelsea 11 days ago, continues to haunt Van Gaal, whose future remains uncertain. His face and 'Special One' nickname adorned scarves sold outside Old Trafford by opportunistic stallholders, while his name was chanted by the away fans inside the ground.

Matic Mocked

Rested for the 2-0 defeat at Stoke City, Wayne Rooney was one of four players brought in by Van Gaal - Matteo Darmian, Bastian Schweinsteiger and Morgan Schneiderlin the others - and the captain set the tone for the hosts in the first half with his confident probing and crisp passing. Playing up front, with Martial exiled to the left, the England captain set up two early chances for Mata and Schneiderlin, the Spaniard slamming a shot against the bar,

the Frenchman drilling wide.

In between, United goalkeeper De Gea produced a brilliant one-handed save after Terry met Willian's right-wing corner with a bullet header, but for most of the first half it was one-way traffic. Martial was a menace with his relentless desire to get the ball down and run, driving a shot against the left-hand post after skinning Branislav Ivanovic and drawing a booking for John Mikel Obi - preferred to Cesc Fabregas by Hiddink - with a burst from halfway.

Shortly before the half-hour, Rooney picked up a loose ball and took aim from 30 yards with a shot that was arrowing into the top-left corner until the flying Thibaut Courtois pushed it behind. United's level dropped as half-time approached and they survived a scare early in the second half when De Gea produced a fine double-save

to thwart first Pedro, teed up by the impressive Eden Hazard, and then Azpilicueta. The home side were soon back on the attack and it took a tremendous reflex stop from Courtois to prevent Ander Herrera tucking away Martial's drilled left-wing cross.

But United's fans' hearts leapt into their mouths again moments later when from Pedro's pass, Matic suddenly found himself bearing down on De Gea, only for the Serbian midfielder to hoist his shot into the crowd, unleashing a burst of mocking laughter around the ground. The final chance fell to Rooney, picked out at the back post by substitute Cameron Borthwick-Jackson, but from inside the sixyard area the United number 10 volleyed well over. Frustrated, Rooney planted his studs into Oscar's calf shortly after and was lucky to escape with a booking. — AFP

INSPIRED OZIL FIRES ARSENAL TO TOP SPOT



LONDON: Arsenal's title challenge is back on track following a 2-0 victory over Bournemouth yesterday which sent them to the top of the Premier League and saw goalkeeper Petr Cech set a new clean-sheet record. Goals from Gabriel and Mesut Ozil, who was again Arsenal's key performer, were enough for the Gunners to settle a few nerves following a shock 4-0 defeat at Southampton two days earlier. The victory also marked an important landmark for Cech who kept his 170th clean sheet in the Premier League most of them in Chelsea colors - to overtake the previous mark set by David James.

With former leaders Leicester due to play fourthplaced Manchester City 24 hours after this fixture, the result leaves Arsenal one point clear at the top of the table - and goes some way to answering criticism that Arsene Wenger's side were starting to buckle under the pressure of trying to win the title for the first time since 2004.

If you took only history into account then this fixture would be one of the most uneven the Premier League has ever seen - mighty Arsenal, 13-time champions, 12-time FA Cup winners and perennial Champions League participants against a club that was playing in the fourth tier of English football only 12 years ago. But there's a lot more to English football than that and there was not a huge chasm between the teams as Arsenal ground out a crucial three points.

Bournemouth, renowned for their attractive style of play, went into the game having not lost since early November, including morale-boosting victories over Chelsea and Manchester United. Arsenal by contrast had seen their own six-match unbeaten run brutally ended by Southampton in defeat at St Mary's, a result which almost instantly deflated the euphoria which had been building in north London.

Mercurial

Perhaps that is why the atmosphere at the Emirates was so muted at the start of a match that Wenger's side simply could not afford to lose. Gabriel's header from an Ozil corner after 27 minutes, however, soon settled those nerves. Set-pieces have been Bournemouth's Achilles heel all season and the Brazilian defender was totally unmarked as he stooped to head home at the far post. Gabriel, in fact, was one of four players brought into the Arsenal side by Wenger following that miserable evening on the south coast, with Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, Calum Chambers and Kieran Gibbs also selected in a rare shake-up - and Lauren Koscielny surprisingly left on the bench.

Gabriel justified that faith as he hit the post with another header from another Ozil corner minutes lat-



LONDON: Arsenal's German midfielder Mesut Ozil controls the ball in front of Bournemouth's South African-born English midfielder Andrew Surman during an English Premier League match at the Emirates Stadium yesterday. — AFP

er, the ball bouncing back off the upright onto Per Mertesacker and dropping wide. Gabriel was also outstanding in defence and the game was effectively over when the mercurial Ozil played a delightful onetwo with Olivier Giroud before accepting the Frenchman's back-heeled pass and sliding the ball home in the 63rd minute. Arsenal, who missed a string of chances to add to their lead, now face struggling Newcastle at home next weekend before potentially more difficult fixtures against Liverpool, Stoke and Chelsea. — AFP

CARROLL SCORES WINNER AGAINST SOUTHAMPTON



LONDON: England striker Andy Carroll marked his return from injury with a closerange header that gave West Ham a 2-1 win against Southampton in the Premier League yesterday. The Hammers turned the game around at Upton Park after trailing 1-0, with halftime substitutes Carroll and midfielder Manuel Lanzini key to an unlikely victory after a dreadful first half. West Ham's Carl Jenkinson scored an own goal in the 13th minute after Dusan Tadic latched on to a low cross from Shane Long and the ball hit the defender's leg.

The visitors seized the initiative from there on, dominating possession and going close through Long before failing to convert a flurry of chances before the interval. Jose Fonte drew a dramatic save from Adrian, Sadio Mane shot wide and Tadic - after some neat footwork - fired at the 'keeper as Southampton pushed for a

After seeing his side outplayed for much of the first period, Slaven Bilic rang the changes at the break, throwing on Carroll and Manuel Lanzini for Zarate and Alex Song - and almost immediately got the response he was after. Just two minutes after the re-start, James Collins' header was cleared off the line from an early corner before Carroll blew a golden opportunity, blasting over off the bar from five yards out with the goal at his mercy. Carroll and Oriol Romeu then sent tame efforts goalwards at either end before West Ham pulled level in bizarre circumstances.

Michail Antonio then scored an unusual equalizer in the 69th for West Ham after a clearance hit him on the head, with the ball looping over Southampton goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg. Carroll headed the winner 10 minutes later. Antonio involved in all of West Ham's best moves headed Valencia's cross against the underside of the bar and Carroll was quickest to react, pouncing on the loose ball to score his second of the season.

West Ham had to hold off a determined onslaught from Southampton in the closing stages but, aside from Virgil van Dijk's off-target shot, the hosts were largely untroubled and saw out the final minutes to sign off 2015 with a victory. — Agencies

Kuwait Times BUSINESS

Kuwait credit growth at 6.6%, **CBK raises key rate by 25bps**

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Zimbabwe delays paying some salaries as cash crunch bites

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DSF 2016 set to 'Unwrap The **Exceptional'**

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SURVIVAL OF FITTEST FOR SHIPPING FIRMS IN 2016

TOKYO: Department store employees place products into "lucky bags" for their annual New Year's sale in Tokyo yesterday. Some 150,000 lucky bags containing items worth four times their price tag will go on sale on January 1 to celebrate New Year's Day. — AFP

MIDDLE EAST MISSES OUT ON M&A BOOM

Sellers reluctant to cut prices after buoyant period

DUBAI: A global boom in mergers and acquisitions has largely bypassed the Middle East where regional deals are stalling as sellers refuse to budge on valuations despite a slumping oil price. While a flurry of big deals pushed global M&A volume in 2015 to a record \$4.6 trillion, transactions between parties in the Middle East totalled just \$12.68 billion in the year to Dec 7, according to Thomson Reuters data.

That would make it the slowest year in value terms since 2011, while the actual number of deals is on course to be the lowest since 2007. The decline follows a buoyant period when surging economic growth-driven by government largesse and a young and increasingly affluent populationpropelled the region's private equity market and pushed up valuations, especially in consumer-focused, healthcare and education businesses.

The valuations being sought by sellers, their expectations inflated by that frenzy, have yet to come back down to earth, despite a regional growth outlook clouded by oil falling to an 11-year-low.

"I don't think expectations of sellers have modulated at all in response to oil prices," said Richard Dallas, managing director of Abu Dhabi-based Gulf Capital, noting that "just like in any real estate market, the first phase of an adjustment is a period of illiquidity."

One industry participant contrasted the gap in valuations between private sellers and public markets, with most Gulf stock exchanges tumbling around 15 percent this year.

One reason potential sellers have been reluctant to compromise is because many businesses are owned by families who often have sentimental attachments to their assets.

In other cases, sellers promised high valuations a year ago by advisers pitching for roles are now unwilling to yield to changed economic conditions. "It's the wrong discussion to try and optimize pricing up front and then either end up with the wrong partner or with no transaction," said Mustafa Abdel-Wadood, partner of emerging market-focused firm Abraaj Group. The result is that deals take longer to close, as buyers and sellers haggle for longer to reach a mutuallyagreeable price, or transactions simply fall through.

DEALS DRY UP

The sale of Dunia Finance is one such example, with sources indicating that initial interest shown in the consumer finance firm in August had petered out as the sellers' price expectations deterred potential buyers. Nobody was immediately available to comment on the state of the sale process from Dunia, or current Abu Dhabi-based owners Mubadala and Waha Capital. Singapore's Temasek Holding, whose unit is the third stakeholder in Dunia, declined to comment.

Similarly, KKR and Dubai-based Fajr Capital's joint bid for a 25 percent stake in Azadea Group ran into difficulties because of a disagreement over valuations between the buyers and the family group which owns the Middle Eastern

While the Middle East has started to benefit from engagement by international private equity firms, who target larger deals, such transactions remain rare. Most deals are below the \$200 million level and between local parties

It is not all doom and gloom, with population growth continuing to make defensive sectors like food and beverages and healthcare attractive. Another potential bright spot is that the uncertain economic environment has prompted more companies to begin talks with advisers about raising cash through asset sales. "We are getting a lot of enquiries from family groups as many are having to look at tough strategic decisions and are looking at ... possible M&A transactions, divestments," said Raymond Hurley, financial services deals specialist at professional services firm PwC. — Reuters

JEDDAH: Saudi groom Hisham Saleh Edris drives his decorated car as he arrives alone at the men's section of the wedding hall in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The kingdom has announced yesterday a projected budget deficit in 2016 of \$87 billion (327 billion riyals), as lower oil prices cut into the government's main source of revenue. — AP

SAUDI ELECTRICITY SURGES BEFORE **BUDGET ON PRICE REFORM HOPES**

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's stock market was generally little changed early yesterday as traders cautiously awaited the release of the kingdom's 2016 state budget, while Egypt recouped some of previous session's losses. The Saudi index rose in the opening minutes but then came well off its highs and after 80 minutes of trade, was up just 0.2 percent.

However, Saudi Electricity Co (STC) and National Gas and Industrialization Co surged 9.9 and 6.8 percent respectively. The budget may include rises in electricity and natural gas feedstock prices, which could boost the bottom lines of Saudi Electricity while squeezing petrochemical firms.

"Before such a big announcement, speculative activities take the driver's seat," said Nateer Al-Mahdi, a portfolio manager at Saudi's Riyad Capital, adding that STC could be sold if electricity price rises were confirmed.

In an unprecedented move, a senior official of state oil giant Saudi Aramco and the ministers of Economy and Planning, Finance, and Water and Electricity will appear at a news conference on the budget.

"The reforms may target the industrial sector before they impact the consumer," said Santhosh Balakrishnan, head of equity research at Riyad Capital. "But what the markets are really looking for is indications as to which sectors will be

mostly impacted as a result of those reforms." In Egypt, Cairo's benchmark rose 0.5 percent in thin trade with second-tier stocks making solid gains. Arabia Investments and GB Auto were top performers, gaining 6.4 and 1.4 percent respectively.

Dubai's stock market slipped yesterday as regional investors diverted their attention to Saudi Arabia's 2016 state budget announcement, due in the afternoon, while Qatar and Abu Dhabi were steady in lethargic trade. Late on Sunday, Dubai announced plans to raise state spending by 12 percent in 2016 compared to its 2015 budget plan as it invests in infrastructure to sustain economic growth, while continuing to balance its budget. This failed to boost Dubai's stock index, which fell 0.9 percent as only one-third of listed stocks traded. Emaar Properties and Arabtec

retreated 2.4 percent and 0.7 percent respectively. The Saudi budget, which may include spending cuts that have implications for economies throughout the region, is expected to be announced around 1200 GMT. Abu Dhabi's bourse oscillated narrowly around Sunday's close in early trade with only six active stocks among the 61 listed. Blue chips Etisalat and Union National Bank were the only two gainers, rising 2.0 and 0.3 percent.

In Qatar, the index rose 0.3 percent in thin trade as international portfolio managers were largely absent because of the year-end holiday season. Gainers out-numbered losers seven to four with the industrial sector's Aamal Co and Qatar Islamic Bank advancing 2.4 and 1.1 percent. — Reuters

LISTING FAMILY BUSINESSES TO GIVE ADDED VALUE TO KSE

KUWAIT: Analysts have agreed that the recent call by the region's second strongest market will no doubt consoli-Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Kuwait's Capital Market Authority (CMA) Nayef Al-Hajraf for family businesses to list at the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) is a significant step that is likely to give added value to the market. In separate interviews with KUNA, they cited the financial solvency and accumulated expertise of family businesses, saying this will help realize the vision of turning Kuwait into a regional financial hub, enhancing the flow of national and foreign investments.

Listing of family businesses on the KSE will be a remarkable step, advisor to the Board of Directors of Arzaq Capital Co. Salah Al-Sultan told KUNA yesterday. Yet, he believed that the present stage is "unfavorable", citing the frequent declines in market performance since the global financial mayhem, and its implications. The pace of market performance since the year started has been impacted by pressing factors, which prompts family businesses to wait until some temporarily risks vanish, he said.

These risks are mainly political developments in the region, the falls of oil prices and the lack of major market makers at KSE, he noted.

Al-Sultan stressed the fact listing family businesses in

date it, and give impetus to efforts seeking to develop Kuwait into a financial hub in the region. Analyst Adnan Al-Duleimi referred to favorable positive factors for family businesses to be listed at KSE, topped with their good investment reputation. These also include the CMA Law that regulates businesses and helps them maintain their status, he added, noting that the state had offered these companies financial, legislative and logistic support, as well as saving many of them from bankruptcy.

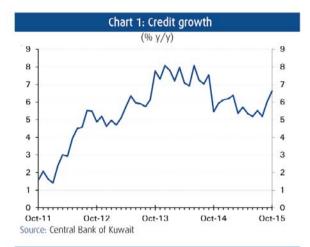
Meanwhile, Al-Duleimi told KUNA that the activation of the CMA Law pushed some companies that had withdrawn from the market to think seriously of making a comeback.

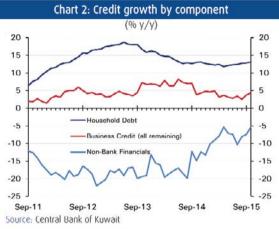
No doubt listing family businesses on the KSE will have several benefits for the market and the companies, chairman of the Kuwaiti Traders Association Mohammad Al-

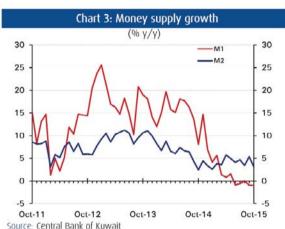
The step will boost the financial solvency of the businesses so that they can expand their activities for the good of shareholders, Al-Tarrah told KUNA. The listing of the Mezzan Holding Co. on KSE earlier this year has been successful, which prompts the "cloning" of similar family businesses. — KUNA

KUWAIT CREDIT GROWTH AT 6.6%, CBK RAISES KEY RATE BY 25BPS

KUWAIT: Credit saw a small decrease of KD 22 million in ness credit did relatively well. Deposits resumed their October on the heels of an exceptionally large increase the month before (KD 692 million). Despite the small decline, credit growth still rose to 6.6 percent year-on-year (y/y), the most rapid pace in over a year. A large decline in lending for securities weighed on the October figure. Meanwhile, household borrowing recorded a good gain, while busi-







NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

month-on-month declines following one positive month in

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) increased its key policy rate in December following the much anticipated policy rate hike by the US Federal Reserve. The CBK increased its discount rate by 25 basis points (bps) to 2.25 percent; the rate had remained unchanged at 2 percent for over three years. The increase will see some bank lending rates rise as a result. Interbank rates have already been rising in anticipation and as bank liquidity came under some pressure. Deposit and interbank rates remained relatively steady during October, though the data did reflect the start of a pickup in interbank rates that continued into December.

Household debt saw an average sized gain in October of KD 107 million, with growth accelerating to 13.1 percent y/y. Installment loans (primarily housing) continued to be the sole source of growth, with growth there accelerating to 16.2 percent. Consumer loans (car, etc.), on the other hand, saw a small decrease in October and registered a 0.2 percent decline y/y.

Non-bank financial companies resumed their net reduction of bank credit, with a decline of KD 27 million. Still, the sector's pace of deleveraging has been easing, dropping to 5.3 percent y/y in October. It is now less than half its size at its height, back in 2009.

All remaining credit declined by KD 101 million, though growth rose to 4.3 percent y/y thanks to a basis effect. The monthly decline was due to a large KD 189 million drop in lending for the purchase of securities. Other sectors did relatively well, adding around KD 89 million. This came largely from industry, real estate and construction.

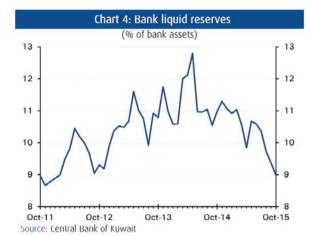
Private deposits resumed their decline in October, registering a relatively large drop of KD 776 million. As a result, money supply (M2) growth eased to 3.1 percent y/y, while narrower money supply (M1) remained down by 1.0 percent y/y. Deposits have declined in four of the last five months, with September the only exception. During the period from May through October, deposits shrank by KD 1.7 billion, or 4.8 percent. The decline in deposits during October was largely in KD sight deposits (-KD 323 million) and foreign currency deposits (-KD 407 million).

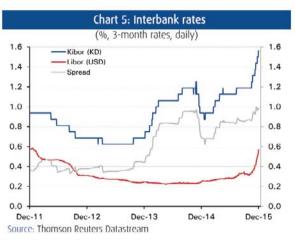
Government deposits have helped offset some of the decline in private sector deposits in recent months. Government deposits with domestic banks rose by KD 219 million in October and were up by KD 527 million since July 2015. The ratio of government deposits to bank assets rose from 9 percent in July 2015 to 10 percent in October, which is where it stood a year ago.

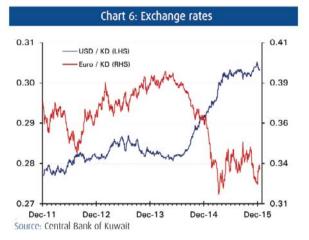
System liquidity is still relatively comfortable, though it has come under some pressure recently. Banks' core liquid assets (which include cash and deposits with the CBK, as well as CBK bonds) stood at KD 5.1 billion in October 2015, or 9.0 percent of total bank assets, down from 10-11 percent before the summer.

Dinar interbank rates have been moving upward as liquidity tightened and in anticipation of the Fed hike. The 3month rate was steady at 1.31 percent in October, though it was up 26 basis points year-to-date. The rate has risen further since, recording a gain of more 60 bps ytd by late December 2015, rising to 1.56 percent.

Customer interest rates on dinar time deposits were relatively steady in October. Average rates on the 1-month, 3month and 6-month time deposits saw a decline of a basis point each to settle at 0.61 percent, 0.78 percent, and 1.00 percent, while 12-month rates added 12 bps to reach 1.24 percent.







OIL FALLS TOWARDS \$37, NEAR 11-YEAR LOW

LONDON: Oil fell towards \$37 a barrel yesterday, trading within sight of an 11-year low, pressured by excess supply that has more than halved prices since the downturn began in mid-2014. US crude was trading at around parity with global benchmark Brent, having earlier in December risen to a premium for the first time in about a year following the lifting of a 40-year-old ban on most US crude exports. Brent crude was down 71 cents at \$37.18 a barrel at 1137 GMT. It fell to \$35.98, an 11-year low, on Tuesday. US crude was down 91 cents at \$37.19. Trading volume was lighter than normal due to a UK public holiday.

"We expect both prices to rise next year," said Eugen Weinberg, an analyst at Commerzbank. "A short-term slide can't be excluded, due to persisting oversupplies, negative sentiment and stronger downside momentum." Figures from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries imply a glut of more than 2 million barrels per day, equal to over 2 percent of world demand. Oversupply is expected to persist into the earlier part of next year. "The global supply and demand tables are still showing a heavy picture for the first half of 2016," said Olivier Jakob, oil analyst at Petromatrix. Signs yesterday that a further demand stimulus from low crude prices may be limited also added pressure. In Japan, total oil product sales in November fell to a 46-year low. In Europe, demand growth for oil products turned negative in October, analysts at JBC Energy said in a report, citing figures from the Joint Organizations Data Initiative - the first year-on-year decline this year, JBC said.

The drop in prices gained impetus after OPEC, led by top exporter Saudi Arabia, a year ago dropped its longstanding policy of cutting output to support prices in favor of defending market share. While the price collapse has partly achieved OPEC's goals by curbing growth of competing supplies, it has put finances in producing nations under more strain, even in the relatively wealthy Gulf states.

Saudi Arabia is expected to announce its 2016 state budget yesterday, and the details will be scrutinized for any indication that it may give about the likelihood of the kingdom changing its oil policy. A senior official of state oil company Aramco and three ministers will appear at a news conference scheduled for 1200 GMT on the budget. —Reuters

US DOLLAR STABLE AT KD 0.303

KUWAIT: The US dollar was stable against the Kuwaiti dinar exchanging at KD 0.303, as well as the euro at KD 0.332 compared to Sunday's rates, said a statement by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. Meanwhile, the Sterling stabled at KD 0.452, the Swiss franc was at KD 0. 307 and the Japanese yen was unchanged at KD 0.002. —KUNA

EGYPT'S TREASURY BOND YIELDS RISE MODESTLY AT AUCTION

CAIRO: Yields on Egypt's 18-month, rates on Thursday, citing inflationary three-year and seven-year treasury bonds rose modestly at an auction yesterday, data from the central bank website showed, four days after the central bank raised its key rates by 50 basis points. The average yield on Egypt's zero-coupon, 18month bonds rose to 11.993 percent from 11.844 percent at the last auction on Dec. 14.

The average yield on the threeyear bond rose to 12.663 percent from 12.521 percent and on the seven-year bond to 14.572 percent from 14.43 percent.

The bond auction is the first since the central bank's monetary policy committee (MPC) raised interest

pressures. That fuelled expectations that government debt yields would increase by at least 50 basis points and bankers were surprised on Sunday when a sale of three and nine-month T-bills saw yields rise by less than 20 basis points. Bankers have cited aggressive bidding by state banks as a reason why yields have risen less than expected at auction, which would add to the government's debt burden.

Monday's auction is expected to have a similar result, bankers said, adding that state banks had informed other banks that the yields will not rise by more than 20 basis

"It has been done before when state banks want to keep the auction yields under control," one banker said. "They do that sometimes to inform banks that they will keep yields within (a range) so if the other banks want to be accepted they should stay within that range,"

Official auction results were expected later in the afternoon. Yields on Egypt's zero-coupon 1.5 year, and three-year treasury bonds rose marginally to 11.844, and 12.521 percent, respectively, at the previous auction on Dec. 14. While yields on the seven-year bonds dropped marginally to 14.43 percent. —Reuters



KOLKATA: An Indian taxi driver sits in his vehicle as he waits for passengers in Kolkata. From London and Paris to New Delhi and Sao Paolo, traditional taxi drivers united worldwide against Uber in 2015, a year that saw riots, legal battles and even a kidnapping in protest against the startup. —AFP

US Dollars Mint

Tunisian Dinar

Turkish Lira

0.304550

UAF Dirhams

Yemeni Rival

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE C	0
COUNTRY SELL DRAFT ASIAN COUNTRIES	SELL CASH
Japanese Yen 2.527	
Indian Rupees 4.609	
Pakistani Rupees 2.902	
Srilankan Rupees 2.120	
Nepali Rupees 2.877	
Singapore Dollar 217.090	
Hongkong Dollar 39.245	
Bangladesh Taka 3.869	
Philippine Peso 6.447	
Thai Baht 8.214	
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal 81.150	
Qatari Riyal 83.592	
Omani Riyal 790.410	
Bahraini Dinar 808.160	
UAE Dirham 82.852	
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash 37.950	
Egyptian Pound - Transfer 38.910	
Yemen Riyal/for 1000 1.420	
Tunisian Dinar 151.720	
Jordanian Dinar 428.470	
Lebanese Lira/for 1000 2.028	
Syrian Lira 2.169	
Morocco Dirham 31.195	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTR	IES
US Dollar Transfer 304.150	
Euro 335.330	
Sterling Pound 455.310	
Canadian dollar 220.560	
Turkish lira 104.980	
Swiss Franc 310.040	
Australian Dollar 222.640	
US Dollar Buying 302.950	

	GOLD
20 Gram	219.670
10 Gram	112.530
5 Gram	56.950
	HAF FYCHANGE CE

UAE	EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL
Australian Dollar Canadian Dollar Swiss Franc Euro US Dollar Sterling Pound Japanese Yen Bangladesh Taka Indian Rupee Sri Lankan Rupee Nepali Rupee Pakistani Rupee UAE Dirhams Bahraini Dinar Egyptian Pound Jordanian Dinar Omani Riyal	212.64 223.90 312.54 337.05 304.35 465.98 2.57 3.870 4.602 2.122 2.873 2.901 0.08282 0.8088 0.03877 0.4329 0.7903
Qatari Riyal Saudi Riyal	0.08391 0.08112

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD				
	GCC COUNTRIES			
US Dollar	304.400			
Canadian Dollar	222.240			
Sterling Pound	455.735			
Euro	334.985			
Swiss Frank	301.790			
Bahrain Dinar	805.305			
UAE Dirhams	83.120			
Qatari Riyals	84.335			

Saudi Riyals	81.850
Jordanian Dinar	428.810
Egyptian Pound	38.763
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.123
Indian Rupees	4.594
Pakistani Rupees	2.901
Bangladesh Taka	3.867
Philippines Pesso	6.440
Cyprus pound	579.790
Japanese Yen	3.510
Syrian Pound	2.380
Nepalese Rupees	3.865
Malaysian Ringgit	71.725
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	47.470
Thai Bhat	9.415
Turkish Lira	104.405

US Dollars

Bahrain Exchange Company					
COUNTRY	SELL CASH	SELLDRAFT			
British Pound	Europe 0.446836	0.455838			
Czech Korune	0.004339	0.433838			
Danish Krone	0.040641	0.045641			
Euro	0.328067	0.336067			
Norwegian Krone	0.031045	0.036245			
Romanian Leu	0.087248	0.087248			
Slovakia	0.009088	0.019088			
Swedish Krona	0.032203	0.037203			
Swiss Franc	0.301603	0.311803			
Turkish Lira	0.099748	0.110048			
	Australasia				
Australian Dollar	0.212639	0.224139			
New Zealand Dollar	0.201590	0.211090			
America					
Canadian Dollar	0.214208	0.222708			

0.300050

	Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003460	0.004060	
Chinese Yuan	0.045401	0.048901	
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037142	0.039892	
ndian Rupee	0.004267	0.004657	
ndonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024	
Japanese Yen	0.002446	0.002626	
Kenyan Shilling	0.003161	0.003161	
Korean Won	0.000252	0.000267	
Malaysian Ringgit	0.066900	0.072900	
Nepalese Rupee	0.002883	0.003053	
Pakistan Rupee	0.002668	0.002948	
Philippine Peso	0.006400	0.006680	
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073	
Singapore Dollar	0.213194	0.219194	
South African Rand	0.014042	0.022542	
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001765	0.002345	
Taiwan	0.009194	0.009374	
Thai Baht	0.008119	0.008669	
	Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.799874	0.807874	
Egyptian Pound	0.034527	0.037653	
ranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085	
raqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260	
Jordanian Dinar	0.424989	0.432483	
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000	
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252	
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022096	0.046096	
Nigerian Naira	0.001257	0.001892	
Omani Riyal	0.783579	0.789259	
Qatar Riyal	0.082831	0.084044	
Saudi Riyal	0.080220	0.081170	
Svrian Pound	0.001289	0.001509	

0.147679

0.098748

0.081826

0.001375

0.300550

0.304550

0.155679

0.110048

0.082977

0.001455

GIB WINS 'CREDIT SPECIALIST' AWARD FOR ITS BOND

DUBAI: Gulf International Bank is pleased to announce its Emerging Markets Opportunities Fund (EMOF) has won 'Credit Specialist' award at 'Alternative (Alt) Credit Intelligence European Performance Awards' recently held in London.



Mark Watts

The Alt Credit Intelligence Awards are a recognition and reward for funds that have outperformed their peers over the past 12 months. Alt Credit Intelligence is an international publication developed by Hedge Fund Management Community (HFM), an information and membership networking group providing services for the global hedge fund management community.

Mark Watts, GIB (UK) CEO, commented on the award, saying: "This award recognizes our market leading risk adjusted returns for GIB Emerging Markets Opportunities Fund and is a testament to the experience and hard work put in by the investment team. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Fund's prime brokers Barclays Bank and Credit Suisse, and all our counterparties that contributed to this result."

The award winning GIB Emerging

Markets Opportunities Fund (EMOF) is GIB (UK)'s flagship long/short Global EM Credit Fund. EMOF seeks to provide consistent risk adjusted returns over

INTELLIGENCE **EUROPEAN PERFORMANCE**

AWARDS 2015

the medium to long term with low correlation to underlying market indices whilst preserving capital and minimizing short term volatility. The disciplined investment approach employed led to the establishment of a proven track record of minimizing the negative returns in extremely volatile markets as experienced during the past 12 month period, thereby preserving capital and creating a unique drawdown record.

Despite challenging market conditions between August 2014 and August 2015, EMOF return 3.89 percent net of fees to its investors. Positioning in the Fund and sound risk management contributed to the delivery of this positive return. EMOF also prudently managed its liquidity situation and brought its leverage ratio down to around 2 times from 3 times, putting the Fund in a comfortable situation to navigate current market turbulences.

"The Investment Team has steered EMOF through turbulent waters and achieved impressive positive numbers in risk adjusted terms each calendar year since inception and we expect this to continue. Prospects are very strong for the next twelve months. We see the context of higher market volatility and re-pricing in emerging markets securities as a perfect opportunity for EMOF to identify new investment opportunities," added Watts.

GIB is owned by the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund owns 97.2 percent of GIB.

Gulf International Bank (GIB) is a pan-GCC universal bank that specializes in corporate and investment banking and has a growing retail footprint. In addition to its main subsidiaries, London-based Gulf International Bank (UK) Limited, and Riyadh-based GIB Capital LLC, it has branches in London, New York, Abu Dhabi, Dhahran, Riyadh and Jeddah with representative offices in Dubai and Beirut.

RUBLE DROPS TO 2015 LOW AMID OIL PRICE SLUMP

MOSCOW: Russia's battered ruble yesterday reached its 2015 low as the slump in oil prices weighs on the outlook for the country's recession-hit economy.

The ruble stood at 72.46 against the dollar, dropping below 72 for the first time since December 2014. The Russian currency also stood at 79.55 against the euro, its lowest value since August.

The slide in oil prices and Western sanctions over Moscow's role in the Ukraine crisis have pummelled the oil-dependent Russian economy in recent months.

The ruble lost around half of its value in 2014 but recovered slightly as energy prices stabilised this year, allowing officials to claim the worst of the crisis had

The recent decline in oil prices-with Brent crude reaching an 11-year low this month-casts a shadow on the prospect of economic recovery. Russia's Central Bank predicted that if oil prices remain at their current level, the country's GDP could drop 2 percent in 2016.

"Many experts-including myself-think that we had touched bottom, that the worst of the crisis had passed," former finance minister Alexei Kudrin was quoted as saying by Interfax news agency. "But today we are witnessing a new deteriora-

"Next year will be a big challenge. Public spending inevitably will decrease because state revenue will contract," Kudrin added. —AFP

VALEANT CEO TAKES MEDICAL LEAVE

J. Michael Pearson is taking a medical leave of absence after he was hospitalized with pneumonia last week.

Shares of the troubled Canadian pharmaceutical company fell nearly 7 percent in premarket trading yesterday. Valeant says three executives will take over for Pearson in his absence.

A representative for Valeant said Monday that Pearson has a "severe case of pneumonia and is receiving treatment in the hospital." The company declined to offer details on his condition or the expected length of his absence. Valeant has recently come under scrutiny for its drug pricing policies, as well as its relationship with the mail-order pharmacy Philidor. Critics believe Philidor created a network of "phantom pharmacies" to steer pharmacy benefit managers toward Valeant's moreexpensive drugs, rather than to cheaper alternatives. Valeant cut ties with Philidor in October and later announced a distribution deal with the drugstore chain Walgreens for its dermatology and ophthalmology treatments.

Valeant earlier this month cut its expec-

NEW YORK: Valeant Pharmaceuticals CEO tations for the fourth quarter and all of 2015 and issued a guarded outlook for 2016 mainly due to lower sales.

Pearson, 56, joined Valeant in 2008 after a 23-year career with the consulting firm McKinsey & Co., for which he served as head of its global pharmaceutical practice.

He used a string of acquisitions to turn a relatively small business that made generic drugs and chronic illness treatments into a major pharmaceutical company. Valeant, formerly based in California, combined with Wellbutrin XL maker Biovail in 2010 to form Laval, Quebec-based Valeant Pharmaceuticals International Inc. Its sales climbed from \$2.46 billion in 2011 to an expected \$10.4 billion to \$10.5 billion for this year. Valeant said yesterday that the three executives taking over for Pearson will be Executive Vice President and General Counsel Robert Chai-Onn, Executive Vice President and Chairman Dr. Ari Kellen and Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Robert Rosiello.

Shares of Valeant fell 6.5 percent to \$ 106.68 before the market opened yesterday. Its shares have fallen 30 percent in just the past three months. —AP



MOSCOW: A woman walks past a board listing foreign currency rates against the Russian ruble in central Moscow on December 28, 2015. Russia's battered ruble yesterday reached its 2015 low as the slump in oil prices weighs on the outlook for the country's recession-hit economy. —AFP

ZIMBABWE DELAYS PAYING SOME SALARIES AS CASH CRUNCH BITES

Government struggling to pay salaries on time

HARARE: Zimbabwe has delayed paying December salaries for most of its public sector workers to early next month and has not paid annual bonuses, in a sign of a cash crunch that brought threats of strikes from doctors and teachers vesterday.

Doctors working at state hospitals and the main teachers' union demanded the payment of salaries and bonuses before Dec. 31, warning of possible strikes next year. Zimbabwe spends more than 80 percent of its budget on salaries, mainly for the army, police, teachers and nurses, but only managed to pay soldiers earlier this month. Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa said in a statement yesterday that December wages for teachers and other education sector workers would be paid today.

"Treasury advises that the December 2015 salary payment date for the rest of the public service is also being moved from 29 December 2015 to 5 January 2016," Chinamasa said. He could not be reached for further comment. The government spends more than \$260 million every month on salaries for more than 300,000 of its employees.

Zimbabwe finances its entire budget from taxes because lenders like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank will only consider fresh loans once it clears its debts. Tax revenues are falling as the economy struggles with weak commodity prices and high unemployment.

Chinamasa did not say when bonuses, equivalent to one month's salary and traditionally paid in November, would be paid. "Our December salary and 2015 bonus must be disbursed on or before Dec. 31. Our members countrywide will not be able to attend to their duties from Jan. 1, 2016 should this be violated," read a statement from the Zimbabwe Hospital Doctors Association.

Last April, Chinamasa said the government would not pay annual bonuses to public workers for two years, citing falling tax revenues, only for President Robert Mugabe to reverse the decision. —Reuters



MONTREAL: Valeant Pharmaceuticals CEO J Michael Pearson poses at the company's annual general meeting in Montreal. Valeant announced yesterday that Pearson is taking a medical leave of absence after he was hospitalized with pneumonia a week earlier. —AP

IRAQ APPROACHES PETROCHINA, **EXXON OVER SOUTHERN PROJECT**

BAGHDAD: Iraq, OPEC's second-largest producer, has approached PetroChina and ExxonMobil about investing in a multi-billion-dollar project to boost output from its smaller southern oilfields, a senior Iraqi oil official said. State-run South Oil Co (SOC) is seeking investment from either or both of the companies to build infrastructure needed to raise output at fields it operates, SOC Deputy Chairman Basim Abdul Kareem told

A sharp fall in crude oil prices since mid-2014 has hurt Baghdad's ability to fund oilfield development and foreign investments are needed, he said. The enhanced recovery project targets the Luhais, Nassiriya, Tuba, Nahr Bin Umar and Artawi oilfields, he said. They are producing about 240,000 barrels per

day (bpd) currently and SOC's initial plan calls for raising that to about 350,000 bpd in 2016.

The "Integrated South Project" consists of building oil pipelines, storage facilities and a seawater supply project to inject water from the Gulf to maintain pressure and enhance oil recovery, he said.

The seawater project will also be used to overcome declining production rates at larger fields such as West Qurna, Majnoon, Zubair and Rumaila, operated by oil majors such as BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Eni and Lukoil. "Due to the current financial crisis caused by the falling oil prices, we established the 'Integrated South Project' to attract financiers and investors to help us increase our production and complete these vital energy projects," Abdul Kareem said. —Reuters

FUTURES SLIP AHEAD OF LAST TRADING WEEK OF YEAR

NEW YORK: US stock index futures were lower in thin volumes yesterday, ahead of the final trading week of the year. Crude prices slumped and were hovering near multi-year lows, pressured by a global glut. Exxon's shares were down 0.7 percent at \$78.80 in premarket trading. Global stocks ticked lower over fresh worries about Chinese growth after data showed profits at industrial companies in the world's second-largest economy fell in November for the sixth month in a row.

* Trading volumes are expected to remain subdued through the week.

* The S&P 500 is on track to end the year in the black, rising a marginal 0.1 percent so far in 2015, while the Nasdaq Composite is up 6.6 percent. The Dow Jones industrial average is down 1.5 percent.

* Wall Street closed slightly lower on Thursday, dragged down by energy stocks.

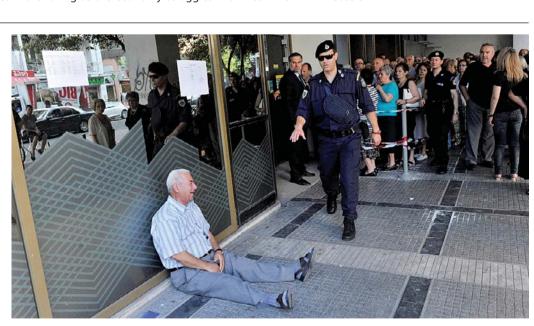
* Weight Watchers was up 2.2 percent at \$18.39, while Fitbit was up 2 percent at \$29.50.

* Apple was down 0.6 percent at

\$107.35. Dow e-minis were down 88 points, or 0.5 percent, with 11,890 contracts changing hands.

* S&P 500 e-minis were down 9.25 points, or 0.45 percent, with 54,806 contracts traded.

* Nasdag 100 e-minis were down 16.25 points, or 0.35 percent, on volume of 10,046 contracts. —AP



THESSALONIKI: Giorgos Chatzifotiadis, an elderly man, cries outside a national bank branch in Thessaloniki on 3 July, 2015 as pensioners queue to draw their pensions, up to a limit of 120 euros. Greece is almost evenly split over a crucial weekend referendum that could decide its financial fate, with a 'Yes' result possibly ahead by a whisker, the latest survey Friday showed. —AFP

NO FURTHER EURO-ZONE EXPANSION IN NEXT FEW YEARS: COMMISSIONER

FRANKFURT: The eurozone is not expected to welcome any new members in the coming years, as the region's long crisis seems to have put some countries off, deputy European Commission chief said in a newspaper interview yesterday.

"No new members are expected to join in the next few years," Valdis Dombrovskis told the daily Die Welt. Dombrovskis is the EU Commissioner in charge of the euro and social dialogue.

Out of the 28 EU member states, 19 have signed up to the single currency. "Before a coun-

try joins the euro, it must have a fixed exchange rate to the euro. This mechanism is the waiting room for eurozone membership," Dombrovskis said. But at the moment, no EU member is in the "euro waiting room", with the exception of Denmark, which has a special status, he said.

Dombrovskis said that Bulgaria and Romania had both expressed interest in taking the first step to joining the euro. And preliminary talks have also been held with the previous government in Poland. —AFP



EUROPE SHARES LACKLUSTRE IN POST-HOLIDAY TRADING

LONDON: European shares fell yesterday in their first day of trade since the Christmas break, with a sharp decline in crude oil prices putting pressure on energy stocks such as Repsol and Total.

The Euro STOXX Oil and Gas index fell 1.2 percent as crude oil dropped towards \$37 a barrel, trading within sight of an 11-year low, pressured by excess supply that has more than halved prices since the downturn began in mid-2014. Shares in Repsol, Total and oil services company Technip fell between 1.3 percent and 3.1 percent.

"Today's drop is again due to the low price of oil and the fall in the oil and gas sector following the weak Chinese data over the weekend," John

WETHING

BASSACT.

Plassard, senior equity sales executive at Mirabaud Securities, said.

Data showed profits earned by Chinese industrial companies in November fell from a year earlier, marking a sixth consecutive month of decline. Naeem Aslam, chief market analyst at AvaTrade, also said weak Chinese economic data released on Sunday was putting pressure on the markets.

"The bias could be skewed towards the downside and most of the bets may also be anchored towards this direction," he said. The Euro STOXX 50 index was down 0.5 percent by 1153 GMT, Germany's DAX fell 0.4 percent, while France's CAC dropped 0.7 percent. However, volumes on the

DAX and the CAC were just about 12 percent of their 90-day daily average by midday due to a public holiday in the United Kingdom.

Shares in ArcelorMittal fell 3.1 percent on profit taking, after surging 17 percent in the previous week on a report saying China was likely to cut its steel surplus that has kept prices at decade lows.

Adidas fell 1.3 percent after the company's CFO Robin Stalker told Boersen-Zeitung he expected sourcing costs to rise by half a billion euros in 2016 due to negative currency effects.

However, Banca Monte dei Paschi rose 2 percent after Italy's third-largest bank said it had signed a binding agreement to sell a portfolio of

non-performing loans with a gross book value of 1 billion euros (\$1.1 billion) to a Deutsche Bank vehicle.

Asia declines

Over in Asia, markets broadly fell yesterday as a decline in profits at China's industrial firms reignited worries about the world's number two economy, but bargain-buying helped Tokyo snap a five-day losing stre ak. Industrial profits declined 1.4 percent to 672.1 billion yuan (\$104 billion) in November, according to data released on Sunday by China's National Bureau of Statistics.

"We see weakness across industries, with few signs of improvement," Steve Wang, chief China economist at Reorient Financial Markets in Hong Kong, told Bloomberg News. The fresh figures weighed on mainland markets with Shanghai down 2.59 percent and Shenzhen off 2.18 percent by the close. Shares in China Telecom dropped as much as three percent after news its head was under investigation for "severe disciplinary violations", the latest high-profile target in a corruption crackdown.

On currency markets the dollar rose to 120.53 yen from 120.19 Friday in Tokyo, as investors bought back the US currency after it hit a two-month low against the Japanese unit last week.

A weak yen is a plus for Japanese exporters, as it boosts their repatriated profits and competitiveness overseas. Dealers largely ignored a 1.0 percent decline in Japan's factory output in November-after two months of gains-announced by the government shortly before Tokyo opened yesterday morning.

The disappointing data comes after sepa-

National Bank of Kuwait

rate figures last week showed still-weak inflation and household spending, as the world's number three economy struggles to stage a recovery. Most other regional markets were also in the red. Seoul closed down 1.34 percent, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index was 1.08 percent lower in afternoon trade, Taiwan slipped 0.06 percent and Singapore fell 0.12 percent. However, Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei 225 index gained 0.56 percent by the close as bargain-buying and a weaker yen lifted the market. Sydney and Wellington were closed for a public holiday.

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Dealers largely ignored a 1.0 percent decline in Japan's factory output in November-after two months of gains-announced by the government shortly before Tokyo opened yesterday morning. The disappointing data comes after separate figures last week showed still-weak inflation and household spending, as the world's number three economy struggles to stage a recovery.

Yesterday's decline in Japanese factory output was worse than market expectations for an 0.4 percent contraction. Yusuke Shimoda, an economist at Japan Research Institute, warned that the weak Japanese data reflected weakness in China's economya key driver of global growth. "One big concern is a slowdown in the Chinese economy, which is pressuring Japanese companies," he said. — Agencies.

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Daily K	uwait :	Stock	Exchang	e Repor	t							(Olc	oa	II U		ע
Monday 28 E	Decembe										_						
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MARIN KARUS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	114 91	Ξ	0.0	SONOUK KRE	9/1 96	48.0	7008636 1,018,166	345,966 57,017	169	49.0 56	=	0.0
IPG NAPESCO	260	260	35,000 0	9,100	0	260 650	=	6.0	URC NRE	96 92	90	11,500 92,164	1,064 8,233	2 7	88	÷	4.0
ENERGYH GPI	45.0 53	40.0 52	1,000	43 71,340	20	48.0 52	Ť	0.5 -2.0	TAM	0.0 620	610	0 6.865	0 4,206	3	350 620	Ŧ	420.0
ASAR OH & Gas	0.0	0.0	1,405,962	86,483	42	102 81634	7	-0.84	MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	2:500	403	0	106	=	0.0
KFOUC	230	220	80,000	11,000	1	200	-	0.0	ARABREC ERESCIO	30.5 66	29.5 68	298,973 142,400	9.311	10	30.5	-	1.0
BPCC AUXIOUT	0.0	6:0	17,545	8,773 0	0	500 610	_	40.0	MABANEE PUAZZKT	9.0	0.0	576,309 0	635,967 0	0	930 84	÷	-10.0 0.0
ALCURAIN Basic Materials	188	188	32,058 99,665	25,799	12	963.75	Ŧ	4.73	INVESTORS INC	25.5 30.0	25.0 29.5	2,367,100 664,676	19,915	40 34	25.5 29.5	÷	-1.5
KCEM	360	580	599	239	1	380	Ŧ	-5.0	ALTUARIA SANAM	0.0	0.0	2.516	0	0	79 42.0	-	0.0
REFRI CABUE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	500 575	Ξ	0.0	AAYANRE AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79 75	=	0.0
POEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,080	=	6.0	ALAQARIA MAZAYA	21.0 104	21.0 102	10,000 40,250	210 4,146	3	21.0	÷	40.5 -2.0
PAPER MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300 84	=	6.0	ADAIC THEMAR	27.0	95.0	3,736,008	98,090	65	26.0 90	÷	-1.0 0.0
ACICO GONC	280	280	9,990	2,797 0	0	280 480	<u> </u>	-5.0 6.0	TUARA TAAMEER	47LS 0.0	40.0	117,286	4,779	10	34.0	Ť	-1.0 0.0
HOC KPAK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	=	0.0	AROAN AROAN	112	106	107,473 145,340	11,674 25,261	15 30	112	_	0.0
KBMMC NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250 228	=	6.0	ABYAAR MUNSHAAT	30.0	29.5 86	175,000 765,604	5,165 66,476	21	30.0	Ŧ	-3.0
EQUIPMENT NOCI	60	58	710,290	41,500	11	99		1.0	FIRSTOUBAI KBT	50 48.0	47.5	482,105 7,040,329	24,006 386,630	172	90 44.5	+	2.5
GHPSUM SALBOOKH	0.0 82	6.0	0 362,841	0 29.750	12	102	-	4.0	REAM MENA	9.0	9.0 34.0	100	0 2	0	136	-	1.0
AGLTY EQU	490	485	161,200	76.222	19	485 210	=	0.0	ALMUDIONI MARAKEZ	30.5	30.0	868,000	26,722	9	30.5	-	4.5
CLEANING	40.0	40.0	100,000	4,000	2	40.0		1.0	REMAL MACHAER	34.0	30.6	26,000	884	3 0	34.0	*	-0.5
KOL KOPC	45.0	42.5	85,000	3,618	4	45.0	Ē	6.0	Real Estate	**	7.0	25,857,258	1,694,011	674	944.62	Ŧ	4.19
HUMANSOFT NAFACS	980	980	766	760	1 0	980	-	6.0	KUMV	0.0	0.0	0 942,902	94.495	0 19	100	=	0.0
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	204 300	Ξ	0.0	FACIL IFA	31.0	30.0	6,121,800	188,315	99	30.0	+	4.0
GPC MAXIADEEN	21.5	21.5	31.458 363.000	1,012 7,590	•	21.5	*	45	KIPROJ	90 980	68 679	1,735,000	167,068	6	580	-	9.0
MUCC MUCC	6.0	68	368,810	24.918	20	790	Ŧ	-1.0	DOAST	38.6	37.8	1,636,200	49,992 53,583	58 25	37.5	÷	4.5
UPAC ALAPCO	210	210	2,600	0 625	1	210	=	0.0	ARZAN	37.0	35.0	4.840	171	1	35.0	÷	-1.5
LOGISTICS	77 97	76 56	291,060 575,769	19,225	16	57	Ť	0.0	MARKAZ KIMBPIC	0.0 27.5	0.0 27.0	30,000	813		37.5	Ŧ	-1.0
GCEM GCEM	0.0	0.0	2,000	168	0	76	_	0.0	ALOLA	67 66	54	100,099 330,000	2,856 17,360		57 54	*	-1.0
POEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	=	0.0	ALMAL GIH	9.0 28.0	27.0	0 561,149	15,369	21	39.5	Ŧ	-1.0
RKWC SPEC	102	99 83	12,300	1,046	4	100	-	1.0	BACKANING/	49.0 34.5	48.0 30.0	49,070 695,754	23,250	10	49.0 34.5	-	9.5
Industrials			3,074,352	254,766	125	1049.14	Ŧ	-0.40	OSOUL KFIC	39.0	38.0	2.600	99	5	41.0 28.0	=	0.0
KSH NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220 62	Ξ	0.0	KAMCO NIH	0.0 62	0.0	100,613	6,258	0	100	-	-2.0
PAPCO CATTL	128	128	200,000	0 25-600	0	112	÷	-2.0	ISKAN MADAR	30.6	31.0	1,887,812	60,736	60	30.0	-	2.0
DANNAH POULT	106	176	144,400	11,700	13	106	-	10.0	ALDEERA ALSALAM	30.5	30.0 35.0	30,229	1,002	15	30.0	Ť	-1.5 0.5
FOOD Consumer Goods	1,960	1,960	2,670	5.233	19	1,960	A	20.0 13.25	EXTTITAB ALMADINA	31.5	29.5	1,305,410	39,704 226,044	30 112	29.5	÷	4.0
MHC	180	180	1,727	311	i	180	_	_	NOOR TAMINY	47.5	45.0	315,000	14,863	8 0	47.5 439	-	0.5
ATC YMCO	0.0	0.0	0 8,628	0	0 2	140	=	-10	EXCH TAIBA	0.0	0.0	9	0	0	130	=	0.0
Health Care			16,350	1,504	3	907.10	Ŧ	-18.55	KSHC STRATEGIA	25.0	24.5	406,610	10,160	24	36.6	Ξ	0.0
KON	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	880	Ξ	•	ASPIA	38.0	37.0	525,048	19,667	26	38.0	4	1.0
KHOT SULTAN CARLETY	204 66 0.0	196 66 0.0	34,000 10,000	6,796 660 0	1 0	990 99	Ť	+	GNAHC AMMAL ALMTIAZ	29.5 0.0 79	29.5 0.0 77	909,582 0 690,201	26.271 0 54.060	0 0	31.0	÷	1.5 0.0 2.0
CABLETY EYAS	6.0	0.0	0	0	0	25.0	Ξ		MANAZEL	29.6	22.5	1,673,900	36,255	36	22.5	÷	0.0
DULAPUEL	112	110	117,236	13,070	18	194	_	*	NINO BIHC	128 29.6	126	23,556 3,842,666	111,202	5 77	29.5	÷	9.0
MUNTAZAHAT JAZEEPA	910	910	15,000	9,738 13,950	3	910	=	÷	SENERGY AGHC	10.5	12.6	2,616,547	33,967	0	10.0	=	9.0
SOOR PUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	18.625	2,049	0	110	Ť	-2	KPPC TAHSSILAT	63 48.0	44.6	327,197 3.801	11,814		44.5	Ŧ	-6.0
ALRAI	158	144	60,000 434	4,230	3	144	7	-10	JEERANH EXHOLDING	156	156	150 28,800	4,445	2	154	+	-10.0
JMMH UFIG	138	136	586,200	74,10P 0	0	106	=	-	MOVEST MOVEST	40.5 95	38.5	32,96P,1P3 146,000	1,279,124	208	38.5	Ť	0.0
KOUTFOOD Meason	1,160	1,160	1,798	2,096	0	1,160	-	20	Financial Service	46		67,415,547	2,677,349	1,058	599.89	Ŧ	4.0
Consumer Service	-		1,272,810	190,821	125	1018.21	Ŧ	4.97	Investment Instr	uments		0	0	0	1081.87	_	0.00
ZAM COMEDOO	3155 1,060	346 1,060	2,193,489	767,066 4,748	95	1,060	Ĭ	-5	ASC OSOS	0.0 82	0.0	0 12	0 1	0	385 82	Ξ	9.0
HITSTELEC VIVA	29.5	29.0 990	840,101 298,166	24.363 236.823	14	29.5	-	-10	FUTURE HAXXTOOMM	0.0 46.0	0.0 46.0	0 200	9	0	110	-	2.6
Telecommunicati	one		3,276,234	1,001,990	235	595.89	Ŧ	4.77	Technology			212	10	2	695.16		6.96
NBK GBK	810 260	8(00) 2(60)	2,503,535	2,027,133	35	800 260	Ţ	6	BAREEQ AFAQ	0.0	0.0	0 0	0	0	104	Ξ	0.0
CBX	500	500	20,000	10,000	1 2	580 370	=	-	ALSHAMEL SAFRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	Ξ	0.0
AUMUTAHED	540	530	156,204	62.261	14	540	A	20	AJMMAN	26.5	25.5	1,073,613	27,677	15	26.5		1.0
KIB BURG	380	375	7,108	153,342	18	175	Ŧ	4	DALGAN	48.0	47.0 0.0	138,961	0	0	250	-	9.0
BOUBYAN	560 440	540 435	983.565 74.211	540,541 32,268	20	435	=	÷	ALEIO MGAAI	0.0	0.0	9	9	0	1,230	=	0.0
AUS ITHMR	45.5	43.6	642,000 6,116,460	102,252	68	43.5	7	4	PUEX THURAYA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	140	=	0.0
WARBABANK Banks	198	196	10,974,445	3,416,850	107 327	903.34	Ŧ	2.06	KIDLINIC AMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	29.5 56	=	0.0
KINS.	566	506	1,000	505	1	5015	Ŧ	-60	Parallel Market			1,212,574	34,509	29	1206.00		10.59
GMS AINS	460	460	6,449	2,967	1	150 460	Ŧ	-5.0									
WINS KUWATRE	104	104	215 0	222 0	0	104 200	Ť	-2.0									
FTI	0.0	0.0	9	0	0	56	_	6.0									

40.0

For more information, call Global Investment House on 1 80 42 42, www.globalinv.net

Financial Markets Daily Report At 02:00 PM Previous Day Global Stock Indices Previous Close Last Price 17,552.17 17,602.61 -1.52 -50.44-0.295,045.90 5,048.50 2.60 0.05 6.60 2,064.29 2,060.99 -3.30-0.160.10 6,240.98 6,254.64 13.66 0.22 -4.74 10,727,64 10,716,84 10.80 -0.109.29 4,663.18 4,646.33 -16.85 -0.368.74 8,705.74 8,719.96 14.22 0.16 -2.93 18,769.06 18,873.35 104.29 0.56 8.15 1,516.19 1,529.22 0.86 8.65 22,138.13 21,919.62 -218.51 -0.99-7.14 2,877.62 2,875.32 raits Time -2.30-0.08 -14.56**MENA Stock Indices** Previous Close Last Price 5,647.16 5,628,41 -18.75-0.33-15.736,969.06 23.06 0.33 -16.65 16.24 -41.52-1.31Abu Dhabi 4,246.52 0.13 -6.241,199.26 1,204.40 5.14 -15.93 0.43 10,397.95 10,302,80 95.15 0.92 -16.14 5,435.96 5,434.74 -1.22-0.02-14.301,157.08 1,152.00 -5.08 -2.27-0.442,085.50 -0.03-3.69-0.646,749,11 6,761,44 8,893,10 8,836,40 -56.70 -0.64-7.564,969.61 4,943.79 -0.52-2.37 -25.82. Global Currencies Exchange Rate Saudi Riyal US Dollar Currency wait Dinar 3.2803 4.5165 12,2591 2.9856 2.1990 3.2383 395.37 edi Riyal 0.08157 0.2435 0.1794 0.2642 32.25 0.3684 0.2676 US Dollar 0.30485 3.7372 1.3768 0.33494 4.1061 1.0987 1.0849 1.5132 0.45474 5.5748 1.4917 1.3570 1.4728 179.81 2.0547 iss Franc 0.30880 3,7857 1,0130 0.9217 0.6790 122,14 1,3947 0.00253 0.0310 0.0083 0.0076 0.0056 0.0082 0.0114 0.22141 2.7143 0.7263 0.4867 MENA Currencies Exchange Rate US Dollar US Dollar 0.30485 3.7372 0.3741 3.6263 0.3831 3.6574 7,7201 Guwalti Dinar 3,2803 12,2591 1.2272 11,8954 1.2567 11,9974 25,3243 0.2676 0.1001 0.9703 0.9786 2.0657 Saudi Rival 0.08157 0.1025 2.6730 0.81487 1.0241 9.7763 20.6359 ahraini Dinar 9,9896 9.6931 Ontari Riyal 0.2758 0.08407 1.0306 0.1032 1.0086 2.1289 0.1057 20.1506 0.2734 0.08335 1.0218 0.1023 0.9915 0.1048 2,1108 nirates Dirham ptian Pound 0.1295 0.03949 0.4841 0.0485 0.4697 0.0496 0.4738 Global Interest Rates 0.00 1.19 waiti Dinar 0.38 0.42 -0.030.05 -0.200.48 0.50 0.58 0.74 1.06 iss Franc -0.84-0.80-0.70-0.602.07 2.05 2.01 strallian Dollar 2.09 2.16 0.00 Global Bond Yields Country 2-Year 10-Year 30-Year 1.01 2.20 2.96 ited States 0.34 0.61 1.29 1.91 Commodities Yearly Previous Close Last Price % HO Siew 29.65 29.51 -0.14-0.47-72.4537,44 36,70 -0.74-1.98-48,16 37,70 37.50 -0.20-41.78-0.53

1075.50

Source: National Bank of Kuwaii

-3.59

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SURVIVAL OF FITTEST FOR SHIPPING FIRMS IN 2016

Downturn in dry freight market started in 2008

LONDON: Shipping companies that transport commodities such as coal, iron ore and grain face a painful year ahead, with only the strongest expected to weather a deepening crisis caused by tepid demand and a surplus of vessels for hire.

The predicament facing firms that ship commodities in large unpackaged amounts - known as dry bulk - is partly the result of slower coal and iron ore demand from leading global importer China in the second half of 2015. The Baltic Exchange's main sea freight index - which tracks rates for ships carrying dry bulk commodities - plunged to an all-time low this month.

In stark contrast, however, tankers that transport oil have in recent months enjoyed their best earnings in years. As crude prices have plummeted, bargain-buying has driven up demand, while owners have moved more aggressively to scrap vessels to head off the kind of surplus seen in the dry bulk

Symeon Pariaros, chief administrative officer of Athens-run and New York-listed shipping firm Euroseas, said the outlook for the dry bulk market was "very challenging".

"Demand fundamentals are so weak. The Chinese economy, which is the main driver of dry bulk, is way below expectations," he added. "Only companies with very strong balance sheets will get through this storm." The dry bulk shipping downturn began in 2008, after the onset of the financial crisis, and has worsened significantly this year as the Chinese economy has slowed. The Baltic Exchange's main BDI index - which gauges the cost of shipping such commodities, also including cement and fertiliser - is more than 95 percent down from a record high hit in 2008.

The index is often regarded as a forward-looking economic indicator. With about 90 percent of the world's traded goods by volume transported by sea, global investors look to the BDI for any signs of changes in sentiment for industrial demand.

"The state of the dry bulk market especially indicates that economies worldwide are likely to stay weak, much to the disappointment of central banks ... FX traders, miners, steel makers, trading houses, and commodity economies," said Basil Karatzas, head of New York consultancy and brokerage Karatzas Marine Advisors & Co.

Ratings agency Fitch downgraded the shipping sector to negative, from stable, this month due to slowing global trade and an economic slowdown in emerging markets, adding that dry bulk would remain under pressure.

COMMODITY PRESSURE

Slowing demand and concerns over the health of the Chinese and global economies have pushed the 19-commodity Thomson Reuters/Core Commodity CRB Index, which tracks the prices of 19 commodities including oil and grains, to its lowest level since 2002.

"There is no doubt that the overall macro situation is one that does not engender a lot of confidence for increased trade flows in 2016 and beyond," said Khalid Hashim, managing director of Precious Shipping, one of Thailand's largest dry carsupport will be at the most risk." Ship owners are also contending with more vessel orders, which are expected to increase oversupply further.

While the dry bulk market has been in a downturn since 2008, there have been brief rebound periods of relatively good earnings in that time that emboldened ship owners to order more vessels, which normally take up to three years to deliver.

"Too many factors are against ship owners at present, and January sees a disproportionate deliv-

ery of vessels from the shipyards," said Karatzas. Analysis from Axia Capital Markets showed the environmental pledges. But the country has been looking to boost strategic reserves of crude, taking advantage of multi-year lows in prices, which has helped the oil tanker market rally. Earlier this month China said it more than doubled the size of its strategic crude oil reserves between November 2014 and the middle of this year, a rate exceeding analysts' estimates.

Oil tanker players have been more conservative since 2008 in ordering ships as they experienced rock-bottom rates that saw earnings falling below zero as recently as last year, meaning owners



go ship owners.

Worsening conditions have already claimed casualties. In September, Japanese bulk carrier Daiichi Chuo Kisen Kaisha filed for protection from creditors, and private equity backed Global Maritime Investment Cyprus Ltd filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the United States.

Smaller dry bulk ship owners are expected to struggle in coming months. "There are clearly big problems for almost all dry bulk owners, certainly those who cannot subsidize dry bulk through ownership in tankers. Debt can only be serviced through reserves of capital and not from cash-flow," said Tony Foster, chief executive of British shipping asset manager Marine Capital.

"Public companies will issue discounted shares. Small private companies without obvious external

cumulative loss of revenues for 13 shipping companies publicly listed in New York reached over \$3.36 billion in the first nine months of 2015.

"Given the current oversupply of vessels in the marketplace that has built up over the past five years, we expect rates to remain at depressed levels for at least two more years as the market structles to find a new equilibrium," said Robert Perri of Axia Capital Markets.

DIVERGING FORTUNES

By contrast, demand for oil tankers and the rates they command have surged to their highest levels since 2008 in the past three months. Dry bulk shipping markets have been hit hard by a slide in demand for coal by China, which is also trying to ease its dependence on the polluting fuel and meet clocked up losses every day. The scrapping of tankers, which picked up in 2011, has also shrunk

Average earnings for supertankers hauling 2 million barrels of oil on the benchmark Middle East Gulf to Japan route have surged to over \$110,000 a day. In contrast, average earnings for capesize ships, among the largest vessels used to haul coal and iron ore, have slumped to under \$5,000 a day in recent weeks - below the basic operating cost level a ship needs to break even, which is around \$8,000.

"The (tanker) market is on fire," said Deutsche Bank analyst Amit Mehrotra, but added: "Owners of dry bulk ships are likely to spend the holiday break quietly reflecting on how they will further endure the worst market many have seen in their lifetimes." — Reuters



Parag Jain

GULF NAVIGATION HOLDING NAMES JAIN AS NEW CEO

DUBAI: Gulf Navigation Holding PJSC, the Dubai-based shipping company, has confirmed the appointment of Parag Jain as the company's new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The confirmation is a welcome move as Jain has been serving in the capacity of acting CEO since May of this year. With over 20 years of experience in the marine and maritime ndustry, Parag's dynamic leadership and proficiency in the business is expected to help steer the company's journey towards more growth and development.

CHINA TELECOM SHARES FALL

AMID PROBE INTO BOSS

The newly appointed CEO first joined Gulf Navigation Holding in January 2010, originally serving as the company's General Manager for the Agencies and Marine Products Division. Co-workers and industry professionals have described Jain as a dynamic and a visionary leader that believes in leading from the front with a nands-on approach towards achieving operational efficiency and effective management, which results in financial strength for the company.



JAPAN FACTORY OUTPUT SLUMPS

TOKYO: Japan's factory output declined 1.0 percent, data showed yesterday.

GERMAN STOCK **EXCHANGE BOOKS**

the drop had narrowed to 1.34 percent, with the shares ending at HK\$3.68. The probe into Chang Xiaobing for "severe disciplinary violations" was announced by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the watchdog of the ruling Communist Party. The term is normally a euphemism for graft. Chang had been "taken away", according to an article in the respected business magazine Caijing, adding that he disappeared just

for December 28. Chang's phone was switched off and he had not responded to multiple calls, it added. "Since last year, when the authorities were probing oil companies, we knew they would be doing this for other sectors. Now it's telecoms," financial analyst Jackson Wong from the brokerage firm Simsen

days before a meeting of the state-owned company planned

HONG KONG: Shares in China Telecom dropped as much as three percent yesterday after news its head was under investi-

gation, the latest high-profile target in a corruption crack-

down. The firm, one of China's big-three telcos, saw its shares trade as low as HK\$3.62 (\$0.47) on Hong Kong's bourse com-

pared to the previous closing of HK\$3.73. At Monday's close

Financial group told AFP. Wong said investors were moving cautiously pending further details of the probe. Authorities have been pursuing a hard-hitting campaign against allegedly crooked officials since President Xi Jinping took office in 2013, a crusade that some experts have called a political purge. After a stock market rout this summer, the nation's financial sector was under the spotlight with several high-level executives reportedly being hauled in. Billionaire Guo Guangchang, dubbed China's Warren Buffett, disappeared from public view earlier this month amid reports he had been detained by police in Shanghai. He briefly resurfaced afterwards but his conglomerate flagship Fosun confirmed the 48-year-old was "assisting in certain investigations" by Chinese authorities. — AFP

HIGHEST NUMBER OF IPOS SINCE 2007

FRANKFURT: The Frankfurt stock exchange said yesterday that 24 companies went public in 2015, the highest number of initial public offerings (IPOs) since 2007. In terms of the size of capital raised from the new listings, this year was also the best in eight years, with the total issue volume amounting to seven billion euros (\$7.7 billion), Deutsche Boerse said in a statement.

By comparison, 19 companies went public in 2014 with a total volume of four billion euros. The single biggest IPO was Covestro, the polymers division of chemicals and pharmaceuticals giant Bayer, which raised 1.5

billion euros when it went public in October. In July, the real estate financier Deutsche Pfandbriefbank raised 1.16 billion euros via its IPO and Scout24, a digital marketplace specializing in the automotive and real estate sectors, was the third-biggest listing in Frankfurt this year with a volume of 1.02 billion euros. Among the other stock market debutants this year were car parts maker Schaeffler and container shipping giant Hapag Lloyd. In 2016, the most eagerly awaited IPOs will include divisions of the two energy giants E.ON and RWE. — AFP

IN NOV AS RECOVERY STUMBLES TOKYO: Japan's factory output declined in November, official data showed yesterday, falling back after two months of gains as the economy struggles to mount a recovery. The disappointing data-industrial production fell 1.0 percent from a

month earlier-comes after separate figures last week showed persistently weak inflation and household spending. The numbers underscore Tokyo's challenge in conquering

years of deflation and tepid growth with the prime minister's "Abenomics" policy blitz. Monday's decline in factory output was worse than market expectations for a 0.4 percent contraction. Output is taking "one step forward and one step back," the ministry of economy, trade and industry said in a statement. The government forecast stronger figures this month and in January.

"But we should not be so optimistic," said Yusuke Shimoda, an economist at Japan Research Institute. "One big concern is a slowdown in the Chinese economy, which is pressuring Japanese companies." On Friday, Japan said that core inflation, excluding volatile fresh food prices, ticked up 0.1 percent in November. It was the first gain in five months but remains way below the Bank of Japan's 2.0 percent target, as officials struggle to convince cautious firms to usher in big wage hikes to stir spending. In November, household spending fell 2.9 percent from a year ago, the third monthly decline.

Japan's economy saw a slight uptick in the July-September guarter, rising 0.3 percent-and reversing an earlier forecast of a contraction that had risked putting the country into recession for the second time in as many years. But a lacklustre global economy, marked by the slowdown in China and weakness in emerging markets, is also posing challenges to the

Tokyo has approved an extra spending budget to stimulate the economy. A falling price spiral in Japan for years put consumers off buying in the hope of getting goods cheaper down the road, denting firms' expansion and hiring plans. That has weighed on growth in the wider economy.

This month, Japan's central bank announced an unexpected tweak to its 80 trillion yen (\$665 billion) annual asset-buying scheme in a bid to power a recovery in the economy.

The central bank's stimulus, launched more than two years ago, is a cornerstone of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's attempt to kickstart the long-lumbering economy. BoJ chief Haruhiko Kuroda said he was keeping a close eye on how much cash firms hand out in winter bonuses, and in spring wage negotiations. Policymakers hope that putting more cash in shoppers' wallets will spur spending and move Japan closer to the bank's inflation target. — AFP



BEIJING: A group of Chinese workers wait for a shuttle bus outside a construction site in Beijing yesterday. —AFP

GOLD DRIFTS LOWER, HEADS FOR 6TH STRAIGHT QUARTERLY LOSS

LONDON: Gold edged lower yesterday in line with a retreat in commodity research Ole Hansen said. "Although the nearoil prices, giving up some of last week's gains, but moves were muted in thin liquidity in a holiday-shortened week.

The metal rose nearly 1 percent during Christmas week, but remains on track to fall for a sixth successive quarter, its biggest run of quarterly losses since the mid-1970s. It is down

9 percent so far this year. Prices hit their lowest since early 2010 earlier this month in anticipation of the first US interest rate hike in nearly a decade. Though gold recovered lost ground in the wake of the announcement as dealers holding short positions covered, it

remains under pressure. Spot gold was down 0.3 percent at \$1,071.94 an ounce at 1250 GMT, while US gold futures for February delivery were down \$4.40 an ounce at \$1,071.50. "Gold is drifting lower after failing to extend the pre-Christmas rally," Saxo Bank's head of term direction of the dollar is pointing higher, the lack of dollar strength this December has supported gold primarily through the covering of short positions."

"The first quarter is undoubtedly going to be challenging but in the near-term a break above trendline resistance at \$1,078 could signal some additional short-covering towards

Oil prices fell more than 2 percent after the long Christmas weekend, with international crude and product markets still well supplied. Gold is positively correlated to oil as the metal is seen as a hedge against petroleum-led inflation. Weakness in oil pressured shares in Europe and Asia in trade thinned by holidays in a number of financial centres. The dollar was little changed, with the key London currency market among those still closed.—Reuters

DUBAI SHOPPING FESTIVAL 2016 SET TO 'UNWRAP THE EXCEPTIONAL'

World's Longest-Running Festival from 1 January - 1 February



DUBAI: Dubai Shopping Festival enters an exciting new era after two decades of success with its 21st edition from 1 January to 1 February set to offer extraordinary experiences to residents and visitors from around the world that will highlight the festival as the world's most unique shopping experi-

DSF 2016 will run under the tagline "Unwrap The Exceptional" with visitors being offered the opportunity to rediscover their sense of wonder, happiness and excitement from a line-up of over 150 events and activities that will be unfurled during the 32-day celebration.

From internationally renowned events to celebrity icons, family-friendly activities to pulsating live entertainment and mind blowing raffle promotions offering millions of dirhams in prizes, this year's Dubai Shopping Festival has been taken to a new level of splendour by the organisers, Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE), an agency of the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM).

DSF 2016 will elevate the festival's three main pillars of Shopping, Winnings and Entertainment through a range of events and activities for the whole family with its all-embracing slogan "One World. One Family. One Festival", bringing together people from different nationalities in a reflection of the cosmopolitan character of Dubai. Helal Almarri, Director General of Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commercial Marketing (DTCM) said: "Dubai Shopping Festival is a highlight in the emirate's year-round calendar of diverse and attractive events and a key driver of tourism growth. Returning for its 21st year in 2016, the Festival is intrinsic to attracting tourists from close-proximity markets including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, other GCC neighbours and India in addition to visitors from further afield, especially those from China, Africa and Russia. Driving high tourism numbers at the start of the year, Dubai Shopping Festival also profiles the Emirate's year-round retail and entertainment offering - one of the core pillars of Dubai's overall tourism offer - and is a significant contributor to the economy of Dubai."

Laila Mohammad Suhail, CEO of DFRE, said: "Dubai Shopping Festival 2016 will refresh the experience for visitors by showcasing it as an extraordinary shopping journey rather than a mere sales season. Hence, our line-up of events, activities and promotions are built around the festival's 2016 tagline "Unwrap The Exceptional", which defines everything at the festival as a gift that is waiting to be uncovered and cherished. The tagline also reaffirms the fact that Dubai is at its best at this time of the year with an inspirational celebration that rewards by delivering exceptional experiences.

"As part of the shopping experience, the 21st edition of DSF will provide some of the world's best entertainment including music superstars, and global fashion brand events. Of course the traditional attractions will continue to pull visitors such as fireworks shows and the DSF Mega Raffles. In fact, the Winning pillar of DSF has paid rich dividends for DSF as the daily raffle draws over the years has had a huge impact on the lives of thousands of people from all over the world."

Unwrapping The Exceptional during DSF 2016 DSF OPENING WEEKEND DSF Global Village World Party 1-2 January , Global Village

A party like no other to celebrate the DSF Opening Weekend at Global Village under the theme "Shop the World at Global Village this DSF". A series of activities will take place during the two days (1st & 2nd Jan) that collectively will showcase the concept of the DSF Global Village World Party, including non-stop entertainment throughout pavilions and main stage over the course of two days and bespoke main stage shows. Global Village will also have roaming entertainment as well as a live painting of 'DSF Big Picture' which will be a representation of DSF's universal theme, 'One World. One Family. One Festival.' A spectacular fireworks show on 1 January will launch the series of fireworks displays at Global Village during DSF. Global Village will also be holding a social media competition to allow five families the chance to win luxury rides to GV during DSF. Guests can also kick-off the DSF Mega Raffle season to add to the winning element to the world party.

12-hour exclusive New Year shopping

1st - 2nd January A special promotion running on New Year's Day at Majid Al Futtaim Malls across Dubai to ring in the New Year and Dubai Shopping Festival. This exclusive New Year shopping experience will include a private sale from 12pm - 12am allowing 80-90% discounts at all retail outlets within Mall of the Emirates, City Centre Mirdif, City Centre Deira, City Centre Me'aisem. Shoppers can also expect DSF exclusive rewards, promotions and offers for 12 hours, while F&B outlets will offer their own rewards and offers. Shoppers will be encouraged to shop and enter a lucky draw to win an amazing prize worth AED50,000 that will allow the winner to go on a shopping spree at Majid Al Futtaim Malls during DSF. With every AED200 a customer spends they will be entitled to one raffle coupon which they can enter into the draw. The raffle draw will take place at 12 pm at Mall of the Emirates on 2nd January.

RETAIL-THEMED ACTIVATIONS Beauty Theme: 1 - 7 January

Dubai Shopping Festival 2016 kicks off with the Beauty Theme dedicated to the beauty segment of Dubai's retail sector.

Beauty District 2-8 January, The Fashion Catwalk, The Dubai Mall

The main event under the Beauty Theme is Beauty District, a purpose designed location that will satisfy all the shopaholics visiting Dubai. Retailers will be doing their own activations during the week in keeping with the beauty theme, with launches of products and lots of tutorials on how to get the most out of your makeup. This themed period will also feature the region's top beauty influencers. Shoppers can also use the 360 degree Glam Cam once they are done beautifying themselves to take a 360 picture of their new look. Shoppers in the Beauty District will be able to enjoy lots of goodies and workshops on makeup and beauty tips, adding to their shopping experience with lots of activations. Of course, they can also find great in-store activations across the city as stores showcase their wide range of beauty prod-

Gold and Jewellery Theme: 8 -14 January

The focus on Gold and Jewellery during Dubai Shopping Festival will see lots of international and regional celebrity visits and showcasing of international luxury jewellery brands. As part of this themed period, various activities will be held to increase the visibility of the mega promotion that is being run by Dubai Gold & Jewelry Group during DSF with the participation of several gold and jewellery retailers.

Apparel & Fashion Theme: 15 - 25 January Fashion Central

15 - 17 January, Mall of the Emirates 'Fashion Central' has been created as part of the festival's Apparel & Fashion Theme and will be introducing 'New to Dubai' fashion brands and collections. One of the attractions of Fashion Central is Fashiontainment, which will bring a fusion of Fashion and Entertainment together to create a fashion show with musical performances by an international celebrity, and held in collaboration with a luxury retail brand. More fashion events and in-store activations will also take place to add to the shopping experience.

Fashion Express 15-16 January: Dubai Festival City Mall 22-23 January: Ibn Battuta Mall

'Fashion Express' is a new in-mall concept that combines the very popular 'flashmob' with a 'pop up' concept to create an exclusive in-store event that not only entertains customers in the traditional common mall spaces but also drives footfall inside the stores. Customers will also have multiple opportunities to participate in store competitions.

Fashion On Ice 17 January, The Dubai Mall Ice Rink

The first ever interactive and dramatic fashion show projection on ice using professional model/figure skaters showcasing avant-garde collections via a skating fashion show at The Dubai Mall Ice Rink.

Whilst there are several fashion shows where models walk on ice, this event will involve actual figure skaters/professional skaters who will play the role of models to showcase an avante garde collection from a famous retail brand. Being the first of its kind event, the focus on visual theming, lighting, mood will be crucial. The show will be themed around a white winter with live snowfall, moving video projections etc.

Street Runways Burj Plaza: 23 January Meena Bazaar: 25 January Al Fahidi: 18 January

A series of fashion shows partnering with highstreet brands in specific locations across the city. This event will create a fashion scene that features landmarks as a canvas to showcase high-street fashion. This event creates 3 main runways using three key locations as the backdrop/stage, including: Burj Khalifa, Meena Bazaar and Al-Fahidi District. Each fashion show will complement the area with the designs and fashion that the models will be wearing.

Perfume Theme: 26 January - 1 February Visitors and local residents can look forward to a

week of perfumery from the 26th January onwards The flagship venue of the Perfume Theme is City Centre Mirdif's "Central Galleria", and most of the activities related to this theme will take place at MAF malls (City Centre Deira, City Centre Mirdif, Mall of the Emirates, City Centre Measem).

The Biggest Perfume Sampling 26 January - 1 February, MAF Malls and Dubai Airport (Terminal 1 & 3)

The opening day of DSF's Perfume Theme on 26 January will witness a world-record breaking attempt - offering AED 1 million worth of perfume sampling. Some 200 personnel will be deployed to spray perfume all at the same time in "The Biggest Perfume Sampling" event.

Perfume Village

26 January - 1 February, City Centre Mirdif A specially designed Perfume Village will be set up in Mirdif City Centre with lots of activations taking place throughout the week. A Main Stage will host influencers, celebrities and perfume experts, who will be holding an exhibition on perfumes,

including how to mix ingredients and test sniff per-

Perfume Village will have eight regional and international brands in pop-up stores, as well as a perfume museum to teach people more about different perfumes and oils. 15 niche perfumes will also be on display for people to sample.

DSF 2016 MAIN EVENTS Al Faris

6 - 9 January, Sheikh Rashid Hall, **Dubai World Trade Centre**

Inspired by the poems of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, Al Faris (The Knight) is an epic musical production that will be performed by renowned Lebanese singer Ghassan Saliba and popular Emirati singer Balqees Fathi. The play has been developed to promote Arabic language theatrical performances and cultural awareness in the UAE, with the main themes of the play inspiring courage, leadership, wisdom, and philosophical thinking.

Dubai Arabic Concerts 9, 11, 14, 15 January, **Dubai World Trade Centre**

Every year fans of Arabic music look forward to the spectacular opportunities to see Arabic singers and musicians live in concert during the Dubai Shopping Festival. This year music lovers have the chance to see 12 of the biggest stars in the Arabic music world live at Dubai's World Trade Center across four special nights, with each night featuring three of the Arabic music world's iconic stars. In collaboration with Rotana, concert goers can see their favourite stars, including Rabeh Sager, Mohammed Abdo, Angham, Majed ElMadani, Abadi Al Johar, Asma Al Mounawar, Waleed Al Shami, Abdullah Al Rowaished, Nawal ElKuwaitia, Jaber Al Kaser, Shamma Hamdan and Natacha.

Market Outside the Box 21 - 30 January 2016- Burj Park

Taking place next to the pride of Dubai - Burj Khalifa - the Market Outside the Box focuses on emerging brands in Dubai and gives them a chance to take center stage during DSF. This year Market Outside the Box is not just focusing on the emerging product based market Dubai has cultivated but will also be showcasing the budding market for personalities in health and fitness, music, entertainment and design. Over 80 brands from all over the globe will be encouraged to show off their products and services and promote grass roots engagement. Market OTB will also be providing visitors the opportunity to experience fantastic shows, activities, music, dance and poetry, or even catch the latest creative documentaries at the Market OTB's pop-up cinema.

Historical Districts 1 January - 1 February, Al Fahidi Historical

Neighbourhood, Gold Souk Three locations, known as the Historical Districts on either side of the Dubai Creek (Bur Dubai and Deira) will be dressed up with simple lighting and dècor. Each location will offer a mix of customized concept events and entertainment with retail activations and community engagement opportunities. The event activation ideas will uplift the selected historical area to create a unique experience specific to the area. A main attraction will be the Creek Chic, a vintage market featuring vintage fashion, furniture and art all promoting the appreciation of a new shopping aesthetic in the UAE. This community event will serve as a platform to promote vintage & antique retailers, allowing businesses to gain greater audiences and regional recognition.

Fireworks The BEACH, located opposite JBR, Creek Park, Global Village

7 - 9, 14- 16, 21- 23, 28 - 30 January 2016

Festivals and fireworks go hand in hand and Dubai has become synonymous with both - each becoming bigger and better every year. This year Dubai Shopping Festival will have firework displays taking place at three locations across Dubai during DSF 2016. Local residents and tourists alike will be able to enjoy the amazing and colourful fireworks from The Beach, located opposite JBR, as well as from Creek Park and Global Village.

Carpet & Art Oasis 2016 20 December 2015 - 15 January 2016, Dubai **World Trade Centre**

One of Dubai Shopping Festival's longest running activations, the Carpet & Art Oasis 2016 will bring one of the world's largest exhibitions of hand woven carpets. To be held over an area of 6,000 square meters, the Oasis will include 54 pavilions spreading over 4,000 square meters. This year's Oasis features as many as 250,000 exquisite silk and wool rugs at an estimated market value of AED 2 billion, crafted in leading rug-making countries; Iran, India, China, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan.

Global Village Until April 9

The Global Village is Dubai's leading family entertainment and cultural attraction, featuring a unique shopping experience at several pavilions, each representing a different country. Visitors to Global Village are welcomed into a diversified but united world of joy, colours and rhythms to explore the world, one pavilion at a time. Global Village is celebrating its 20th season this year and with it the international shopping extravaganza finds its home. With products from all over the world housed under Global Village's 65 pavilions, guests have the chance to enjoy shopping from 4pm until 12am from Saturday until Wednesday, with timings extended to 1am on Thursdays and Fridays

DSF MEGA RAFFLES AND PROMOTIONS Infiniti Mega Raffle **Ticket sales - 1 November 2015** until 6 February 2016 Daily Draws from 1st January 2016

until 6 February

The annual Infiniti Mega Raffle is returning to Dubai Shopping Festival in 2016 with one lucky shopper getting the chance to drive home with an Infiniti QX70 and AED 200,000 in cash every day. You can purchase a raffle ticket for AED200 from selected EPPCO & ENOC petrol stations, Al Ghurair Centre; Global Village; Al Fahidi Street; Al Rigga Street; Al Seef Street; Baniyas Road and the Gold Souk. The daily raffle draw takes place at Global Village next to Gate 2, every day at 10pm.

Nissan Grand Raffle 1 January until 6 February 2016

One of the Dubai Shopping Festival's most highly awaited raffle draws, the Nissan Grand Raffle will take place every day at Global Village with a live broadcast from SAMA Dubai TV at 10pm. The raffle will be giving away one of eight cars from Nissan - Micra; Sunny; Sentra; Tiida Hatchback; X-Trail; Juke; Pathfinder and Patrol. The raffle coupons will be available on purchases of non-fuel products worth AED 20 and above at all ENOC, EPP-CO petrol stations, as well as Zoom shops in Dubai,

Gold Promotion

1 January until 1 February 2016 The Dubai Gold and Jewellery Group is running a mega promotion offering shoppers fabulous gold prizes every day. Many of Dubai's gold and jewellery retailers are participating in this exciting pro-

Shop, Play & Win. Participating malls, 1 January to 1 February Draws to take place on the 7th, 14th, 21st January and 1st February

Visitors to Dubai's community malls can win more than just gold at this year's Dubai Shopping Festival with 'Shop & Win. Play & Win.' giving shoppers two fantastic chances to win big. Shop, Play & Win gives shoppers a chance to enter a raffle draw for every AED200 they spend, entering them into a draw to win a Nissan Pathfinder every week. Play & Win will give customers a chance to play at a specially installed gaming kiosk in the store once they spend AED1000.

Win 5KG of Gold Participating malls, 1 January to 1 February Draws to take place on the 7th, 14th, 21st January and 1st February 2016

Shoppers at Dubai's community malls more opportunities to win up to 5Kg of Gold this DSF. The more you shop at any of the select community malls the higher your chance of winning. Over the course of four weeks, four lucky winners will be able to win 200 grams at each weekly draw with the final winner of the raffle draw on the last day of DSF being able to win a kilo of gold.

The Red Envelope (Paris Gallery Promotion) 1st January to 1st February, 2016

This DSF, it's a win-win situation for all with Paris Gallery and Watch Gallery. For every AED 750 you spend at Paris Gallery, you could walk away with gift vouchers worth up to AED 10,000 or a discount voucher up to 10 percent off on your next pur-

VISA Impossible Deals 1st January to 1st February, 2016

Every day through DSF, Visa customers will be able to avail themselves of limited but incredible, almost impossible, offers - available to purchase with Visa card. The deals will be impossibly tempting, typically with pricing of 20 percent of retail price i.e. 80 percent off, across electronics, travel, entertainment, luxury goods and automobiles.

ADIB DSF Mobile App

The all new ADIB Dubai Festivals App powered by Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB) will list all the Dubai Shopping Festival 2016 retail offers in one place allowing them to search, browse, and discover either by interest, product or offer. The ADIB Dubai Festivals App is intended to be the ultimate DSF Offers companion, connecting the user with the right kinds of deals that matches his/her interests. Users will have the opportunity to avail further discounts or services from ADIB on selected pro-

ADDITIONAL ENTERTAINMENT Beatbox at BOXPARK 31 December 2015,

31 January 2016 - BOXPARK This special event will be taking place throughout the Dubai Shopping Festival and will center on the urban art of beatboxing and other urban influenced styles of music.

Interactive displays, music themed decorations and a whole host of performers will keep visitors entertained and feeling innovated. Beatbox at BoxPark will feature a number of fantastic set pieces that will inspire urban creativity, like an interactive piano which visitors can play with and create light shows for other visitors to enjoy.

Carnival at THE BEACH 1 - 31 January 2016- THE BEACH Piazza

What is a festival without a carnival to help everybody get into the celebratory mood? Now that Dubai Shopping Festival has brought with it Carnival at The Beach, families can enjoy a fantastic atmosphere of fun and amazement at one of Dubai's newest shopping areas in JBR. You can expect lots of entertainment and even more fun and games at this carnival. While walking from shop to shop be sure to say hello to the jugglers, fire eaters, acrobats, and any

Disney's Beauty and the Beast 6 - 9 January 2016- Dubai World Trade Centre, Sheikh Saeed Hall 2 & 3

other entertainers you will be able to see.

The official and original Broadway smash hit will be making its way to Dubai to showcase the magic of its Academy Award winning animated movie from Disney.

Humsafar 22 - 23 January - DUCTAC, Mall of the Emirates Hindi play based on the poetry of renowned

Hindi lyricist, Gulzar, and dealing with relationships in a light hearted manner. Einstein

29th - 30th January, Centrepoint Theatre, DUC-

TAC, Mall of the Emirates Leading Bollywood film and stage actor,

Naseeruddin Shah, plays the role greatest scientist of all time - Albert Einstein. The play takes a look at the personality of one of the most spectacular brains the world has ever known.

Ballet Gala 2016 7 - 8 January, Madinat Theatre, **Madinat Jumeirah**

The Paris Opera Ballet Gala will be coming to Dubai to showcase one of the world's greatest ballet troupes and will also feature one of the greatest dancers of her time, Dorothee Gilbert.

Caucasian Dance - Lezginka 9 January, DUCTAC, Mall of the Emirates

The first of its kind in the UAE, this International show will give people in the region an insight into this beautiful style of dance from the Caucasian

Salaam Dubai 2016 15 January, Dubai Duty Free Tennis Stadium

This unique Bollywood concert features two of India's biggest playback singers - Shaan and KK accompanied by a 25-member strong troupe of musicians and entertainment artists.

Indian Republic Day with Kavi Sammelan & Mushaira 28 January - Sheikh Rashid Auditorium, Indian **High School**

Celebrate Indian Republic Day at an evening with some of the biggest names in Hindi and Urdu

Simple Minds 28 January, Dubai Duty Free Tennis Stadium

Fans of 70s Scottish Rock will be in for a treat come 28th January, as the legendary Simple Minds will perform IN Dubai during DSF.

"The Russell Peters Almost Famous World Tour"

19 - 20 January, Dubai World Trade Centre Global comedy rock-star Russell Peters returns to Dubai with exciting new content to give audience an interactive experience.

DSF Media Awards

An Awards Ceremony to honour, celebrate and award the media for their support of, and contribution to DSF 2016 by way of coverage. Awards to journalists will be given away in several categories while press photographers will also be honoured

for their winning entries.

PREDICTIONS OF BIG TRENDS IMPACTING DIGITAL ECONOMY

By Tony Bishop

rom the Internet of ■Things to renewable energy principles, we'll see our digital economy transforming before our eyes in 2016. Here are my predictions.

1. Digital commerce will be transformed.

The confluence of new payment platforms, big data and technologies such as real-time fraud detection and location-based services is transforming the digital payments industry. Meanwhile, consumer expectations are only rising as digital payment options become more available, banks transition to secure, chip-



networks to better handle and analyze these non-payment data elements, so they can better position themselves for precise customer targeting, such as personalized time and location-based offers mixed with loyalty systems.

2. The Internet of Things (IoT) will dramatically impact IT networks. Record-breaking adoption and expansion of IoT devices and sensors

CONNECTED ERA In the connected era, networks at last evolved into open thoroughfares for world. People could access data beyond the wn PC, LAN or WAN, quickly shrinking the distance between businesses. Founded in providers could come together and "peer" to exchange information, Equinix helped scale the Internet by enabling companies around the world to connect and collaborate. The orked era ultimately morphed into a tim of constant "anytime, anywhere" connectivity made possible by new mobile, cloud and

embedded credit cards and merchants adopt new EMV terminals that make it easier to use those cards. To adapt, 2016 will see the players in the digital payments industry seeking fast, continuous availability of colocation services in a scalable, interconnected environment. These environments must supply real-time access to brokers, as well as to digital wallet and market data providers. They must also connect to hundreds of point-of-sale providers, digital commerce sites, financial institutions and mobile networks. We predict that 2016 will also

will continue to accelerate, resulting in a flood of data that severely strains network capacity and security. We predict that in 2016, enterprises will work to more seamlessly combine networked intelligence with the data being processed by sensors and actuators. This will enable the enterprise to gain more control of its information and enhance its ability to use the IoT to quickly adapt to changing conditions, create new value and drive new growth. Enterprises can improve their agility in rapidly changing IoT environments by deploying infrastructure that enables direct and secure connections between the multiple components that must be in synch to exploit the real-time insights the IoT offers. That kind of interconnection ensures employees, partners and customers can get the information they need, in the right context, using the devices, channels and services they prefer. Businesses will realize this, meaning robust interconnection will become a more prominent solution in this space in 2016, as an intersection point between IoT, clouds and the enterprise becomes increasingly nec-

3. Content providers will increasingly bypass the Internet to meet surging demand for capacity.

The massive shift toward 3D, Super HD, 4K and high dynamic range (HDR) streaming technologies will present huge challenges to networks and digital content providers in 2016. For instance, the latest digital video report from Sandvine indicates Netflix streams used a whopping 36.5% of all downstream traffic to North American broadband households at prime viewing hours. But that kind of capacity demand is set to spike in 2016 as more households embrace new streaming technologies that require up to four times the normal bandwidth. In addition, the Cisco Visual Networking Index points to even more strains on networks and content providers as YouTube, Netflix, Hulu and other video streaming services grow to make up 76% of consumer Internet traffic by 2018. To handle these looming capacity demands, in 2016 we'll see more media companies follow Netflix's lead by shifting workloads to the cloud and using interconnection to optimize Internet application performance. Netflix has also created internal content delivery networks to circumvent Internet bandwidth limitations and stream even more digital content to customers, effectively and efficiently.

4. The Internet will get greener.

The Internet will get greener in 2016, even as the number of global Internet users reaches 50 percent of the world's population. This continuous expansion of our digital lives requires massive amounts of electricity, particularly for the data centers that serve as catalysts of the digital economy. Data center operators know that has consequences in a fossil-fuels based economy, with 84% of North American operators recently recognizing a need to consider renewable energy for meeting future energy demands. In 2016, we'll see more enterprises adopt renewable energy principles. Companies that rely on electricity to supply power to critical Internet infrastructure and maintain operational reliability will continue to reevaluate the energy efficiency of their data centers, adopt proven energy-saving techniques and evolve sustainability best practices.

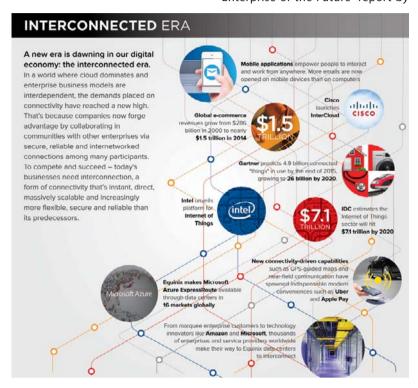
5. The enterprise will turn to multicloud interconnection strategies for cost savings.

Multi-cloud strategies will be a huge part of the enterprise push in 2016 toward improving production workloads, achieving business agility, accelerating application performance and controlling costs. According to the recent Forrester study, "The Total Economic Impact of Equinix Interconnection Solutions," enterprises realized major cost reductions with multi-cloud interconnection strategies that enabled them to deploy and scale applications with lower-cost cloud service providers, compared to running those applications internally. Peering locally with cloud providers through secure, direct interconnections that access and integrate multiple clouds enables organizations to provision cloud services quickly and provide an improved end-user experience. We believe enterprise adoption of multi-cloud interconnectivity will continue to increase, as organizations realize bypassing the public internet and directly and securely connecting to cloud providers eases corporate

6. Cyber-security will fuel increased adoption of interconnec-

Cyber-security was one of the biggest concerns identified by enterprise IT leaders in the recent Equinix "Enterprise of the Future" report. In fact, 64% of global IT business decision-makers admitted cyber-security concerns could prompt them to consider re-architecting their IT infrastructure over the next 12 months. In 2016, we'll see more focus on reducing risks and minimizing exposure for corporate networks. Security in the cloud continues to be a growing concern for enterprises, which are realizing that their own on-ramps to cloud services, not the cloud providers themselves, are their weakest links. They also know that accessing cloud services via the public Internet exacerbates those risks. As enterprises continue to evaluate their IT infrastructure options, direct connection will continue to prove to be a more consistent and secure tool for connecting organizations to each other and to the cloud.

data centers, can't scale to get closer to end users and deliver the high-performance connections users demand. Meanwhile, interconnection via the public internet will continue to be plagued by questions about reliability and security. For all these reasons, 2016 will be a year that enterprises increasingly design interconnectionoriented infrastructures to enable direct and secure links to cloud and network providers and various other partners. In this interconnected era, companies will increasingly rely on instantaneous interconnection with each other to create value and succeed. They'll find the benefits of this interconnection are real and quantifiable. According to the recent "Enterprise of the Future" report by



7. Interconnection will remove significant barriers to IT growth.

In 2016, the corporate network will be strained by trends such as the global dispersion of workforces (75% of enterprise employees reside in locations outside of a company's headquarters) and the proliferation of multiple users who access the network via multiple devices in multiple locations. Centralized, siloed IT architectures, often trapped in on-premise

Equinix, more than a third of respondents who have already deployed interconnection solutions report greater than \$10 million in value created, with 58% reporting this value came from increased revenue opportunities., VP Global Enterprise Strategy and Marketing, Equinix.

—Tony Bishop is the vice president Global Enterprise Strategy and Marketing for Equinix.



ALLAHABAD: Indian village women make cow dung cakes in Allahabad, India. In India, where Hindus have long worshipped cows as sacred, cow dung has been used for centuries as fuel for fires - whether for heat, cooking or in Hindu ritual fires, where it's a necessity. —AP

COW DUNG PATTIES SELLING LIKE HOT CAKES ONLINE IN INDIA

NEW DELHI: Like consumers around the globe, sellers on our platform since October and we have Indians are flocking to the online marketplace in droves these days. But there's one unusual item flying off the virtual shelves: Online retailers say cow dung patties are selling like hot cakes. The patties - cow poop mixed with hay and dried in the sun, made mainly by women in rural areas and used to fuel fires - have long been available in India's villages. But online retailers including Amazon and eBay are now reaching out to the country's ever-increasing urban population, feeding into the desire of older city folks to harken back to their childhood in the village.

Some retailers say they're offering discounts for large orders. Some customers are asking for gift wrapping. "Cow dung cakes have been listed by multiple



ALLAHABAD: Now, online vendors like Amazon, ShopClues and eBay are selling cow dung patties to India's ever-increasing urban population, especially those who grew up in villages. —AP

received several customer orders" since then, said Madhavi Kochar, an Amazon India spokeswoman.

The orders come mostly from cities where it would be difficult to buy dung cakes, she said. In India, where Hindus have long worshipped cows as sacred, cow dung cakes have been used for centuries for fires, whether for heating, cooking or Hindu rituals. Across rural India, piles of drying cow dung are ubiquitous.

Radhika Agarwal of ShopClues, a major online retailer in India, said demand for the cow dung cakes spiked during the recent Diwali festival season, a time when Hindus conduct prayer ceremonies at their homes, factories and offices. On a recent day, ShopClues' website showed that the patties had sold

"Around Diwali, when people do a lot of pujas in their homes and workplaces, there is a lot of demand for cow dung cakes," said Agarwal, referring to rituals performed during the popular festival.

"Increasingly, in the cold weather, people are keeping themselves warm by lighting fires" at outdoor events, she said, adding that people who grew up in rural areas find the peaty smell of dung fires pleasant.

"It reminds them of the old days," she said. Online retailers said people were also buying the dung cakes to light fires for ritual ceremonies to mark the beginning of the new year and for the winter festival known as Lohri, celebrated in northern India.

The cakes are sold in packages that contain two to eight pieces weighing 200 grams (7 ounces) each. Prices range from 100 to 400 rupees (\$1.50 to \$6) per package. Dung cakes are also used as organic manure, and some sellers are marketing them for use in kitchen gardens. —AP

N KOREA'S COMPUTER OPERATING SYSTEM MIRRORS ITS POLITICAL ONE

SINGAPORE/SEOUL: North Korea's homegrown computer how many computers were running the software. While operating system mirrors its political one, according to two German researchers who have delved into the code: a goit-alone approach, a high degree of paranoia and invasive now nearly 15 years old. snooping on users. Their research, the deepest yet into the secretive state's Red Star OS, illustrates the challenges Pyongyang faces in trying to embrace the benefits of computing and the internet while keeping a tight grip on ideas

The researchers, Florian Grunow and Niklaus Schiess of German IT security company ERNW GmbH, spoke to Reuters before presenting their findings to the Chaos Communication Congress in Hamburg on Sunday, a gathering of hackers and security researchers.

The operating system is not just the pale copy of western ones that many have assumed, they concluded after downloading the software from a website outside North Korea and exploring the code in detail,

"(Late leader) Kim Jong II said North Korea should develop a system of their own," said Grunow. "This is what they've done." North Korea, whose rudimentary intranet system does not connect to the outside internet but allows access to state media and some officially approved websites, has been developing its own operating system for more than a decade.

This latest version, written around 2013, is based on a version of Linux called Fedora and has eschewed the previous version's Windows XP feel for Apple's OSX - perhaps a nod to leader Kim Jong Un, who like his father has been photographed near Macs.

But under the hood there's a lot that's unique, including its own version of encrypting files. "This is a full blown operation system where they control most of the code," said Grunow.

This, the researchers say, suggests North Korea wants to avoid any code that might be compromised by intelligence agencies. "Maybe this is a bit fear-driven," said Grunow. They may want to be independent of other operating systems because they fear back doors" which might allow others to spy on them.

Grunow and Schiess said they had no way of knowing

private computer use is on the rise in North Korea, visitors to the country say most computers still use Windows XP,

NO TAMPERING

The Red Star operating system makes it very hard for anyone to tamper with it. If a user makes any changes to core functions - like trying to disable its antivirus checker or firewall - the computer will display an error message, or reboot itself.

Red Star also addresses a more pressing concern: cracking down on the growing underground exchange of foreign movies, music and writing.

Illegal media is usually passed from person-to-person in North Korea using USB sticks and microSD cards, making it hard for the government to track where they come from. Red Star tackles this by tagging, or watermarking, every document or media file on a computer or on any USB stick connected to it. That means that any file could be traced back to anyone who had previously opened or created the

"It's definitely privacy invading, it's not transparent to the user," said Grunow. "It's done stealthily, and touches files you haven't even opened." Such efforts, says Nat Kretchun, an authority on the spread of foreign media in the isolated country, reflect North Korea's realization that it needs "new ways to update their surveillance and security procedures to respond to new types of technology and new sources of information."

There's no sign in the operating system, the researchers say, of the kinds of cyberattack capability North Korea has been accused of. "It really looks like they've just tried to build an operating system for them, and give the user a basic set of applications," says Grunow. That includes a Korean word processor, a calendar and an app for composing and transcribing music.

North Korea is not the only country to try to develop its own operating system. Cuba has its National Nova, while China, Russia and others have tried to build theirs. —Reuters

FACEBOOK FOUNDER URGES FREE INTERNET IN INDIA AMID ROW

Mark Zuckerberg urged India yesterday to approve a controversial plan that would provide a free Internet service to the poor, his latest bid amid an escalating row with authorities.

The head of the social network tried to drum up support for the Free Basics service that offers people without the Internet free access to a handful of websites through mobile phones, in a column in the largest-selling English daily The Times of India.

"If we accept that everyone deserves access to the Internet, then we must surely support free basic Internet services," the chief executive wrote, comparing the Internet to a library, public health care and education. "Surprisingly, over the last year there's been a big

NEW DELHI: Facebook founder debate about this in India," he tor not to ban Free Basics, formerly added. "Instead of wanting to give people free access to basic Internet services, critics of the program continue to spread false claimseven if that means leaving behind a billion people."

> Zuckerberg's personal appeal comes amid fierce criticism from net neutrality activists who say his plan violates the principle that the whole Internet should be available to all and unrestricted by any one company.

Earlier this month the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India ordered Reliance Communications, the sole mobile operator for the service, to suspend it temporarily without giving a reason, docu-

ments seen by AFP show. Some 3.2 million people have petitioned India's telecoms regulanamed Internet.org. It launched nationwide last month after being trialled in several states.

Several prominent Indian entrepreneurs and members of the tech community have spoken out against Free Basics, arguing that even for poor citizens, no Internet is better than a hand-picked and corporate-controlled web offering.

But in an attempt to counter claims "that this will make Internet more like a walled garden", Facebook has taken out billboards and full-page newspaper adverts

defending the initiative. Free Basics is "at risk of being banned" in India, Facebook said in the adverts, adding that the service aims to help a billion unconnected Indians-mostly living in poor rural

areas-to get online. —AFP

KIDS' ASTHMA RATES QUIET DOWN AFTER EARLIER INCREASE

CHICAGO: Asthma rates in US children have quieted down after a decades-long increase, a government study found, and researchers are trying to pinpoint reasons that would explain the trend. A possible plateau in childhood obesity rates and declines in air pollution are among factors that may have helped lower cases in kids, the 2001-13 study suggests. Overall, average asthma rates among kids aged 17 and younger increased slightly, then leveled off and declined by the study's end, when 8.3 percent of kids were affected. Rates varied among some regions, races and ages. The study was published online yesterday in the journal Pediatrics.

Nuanced trends

Childhood asthma rates doubled from 1980 to 1995, partly because of more awareness and diagnosis. The new study shows slower increases after that, rising to 9.3 by 2010. Declines in the most recent vears were in children vounger than 5. Mexican kids, those in the Midwest and those from families that weren't poor. living in the Northeast and West, but increased in those aged 10 to 17, kids from poor families and those living in the

Rates increased but then plateaued among blacks. The study is based on annual in-person government health surveys in which parents of more than 150,000 kids were asked if their children had been diagnosed with asthma. Data not included in the study show 2014 rates climbed slightly to 8.6 percent but it's not

Rates plateaued among whites and those clear if that change was real, said lead author Dr Lara Akinbami, a medical officer at the government's National Center for Health Statistics.

Competing forces

Asthma's causes are uncertain but authorities believe several factors play a role or trigger attacks, including air pollution, obesity, tobacco smoke, premature birth and respiratory infections in infancy. Competing changes in some of these factors complicate efforts to understand

asthma trends, Akinbami said.

For example, while US air quality has generally improved from decades ago, children whose schools are built near congested expressways may not be benefiting. And while US smoking rates have fallen, a warming climate may prolong growing seasons and kids' exposure to pollen. Akinbami called the study overall good news since rates are down or mostly stable. "We're cautious because we never know that the next year is going to show,"

DAMAGE FROM SINKING LAND COSTING CALIFORNIA BILLIONS

DOS PALOS: A canal that delivers vital water supplies from Northern California to Southern California is sinking in places. So are stretches of a riverbed undergoing historic restoration. On farms, well casings pop up like mushrooms as the ground around them drops.

Four years of drought and heavy reliance on pumping of groundwater have made the land sink faster than ever up and down the Central Valley, requiring repairs to infrastructure that experts say are costing billions of dollars. This slow-motion land subsidence more than one foot a year in some places - is not expected to stop anytime soon, experts say, nor will

Over-pumping

Land subsidence is largely the result of pumping water from the ground. As aquifers are depleted, the ground sags. The most severe examples today are in San Joaquin Valley, where the US Geological Survey in 1975 said half of the land is prone to sinking. USGS researchers later called it one of the "single largest alterations of the land surface attributed to humankind."

A sparse mountain snowpack in California's driest four-year span on record has forced farmers in the Central Valley, the nation's most productive agricultural region, to rely on groundwater to irrigate their crops. Drought has spawned a wellspots, irrigation districts raise the sides of sagging canals so they can increase the water level and maintain a gravitational flow.

As a result, at least one bridge now sits below the waterline. Chris White, general manager of the Central California Irrigation District in Los Banos, said replacing it is expected to cost \$2.5 million. Rebuilding another canal recently cost \$4.5 million.

Putting a grand total on damage from subsidence in California is tricky because irrigation districts don't often single out repairs required by subsidence from general upkeep, said Borchers, who estimates long-term costs as being

California Aqueduct, a massive canal that delivers water 400 miles to Southern California, also sank by nearly 13 inches, the NASA research

This has cost the state of California "tens of millions of dollars" in repairs to the aqueduct in the last 40 years, and officials expect to spend that much in the future, said Ted Thomas, a spokesman for the state's Department of Water Resources. California became the last state in the West to regulate groundwater when Gov. Jerry Brown last year signed legislation ending a Gold Rush-era policy that generally let property owners take as much as they wanted. But local agencies have until 2040 to put groundwater management plans into effect.

Farmers and irrigation districts are not the only ones taking note of sinking land. Spokesman Greg Snapper said Pacific Gas & Electric Co. has not sustained any broken natural gas pipelines from sinking land in the Central Valley, but it monitors the lines and this year started using NASA's satellite research as part of that effort.

A 60-mile stretch of California's High Speed Rail track, designed to whisk passengers through the Central Valley in excess of 200 mph, will be built on a bed of rocks. This design is more forgiving and easier to maintain and repair if the land sinks than other stretches built on highway-like slabs, said Frank Vacca, the rail authority's chief program manager.

Sinking land has stopped work on part of a historic project to return water flows to an irrigation-depleted section of the San Joaquin River. Before construction of a passageway for fish can begin, officials need to assess how fast the land will sink in the future, said Alicia Forsythe of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

With a wet El Nino winter forecast, geologists also worry that subsidence in a flood control channel elsewhere on the river may cause water to pool, prompting flooding rather than flow toward the sea. "We haven't had to use it for a while," said Michelle Sneed, a USGS subsidence researcher. "We'll see how that's going to perform this year, if it's called upon."—AP



SEATTLE: This undated photo provided the Spitzer family shows Dr Robert Sptizer, a psychiatrist who played a leading role in establishing agreedupon standards to describe mental disorders and eliminating homosexuality's designation as a pathology. —AP

SPITZER, 'MOST INFLUENTIAL PSYCHIATRIST,' DIES AT 83

SEATTLE: Dr Robert Spitzer - a psychiatrist who played a leading role in establishing agreed-upon standards to describe mental disorders and eliminating homosexuality's designation as a pathology - died Friday in Seattle. He was 83. Spitzer died of heart problems, said his wife, Columbia University Professor Emerita Janet Williams.

Dr Spitzer's work on several editions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, or the DSM defined all of the major disorders "so all in the profession could agree on what they were seeing," said Williams, who worked with him on DSM-III, which was published in 1980 and became a best-selling book.

"That was a major breakthrough in the profession," she said. Spitzer came up with agreed-upon definitions of mental disorders by convening meetings of experts in each diagnostic category and taking notes on their observations, the New York Times reported. "Rather than just appealing to authority, the authority of Freud, the appeal was: Are there studies? What evidence is there?" Spitzer told the New Yorker magazine in 2005. "The people I appointed had all made a commitment to

be guided by data." Dr Allen Frances, a professor emeritus of psychiatry at Duke University and editor of a later edition of the manual, told the Times that Spitzer "was by far the most influential psychiatrist of his time." Gayrights activists credit Dr Spitzer with removing homosexuality from the list of mental disorders in the DSM in 1973. He decided to push for the change after he met with gay activists and determined that homosexuality could not be a disorder if gay people were comfortable with their

At the time of the psychiatric profession's debate over homosexuality, Dr Spitzer told the Washington Post: "A medical disorder either had to be associated with subjective distress - pain - or general impairment in social function." Dr Jack Drescher, a gay psychoanalyst in New York, told the Times that Spitzer's successful push to remove homosexuality from the list of disorders was a major advance for gay rights. "The fact that gay marriage is allowed today is in part owed to Bob Spitzer," he said.

In 2012, Dr Spitzer publicly apologized tor a 2001 study that found so-called reparative therapy on gay people can turn them straight if they really want to do so. He told the Times in 2012 that he concluded the study was flawed because it simply asked people who had gone through reparative therapy if they had changed their sexual orientation. "As I read these commentaries (about the study,) I knew this was a problem, a big problem, and one I couldn't answer," Dr Spitzer told the Times. "How do you know someone has really changed?" Dr Spitzer and his wife moved to Seattle from New Jersey this year. —AP



DOS PALOS: In this Dec 22, 2015 photo, Chris White, general manager of the Central California bridge over the Outside Canal that needs to be replaced because of sinking land. —AP

the expensive repairs.

"It's shocking how a huge area is affected, but how little you can tell with your eye," said James Borchers, a hydro-geologist, who studies subsidence and says careful monitoring is necessary to detect and address sinking before it can do major damage to costly infrastructure such as bridges and pipelines.

drilling boom with some tapping "probably in the billions."

ancient aquifers 3,000 feet down. In wet years, groundwater provides about 40 percent of water used in California, but in times of drought, groundwater can amount to 65 percent of the state's water supply. Decades of over-pumping have destroyed thousands of well casings and buckled canal linings. To keep water flowing through low

Decade long problem

Subsidence has been a problem for decades, and it's accelerating. Last year near Corcoran, the land sank 13 inches in eight months, researchers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory found by comparing images collected over time from satellites and airplanes. Parts of the

ASTRONAUT TIM PEAKE DIALS WRONG NUMBER FROM SPACE

LONDON: Anyone can dial a wrong number, but it's not often done from outer space. British astronaut Tim Peake tweeted an apology on Christmas Day from the International Space Station after calling a wrong number. He wrote "I'd like to apologize to the lady I just called by mistake saying 'Hello, is this planet Earth?' - not a prank call - just a wrong number!"

The 43-year-old former army helicopter pilot did not say who he was calling. Millions of Britons have been following his mission closely since he became Britain's first publicly funded astronaut and the first Briton to visit the space station. The nation seemed to come to a halt during liftoff Dec 15 as many stopped what they were doing and nervously watched live coverage

of him leaving the earth for outer space. An astronomer told Britons they might have a chance to view the space station as it transits above the earth on Christmas Day. Robin Scagell of the Society for Popular Astronomy said the station would be flying relatively low when it passes over London and would be "the brightest star in the sky, moving rapidly from

Peake plans to conduct experiments on how the human body reacts in space and - in a British twist on space exploration - try out a new teamaking process geared toward zero gravity. He is sharing the space station with five other astronauts from Russia and the United States. Peake's crewmates are NASA's Scott Kelly and Tim Kopra and Russians Mikhail Kornienko, Yuri Malenchenko and Sergey Volkov. Kelly and Kornienko are on the first joint US-Russian oneyear mission at the space station. —AP

KAZAKHSTAN: In this Tuesday, Dec 15, 2015 file photo, British astronaut Tim Peake, member of the main crew of the expedition to the International Space Station (ISS), gestures prior the launch of Soyuz TMA-19M space ship at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome. —AP

IRAN REPORTS 112 SWINE FLU DEATHS SINCE NOVEMBER

TEHRAN: A swine flu outbreak in Iran has killed 112 people since mid-November and the country's first medical worker has died of the virus, media said yesterday. "About 1,190 people have been diagnosed with the (H1N1) virus and hospitalized" and "the death toll has reached 112", state news agency IRNA quoted a health ministry official as saying.

"Vaccines and laboratory equipment for diagnosis are available around the clock across the country," Mohammad Mehdi Gouya, the head of the ministry's communicable diseases department, said. The outbreak was "under control" and its "first and more serious wave" of expansion was expected to diminish "in the coming days", he added. Swine flu deaths have mostly been in southeastern Iran, while many other provinces across the country have reported isolated fatalities. A nurse died Sunday after contracting the flu from patients at a hospital in the northeastern town of Neyshabour, the Mehr news agency reported yesterday. Authorities earlier this month warned swine flu could spread to Tehran and provinces in the north and west. A major H1N1 outbreak sparked a World Health Organization pandemic alert in June 2009, after the virus emerged from Mexico and the United States. —AFP



LINCOLN: One of two male red pandas eats bamboo given as a Christmas gift at Lincoln Children's Zoo. —AP

US ZOOKEEPERS GIVE TREAT FILLED PRESENTS TO ANIMALS

LINCOLN, Nebraska: Even the animals shared in the holiday spirit at the Lincoln Children's Zoo in Nebraska. On Thursday, keepers gave their animals treat-filled presents, continuing the zoo's longtime tradition. "The keepers have a great time with it, and it's something fun," zoo director John Chapo told the Lincoln Journal Star, adding

that the treats also provide nutrients. Zookeeper Meg Meyer's first stop was the macaws, where Elliot and Sergeant Pepper ripped the red Christmas wrapping off their boxes and discovered nuts, graham crackers and ice cream cones. They cawed loudly from inside their heated room. Carson and Tenzing, two of the zoo's red pandas, found bamboo, bananas and apples in their present. Ranney, the snow

leopard, savored meatballs. A naked molerat feasted on baby pears.

"It's something different than what they eat every day, but it's still nutritious for them," said Ryan Gross, the zoo's director of strategic communications. "Just like we get special food around the holidays, so do they." And Ranney received an extra gift: a Christmas Eve snowstorm. "I don't think she's had snow since she got here," Gross said. "She's very happy right now." The eight full-time zookeepers work 365 days a year, Chapo said, including in bad weather and on holidays. "They still come in and take care of our animals on Christmas," he said. "They have Christmas spirit, and they want to share toys with the animals - (the toys) are tasty tidbits." —AP

DRUG SHOWS PROMISE FOR ENDANGERED FOX

TORRANCE: The Catalina Island fox, one of the world's most endangered species, suffered from frequent tumors for the past decade until scientists discovered a relatively simple solution: treating ear mites.

Research by veterinarians at the University of California, Davis and the Catalina Island Conservancy shows treating ear mites with an anti-parasitic drug helps block cancer, according to the Daily Breeze of Torrance. Ear infections that can lead to cancer were reduced from 98 percent to 10 percent among foxes that received the drug during a six-month trial.

Efforts to save the foxes, one of the six subspecies of the island gray fox native to the Channel Islands, began in the late 1990s when residents noticed the population declined — a result of canine distemper brought by visitors. The disease killed roughly 90 percent of the island fox population

As of 1999, roughly 100 foxes remained, said Winston Vickers, associate veterinarian at University of California, Davis, and lead author of the study. As a result, all fox pop-

ulations on the island were listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Scientists noticed the prevalence of ear mites and the incidence of cancer. A pilot study spearheaded by the conservancy began with 100 foxes to determine whether the drug ivermectin would be effective, administered through a syringe into the animal's ear canal.

"It's an oily based treatment that coats the inside of the ear and kills the mites," said Calvin Duncan, wildlife biologist for the Catalina Island Conservancy and coauthor of studies. Initial lumps that indicate early stages of most tumors are no longer being seen, Vickers said.

In 2014, the fox population was surveyed at 1,717, and Duncan said this year's data should indicate similar numbers. The numbers have rebounded so much that the Catalina Island fox may no longer be listed as an endangered species. The designation, which prohibits hunting of the animals and other restrictions, is under review by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. —AP



In this Nov 23, 2003, file photo, a Santa Catalina Island fox pup dashes into the wilderness after being released on Santa Catalina Island off the coast of Southern California. —AP

IOWA CITY STUDENTS STRIVE FOR SUCCESS

IOWA CITY: Inside the Church of the Nazarene in lowa City, students are spending time after school working to become better in school. Sitting side by side at a table, a teacher helps an 11-year-old with math homework. Another student works on a math program on a computer, while another sorts through books from her bag.

The 10 students — in third through sixth grade — wear navy blue hooded sweatshirts that say "Got Education?" as well as "Strive for Success," the name of the program that's helping them do better at school. Founded in 2012, Strive for Success is a faith-based, after-school program designed to improve students' math and reading skills. The program was founded by Caleb Thomas, who was a counselor for seven years at Grant Wood

Elementary in lowa City.
"I started the program," he says, "based on the needs of students not having positive things to do after school, as well as some of the kids falling behind in their academics, recognizing that it would be wonderful to provide a safe environment for kids to come and get caught up on their academics and reading and math."

Multiple activities

The program, he says, helps students who are one to two grade levels behind in reading and math become proficient in those subjects. It employs licensed teachers and practicum students at the University of Iowa as trained volunteer tutors. Students start by signing in, having a snack

and creating a daily progress report that "allows them to figure out what they have to do for the day," Thomas says. Besides working on homework, they take time for sports and other activities.

TaSean Henderson, an 11-year-old sixth grader at Horn Elementary, is working his way through math folders that gradually increase in difficulty and that are part of the Teacher Accelerated Instruction program. The work, he says, helped him earn a 96 percent on a recent math test. Math is now his favorite subject. The program, he says, helps in other areas: "When you come in, you gotta be respectful."

Eleven-year-old Joshua Thomas, also a sixth grader at Horn, says he joined to improve his math and reading skills. "If I wasn't in this program, I wouldn't have the best grades," he says. Strive for Success staffers stay in touch with the students' teachers and keep them aware of areas where a child might be struggling, Thomas says.

"The school district has changed its (math) curriculum, which I really enjoy because it provides a lot of story problems," Thomas says. "However, because the kids are behind in their reading, it takes them a longer time to get their math done. It can take some of these students up to an hour just to get some of their math homework done." Students pay \$25 a month as an education investment fee to be in the program, Thomas says. Sponsors also assist with costs. "Hopefully, through word of mouth," Thomas says, "the community will begin to learn more about this program."



BARROW: In this Oct 7, 2014 file photo, men haul sections of whale skin and blubber, known as muktuk, as a bowhead whale is butchered in a field. —AP photos

ALASKA'S INUIT LINK STEADY FOOD SUPPLY TO ENVIRONMENT HEALTH

ANCHORAGE: Alaska Inuit hunter John Goodwin for decades has hunted oogruk, the bearded seal, a marine mammal prized for its meat, oil and hide. The largest of Alaska's ice seals uses sea ice to rest and birth pups, and after the long winter, when ice breaks into floes, there's a window of opportunity for Goodwin to leave his home in Kotzebue and motor his boat between ice panels, shoot seals and butcher them before they migrate north through the Bering Strait.

A hunting season that used to last weeks, however, has shrunk. Ice that formerly froze 5-feet (1.5-meters) thick or more is a fraction of that. Ice disappears quickly, and so do the seals. "As soon as the sun comes out, it starts melting, or we have a heavy rain," Goodwin said. "Basically, it's the rain that deteriorates the ice real quick. We don't have enough time to hunt."

Protect their culture

The environment is changing and the Inuit, who consider themselves a part of it, want measures taken to protect their culture. A report issued this month by the Inuit Circumpolar Council-Alaska, which advocates for Inuit coast villages from southwest to north Alaska, calls for policies that protect Inuit traditional food and the Arctic environment that produces it. "When we say food security, it has to do with the health of all of it," said Carolina Behe, the organization's indigenous knowledge and science adviser.

More than 90 percent of the food purchased with cash in Alaska comes in from elsewhere and a reliable food supply in more urban communities like Anchorage means affordable prices and uninterrupted service on groceries shipped north by barge or jet. For the Inuit, who have survived for thousands of years in one of the harshest climates on Earth, food is the connection between the past and today's culture, according to the report.

Food is survival and identity. Over millennia, the capturing of caribou or seals, the gathering of salmonberries, how they were processed, stored and shared was incorporated into art, storytelling, dance, drumming, education and language.

"Our traditional foods are much more than calories or nutrients; they are a lifeline throughout our culture and reflect the health of the entire Arctic ecosystem," the report's authors said. As changes arose, Inuit leaders began talking at public forums about food. Their concept of secure food differed from the concept held by people in academia and government, who spoke of nutritional value and purchasing power.

Hunting disruption

At a meeting four years ago, Behe recalled, someone asked whether the Inuit were looking forward to increased shipping because it would create more opportunity to move in food. "Our people were saying the exact opposite: We're really concerned about these ships because they're going to disrupt our hunting, the noise is disrupting the animals, the pollu-

ocean and wildlife management. State officials set hunting seasons. Federal officials oversee harvesting of marine mammals and industrial ocean fisheries. International agreements are considered in salmon and migratory bird decisions. Sources within the United States and internationally contribute to warming and pollutants affecting the Arctic.

Researchers want a better understanding on how



BARROW: Inuit hunter Karlin Itchoak coils the rope of subsistence net after pulling in a beluga whale as the sun sets.

tants, and that's a threat to food security," Behe said.

The report, assembled through visits to 15 Inuit villages and with 146 listed authors, urges Arctic policy decisions through the lens of food. Inuit leaders want the baseline data collected on the Arctic ecosystem using both science and indigenous knowledge, Behe said. A scientist researching salmon might look first at population dynamics. An elder might taste the water, look at streamside vegetation, check fish scales and gauge the texture of the meat, Behe said.

he said. The report notes the fragmented nature of land, rapid change in the Arctic is affecting natural systems and people. That's also increasingly important for the Arctic Council, the eight-country forum that promotes cooperation and interaction between Arctic countries, said Fran Ulmer, chair of the US Arctic Research Commission. People who are causing change in the Arctic from greenhouse gases or pollution, Behe said, must take responsibility for actions affecting the Inuit. "The people causing the pollution have to have more responsibility and have to be expected to change their behavior, as opposed to expecting Inuit to change theirs," she said. —AP



Kuwait 248 33 199















The Armenian Prelacy in Kuwait and the Neighboring Countries hosted a Christmas reception which was attended by ambassadors and other dignitaries. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



THE SULTAN CENTER, DASMAN DIABETES INSTITUTE ORGANIZE PUBLIC SCREENINGS

ut of a deep commitment to the health of its customers and the community, The Sultan Center (TSC) and Dasman Diabetics Institute coordinated a Glucose Screening and Blood Pressure check at TSC Sharq on December 22, 2015 at TSC Sharq.

Led by its effective programs and awareness campaigns, The Dasman Institute aims to prevent, control and mitigate the impact of diabetes in Kuwait. Through this event, TSC and the Dasman institute jointly aimed to

educate customers on diabetes through public health promotion, while also encouraging individuals to undergo regular preventative health screenings in order to detect the onset of diabetes.

Lisa Al-Ghareeb, Marketing
Manager at TSC, quoted: "As part of
TSC Because We Care program and
our ongoing support to the community, TSC wanted to provide the public
with a venue to undergo check-ups in
order to help identify their risk for
developing diabetes, hence, to ensure

that they lead healthy lives.

Through this initiative and with consistent check-ups, individuals are strongly advised to adopt healthy lifestyle practices while stressing the importance of early detection of diabetes.

Diabetes is a condition that can have an impact on the entire family; whether you or a family member has diabetes the Dasman Institute can assist with the necessary resources and support in order for your family to adjust to life with Diabetes.









An end of first term - end of Year 2015 event took place recently at Kuwait National English School. A seasonal tea party for staff held by Madame Chantal Al Gharabally, School Director. The year and the term were ended happily before Winter break at Kuwait National English School.





Residence Inn Kuwait

Blentz Restaurant

RESIDENCE INN LAUNCHES WEEKEND OFFER FOR GCC NATIONALS, RESIDENTS



Lobby lounge

esidence Inn by Marriott Kuwait City offers its guests from GCC the perfect weekend escape with up to 30 percent discount on room rates. The special package also includes complimentary breakfast and free airport transfers. Whether it is a short trip to enjoy the shopping delights in the heart of Kuwait City or a weekend break from the stress of everyday living, Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait City provides the perfect solution.

Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait
City extends the feeling of a comfortable home away from home and offers guests inviting and functional public spaces to relax and enjoy their stays.
Other hotel facilities and services include a fitness center, business center, stylishly-appointed studios with fully-equipped kitchens and free house-keeping services.

Perfectly located in the Sharq business district, Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait City has a lobby that offers a communal environment including a self-service lounge, and a warm casual restaurant-The Blendz. A "grab and go" kiosk/market offering snacks, basic food items, newspapers, magazines and various sundries is located adjacent to the front desk. Three fullyequipped meeting rooms are available with state-of-the-art technology and a professional event management team to handle all details. Overlooking the beautiful blue waters of the Arabian Gulf, the sun-drenched meeting rooms are an ideal location for any corporate events and meetings. Residence Inn featuring its fitness facilities will allow travelers to continue with their regular routine of a healthy and balanced



Larger studio sea view









The Jordanian Community in Kuwait launched its first non-profit website to provide career opportunities for Jordanians in Kuwait and outside. The announcement came during a ceremony held recently and attended by officials from the Jordanian Embassy in Kuwait led by Deputy Ambassador Shakir Al-Amoush, as well as Secretary General of the Council of the Jordanian Community in Kuwait Engineer Ghassan Theyab. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

SHOP BAHRAIN LAUNCHED IN A GLITTERY EVENT

hop Bahrain', the largest nationwide festival, kicked off on Thursday, December 24th at Seef Mall with a live performance by popular Arabic singer, Asma Lmnawar, with scores of people attending the launch event from Bahrain and across the region.

Shop Bahrain will mirror the Kingdom's position as a welcoming, accessible, family destination with an incredibly diverse range of retail experiences from luxury malls to traditional souks to luxury boutiques coupled with unbeatable bargains and promotions. The 30-day festival will run until the 23rd of January 2016.

Commenting on the launch event, Shop Bahrain Project Director, Nawaf Al Koheji said: "For the next thirty days, we welcome residents and visitors to enjoy the promotions and activities organized as a part of Shop Bahrain.

Shop Bahrain's calendar of activities boasts the return of Al Riwaq's 'The Nest', showcasing local and regional talent and entrepreneurs under one roof during the weekend event. The event aims to promote the latest creations from clothes, jewelry, ceramics, furniture and much more. On the sidelines of the event, a number of workshop for children, film screenings and music acts are held. The event will be held on the weekends until the 9th of January 2016.

In addition, the 'Taste Tour' is held daily in the center of it all - Adliya, until 9th of January allowing the public to

sample the best dishes from 13 restaurants in Block 338. Participants who complete the 'Taste Tour' will be able to take part in a raffle draw for a Gulf Air business class ticket to any destination.

Shop Bahrain also features the largest outdoor ice skating rink held outside Al A'ali Shopping Complex, the 'VIVA Shop & Skate' is open throughout the week and also features a market during the weekends, creating a unique experience for the public.

Next on the calendar of events is 'The Family Fair', an exciting carnival held during the New Year's Eve Weekend at Prince Khalifa bin Salman Park in Hidd featuring a concert by Bahraini singer, Hind, along with fireworks, games and food stalls.

A number of in-mall activities will also be held across participating shopping malls including children cinema, art workshops, reverse bungee jumps, rock climbing and much more.

Mega raffle draw and instant scratch and win cards will also offer visitors and residents the opportunity to win big and amazing prizes with more than 20,000 prizes such as airline tickets and cars.

Shoppers and visitors can find out the latest information about Shop Bahrain through the festival's website www.shopbahrain.com or by following any of its social media channels on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube @shopbahrain.

















00:20 Fast N' Loud 01:10 Deadliest Catch 02:00 Deadliest Catch 03:40 Auction Hunters 04:05 Property Wars 04:30 Storage Wars Canada 05:00 Carfellas 05:30 How It's Made

06:00 Ice Cold Gold 06:50 Junkyard Empire 07:40 Fast N' Loud 08:30 Auction Hunters 08:55 Property Wars

09:20 Storage Wars Canada 09:45 Carfellas 10:10 How It's Made 10:35 Auction Hunters

For The Love Of Cars 15:10 Manhunt With Joel Lambert19:20 Fire In The Hole 20:10 Property Wars 20:35 Storage Wars Canada 21:00 Lair Of The Mega Shark

21:50 Dual Survival 22:40 River Monsters 23:30 Junkyard Empire

DISCOVERY 00:35 Extreme Bodies

02:55 How Do They Do It? 03:42 Landing On A Comet: 04:29 Curiosity: How Evil Are You? 05:16 How Do They Do It? 06:03 The World's Strangest UFO

Stories

08:23 Sci-Fi Science 09:08 Landing On A Comet: Rosetta 09:53 How The Universe Works 10:38 Stephen Hawking's Grand

07:37 Strangest Weather On Earth

Design 11:23 Stephen Hawking's Grand Design

12:08 Storm Chasers 15:10 Landing On A Comet: Rosetta 15:57 How The Universe Works

16:44 Storm Chasers 19:05 Landing On A Comet: Rosetta 19:50 Food Factory

20:15 Food Factory 20:40 What Could Possibly Go 21:25 Futurescape With James Woods

22:15 NASA's Unexplained Files 23:00 Food Factory 23:22 Food Factory 23:45 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?



00:00 Violetta 00:45 The Hive 00:50 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch 01:15 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch 01:40 Wolfblood 02:05 Wolfblood 02:30 Violetta 03:15 The Hive 03:20 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch 03:45 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch 04:10 Wolfblood 04:35 Wolfblood 05:00 Violetta 05:45 The Hive 05:50 Mouk

06:00 Loliroc 06:25 Hank Zipzer 06:50 Girl Meets World 07:15 H2O: Just Add Water 07:40 H2O: Just Add Water 08:05 Austin & Ally 08:30 Austin & Ally 08:55 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch 09:20 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

09:45 Jessie 10:15 Teen Beach Movie 12:00 First Class Chefs 12:25 Best Friends Whenever 12:50 Jessie 13:15 | Didn't Do It 13:40 Liv And Maddie 14:05 Girl Meets World

The Next Step 14:55 Liv And Maddie 15:20 Gravity Falls 15:45 Mako Mermaids 16:10 Violetta 17:00 The Next Step

17:25 Mako Mermaids 17:50 Girl Meets World 18:15 Dog With A Blog 18:40 Gravity Falls 19:05 H2O: Just Add Water 19:30 Violetta

20:20 The Next Step 20:45 First Class Chefs 21:10 Best Friends Whenever 21:35 Jessie 22:00 I Didn't Do It 22:25 Liv And Maddie

23:10 The Next Step 23:35 Liv And Maddie

00:20 Calimero

03:05 Calimero

05:50 Zou

06:00 Loopdidoo

06:15 Art Attack

06:50 Calimero

07:20 Loopdidoo

07:35 Art Attack

08:00 Calimero

08:25 Loopdidoo

09:20 Sofia The First

09:45 Miles From Tomorrow

Sofia The First

11:55 Miles From Tomorrow

12:20 Henry Hugglemonster12:30 Henry Hugglemonster

12:55 Loopdidoo 13:10 Sheriff Callie's Wild West

Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

Miles From Tomorrow

16:35 Miles From Tomorrow

17:50 Adventures Of The Gummi

18:40 Jake And The Never Land

20:15 Jake And The Never Land

20:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West

21:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

Sofia The First

00:00 E! Entertainment Special

00:55 The Grace Helbig Show 01:25 Kourtney And Khloe Take

04:10 The E! True Hollywood Story

05:05 E! Entertainment Special

06:00 Keeping Up With The

06:55 Keeping Up With The

08:20 E! Entertainment Special

11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 11:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills

Fashion Bloggers

23:00 Stewarts And Hamiltons

tood

00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

05:00 Guy's Grocery Games

Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

Food Court Wars

02:00 Mystery Diners

02:30 Mystery Diners

03:00 Man Fire Food

03:30 Man Fire Food

DEFINING CHAPTER

ROM THE DIRECTOR OF 'THE LORD OF THE RINGS' TRILOGY

THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES

DECEMBER 17

SEE IT IN TOOL D) 3D, HER 3D AND IMAX 3D

#THEHOBBIT #ONELASTTIME

Giuliana & Bill

House Of DVF

19:05 Miles From Tomorrow

18:15 Chip n Dale Rescue Rangers

17:00 Sofia The First

Aladdin

19:30 Sofia The First

19:55 Doc McStuffins

21:35 Sofia The First

22:00 Sofia The First

22:55 Sofia The First

23:20 Lilo & Stitch

02:20 Escape Club

03:15 Escape Club

Kardashians

Kardashians

07:50 Style Star

09:15 Giuliana & Bill

13:05 House Of DVF

15:00 Dash Dolls

14:05 Fashion Bloggers

12:45 Limon And Oli

14:00 Sofia The First

14:25 Sofia The First

Land Pirates

Land Pirates

Bears

Pirates

10:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse 10:35 Doc McStuffins

11:30 Jake And The Never Land

07:00 Zou

08:10 Zou

08:40

Pirates

11:00

Pirates

22:50 Girl Meets World

00:05 Henry Hugglemonster

00:35 Zou 00:50 Loopdidoo 01:05 Art Attack 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster 01:45 Calimero 02:00 Zou 02:15 Loopdidoo 02:30 Art Attack 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster

03:20 Zou 03:30 Loopdidoo 03:45 Art Attack 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster 04:20 Calimero 04:35 Zou 04:45 Loopdidoo 05:00 Art Attack

05:25 Henry Hugglemonster 05:35 Calimero

06:35 Henry Hugglemonster

LV® CHOICE 00:10 Come Date With Me

23:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin

23:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin

06:00 Chopped 07:00 Man Fire Food

07:30 Man Fire Food 08:00 Chopped

10:00

17:00

Special

09:00 Guy's Grocery Games

The Kitchen

11:00 Barefoot Contessa

11:30 Barefoot Contessa

Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

18:30 Grandma's Secret Cookbook

20:00 Guy's Grocery Games 21:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 21:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

12:00 Chopped

13:00 Guy's Big Bite

13:30 Guy's Big Bite

15:00 Man Fire Food

15:30 Man Fire Food

The Kitchen

22:00 Man Finds Food

22:30 Man Finds Food

16:00 Chopped

19:00 Chopped

18:00 Siba's Table

Australia 00:35 Come Date With Me Australia 01:05 Come Date With Me Australia 02:00 Emmerdale 02:25 Emmerdale Henry Hugglemonster 02:55 Coronation Street 08:55 Jake And The Neverland

03:55 The Jonathan Ross Show 04:50 Come Date With Me Australia 05:15 Come Date With Me Australia 05:40 Come Date With Me Australia

06:10 Come Date With Me

Australia 07:05 Coronation Street 07:55 Coach Trip 08:25 The Jonathan Ross Show 09:20 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover 10:10 Grantchester 11:05 Coach Trip 11:35 Four Weddings UK

12:30 Come Date With Me 15:15 Captain Jake And The Never Australia 12:55 Come Date With Me Australia 15:40 Captain Jake And The Never 13:25 Emmerdale 13:50 Coach Trip 16:05 The Adventures Of Disney 14:20 Coronation Street 14:45 Coronation Street 15:05 Come Date With Me

Australia

15:35 Keep It In The Family Christmas Special 16:30 Midsomer Murders 18:20 Come Date With Me Australia 18:45 Coronation Street 19:10 Coronation Street

19:35 Keep It In The Family Christmas Special 20:30 Midsomer Murders 22:20 Coronation Street 22:50 Coronation Street 23:15 Emmerdale 23:40 Come Date With Me Australia

> NATIONAL **GEOGRAPHIC** CHANNEL ED

00:10 Breakthrough 01:00 Yukon Gold 02:00 Yukon Gold 02:55 Ultimate Airport Dubai 03:50 Breakthrough 04:45 Ancient Megastructures 05:40 Apocalypse: The Second World War 06:35 Cold Water Gold 07:30 Monster Fish

08:25 Is It Real? 09:20 Ancient Megastructures 10:15 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South 11:10 Air Crash Investigation 12:05 Survive The Tribe 13:00 Is It Real? Monster Fish 14:00 15:00 Cold Water Gold

16:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs. 17:00 Air Crash Investigation 18:00 Drugs Inc The Border 20:00 Cold Water Gold 20:50 Air Crash Investigation 21:40 Drugs Inc 22:30 Cosmos: A Spacetime

Odyssey

World War

NAT GEO people E

23:20 Apocalypse: The Second

00:10 The Wine Quest: Spain 00:35 Eat Street 01:00 Dream Cruises 01:50 World's Best Chefs 02:15 American Food Battle

02:40 Cradle Of Mandopop

03:30 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen

05:35 Tales From The Bush Larder 06:00 American Food Battle 06:25 Wineroads 06:50 Dream Cruises 07:40 World's Best Chefs 08:05 American Food Battle 08:30 Cradle Of Mandopop 09:20 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen 09:45 David Rocco's Dolce Vita 10:10 This Is Brazil 11:00 Tales From The Bush Larder 11:25 Tales From The Bush Larder 11:50 American Food Battle 12:15 Wineroads

03:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita 04:20 This Is Brazil 05:10 Tales From The Bush Larder

12:40 Dream Cruises 13:35 World's Best Chefs 14:00 The Wine Quest: Spain 14:30 Eat Street 14:55 Eat Street 15:25 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

15:50 A Marriage Of Flavours 16:20 This Is Brazil 17:15 Tales From The Bush Larder 17:40 Tales From The Bush Larder 18:10 The Wine Quest: Spain 18:35 Wineroads 19:05 Eat Street 19:30 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

20:00 A Marriage Of Flavours 20:25 This Is Brazil
21:15 Tales From The Bush Larder 21:40 Tales From The Bush Larder 22:05 The Wine Quest: Spain 22:30 Wineroads 22:55 Dream Cruises 23:45 World's Best Chefs

NAT GEO 00:20 Big Cat Odyssey

01:10 72 Dangerous Animals Australia
02:00 Africa's Creative Killers 02:50 Man V. Monster 03:45 Wild Case Files 04:40 Ultimate Predators GPU

05:35 Africa's Creative Killers 06:30 Man V. Monster 07:25 Wild Case Files 08:20 The Incredible Dr. Pol 09:15 Outback Wrangler 10:10 Expedition Wild 11:05 Swamp Men 12:00 Fish Warrior

13:50 Man V. Monster 14:45 Crimes Against Nature 15:40 The Incredible Dr. Pol 16:35 Outback Wrangler 17:30 Expedition Wild 18:25 Swamp Men 19:20 Crimes Against Nature

12:55 World's Deadliest

20:10 The Incredible Dr. Pol 21:00 Outback Wrangler 21:50 Expedition Wild 22:40 Swamp Men 23:30 Fish Warrior

00:00 Men At Work 02:00 Togetherness 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

OJA FIRST HD

COMEDY

13:00 Suburgatory 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers 19:00 Modern Family 19:30 Modern Family 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry

Wilmore 22:00 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

OM FIRST HD

00:00 Justified 01:00 Quantico 02:00 Homeland 03:00 The Casual Vacancy 04:00 Bones 05:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 06:00 Castle

07:00 Bones 09:00 Quantico 10:00 Castle 11:00 Bones 12:00 Emmerdale

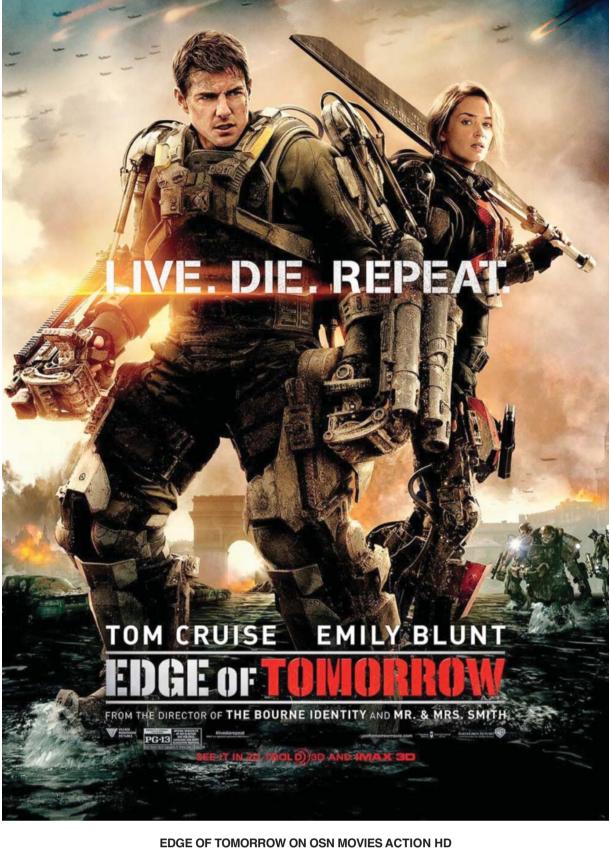
12:30 Coronation Street 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 15:00 Castle 16:00 Emmerdale 16:30 Coronation Street 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 19:00 Complications

23:00 Scream Queensk **OJN** FIRST **MORE**

20:00 The Night Shift

22:00 Supergir

00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 01:00 Good Morning America 03:00 Devious Maids



For Power-PG15 12:00 Age Of Dinosaurs-PG15 14:00 Edge Of Tomorrow-PG15 07:30 Coronation Street 08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 09:00 The Astronaut Wives Club 16:00 Big Ass Spider-PG15 18:00 A Stranger In Paradise-PG15 20:00 G.I. Joe: The Rise Of Cobra Emmerdale 10:30 Coronation Street 11:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show

13:00 Once Upon A Time 15:00 Live Good Morning America 18:00 Once Upon A Time 19:00 The Astronaut Wives Club 00:15 Welcome To The Jungle 02:00 The First Time 22:00 Devious Maids

M MOVIES ACTION 00:00 13 Sins

02:00 Edge Of Tomorrow 04:00 Left Behind 06:00 Justice League: Throne Of 08:00 Big Ass Spider 10:00 The River Wild 12:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power

05:00 Good Morning America

07:00 Emmerdale

14:00 Age Of Dinosaurs 16:00 Edge Of Tomorrow 18:00 Big Ass Spider A Stranger In Paradise 22:00 G.I. Joe: The Rise Of Cobra

OM MOVIES HD **ACTION**

00:00 Edge Of Tomorrow-PG15 02:00 Left Behind-PG15 04:00 Justice League: Throne Of Atlantis-PG15 06:00 Big Ass Spider-PG15 08:00 The River Wild-PG15 10:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest

22:00 Hammer Of The Gods-18 ON MOVIES THE COMEDY

04:00 The Naked Gun: From The Files Of Police Squad 06:00 Simon Birch 08:00 Life With Mikey 10:00 The Naked Gun: From The Files Of Police Squad

12:00 Tooth Fairy 14:00 How To Lose A Guy In 10 16:00 Life With Mikey 17:45 You Again

19:45 Mystery Men 22:00 Hot Tub Time Machine 2 **MOVIES**

DRAMA 01:15 Belle-PG15

03:15 The Wicked Within-PG15 05:00 At Middleton-PG15 07:00 Parkland-PG15 Escobar: Paradise Lost-PG15 11:00 At Middleton-PG15

13:00 One Chance-PG15 15:00 Parkland-PG15 17:00 Escobar: Paradise Lost 19:00 A Thousand Times Good

Night-PG15 21:00 Miss Meadows-PG15 23:00 The Riot Club-18

амс

04:50 The Wilby Conspiracy OM MOVIES HID 06:35 Miracles **FESTIVAL**

02:00 Atlas Shrugged Part 2: The 04:00 Blue Ruin 05:30 The Invisible Woman

07:30 We Are Family 09:00 Seven Days In Utopia 10:45 The Invisible Woman 12:45 Julie And Julia

15:00 Where Angels Fear To Tread 17:00 Seven Days In Utopia 19:00 Calvary 21:00 The Green Mile

OM MOVIES III

01:00 Good People-PG15 03:00 Transcendence-PG15 05:00 Drumline: A New Beat-PG15 06:45 The Theory Of Everything 09:00 Selma-PG15

Guardians Of The Galaxy 13:15 Planes: Fire And Rescue-PG 14:45 The Single Moms Club 16:45 Selma-PG15 19:00 The Imitation Game-PG15

23:00 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies-PG

21:00 Playing It Cool-PG15

OM MOVIES HID KIDS

01:00 Minuscule: Valley Of The Lost Ants 02:45 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion 04:30 The Olsen Gang In Deep

08:00 Ghatothkach - Master O

Magic 10:00 Egon And Donci 11:30 Goat Story 2

06:25 Teletubbies 06:50 The Green Balloon Club 07:15 The Vicar Of Dibley

Christmas Special 1996 08:00 Doctors

09:00 Great Expectations

09:55 Great Expectations

10:45 The Vicar Of Dibley

11:30 The Office Specials

12:15 The Office Specials

13:10 Great Expectations

14:00 Great Expectations

14:55 The Vicar Of Dibley

18:15 The Office Specials

20:00 Spies Of Warsaw 20:45 Spies Of Warsaw

22:20 The Office Specials

23:05 Great Expectations

00:00 Great Expectations

16:40 Sally Lockhart Mysteries

21:30 Alan Carr Live: Spexy Beast

01:55 BBC Proms 2011: Last Night

Christmas Special 1996

15:40 Doctors

19:00 Doctors

00:55 Doctors

Of The Proms

03:14 Groiband

Disguise

03:35 Johnny Test

Disguise 05:50 Regular Show

Gumball 07:00 Adventure Time

07:25 Teen Titans Go!

09:20 Regular Show

10:10 Clarence

10:30 Johnny Test

11:20 Uncle Grandpa

12:50 Steven Universe

13:02 Steven Universe

13:15 Regular Show

14:50 Adventure Time

15:10 The Amazing World Of

15:35 The Amazing World Of

16:00 Ben 10 Omniverse 16:45 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu 17:30 Teen Titans Go!

18:20 Regular Show 19:05 The Amazing World Of

19:30 Johnny Test

14:00 Johnny Test

Gumball

Gumball

Gumball

05:05 Transformers: Robots In

05:27 Transformers: Robots In

06:00 The Amazing World Of

08:10 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu 08:35 Ben 10 Omniverse

11:40 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu 12:05 Teen Titans Go!

01:25 Eastenders

19:30 Eastenders

16:10 Eastenders

08:30 Eastenders

13:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion 14:30 Memory Loss

16:00 Cher Ami 18:00 Egon And Donci 20:00 Snow Queen

23:30 Cher Ami

OM MOVIES HID **PREMIERE**

01:30 So Undercover-PG15 03:45 The Mistle-Tones-PG15 06:00 Bears-PG 08:00 Dragonheart 3: The Sorcerer's Curse-PG15

10:00 Quartet-PG15 12:00 Heaven's Door-PG 14:00 10 Years-PG15 16:00 Dragonheart 3: The Sorcerer's Curse-PG15 18:00 Closed Circuit-PG15

20:00 22 Jump Street-PG15 22:00 Men, Women & Children-18 01:00 Diana 03:00 Half Of A Yellow Sun

05:00 Tea With Mussolini 07:00 Evita 09:30 Atlas Shrugged Part 2: The Strike

11:30 Tea With Mussolini 13:30 We Are Family 15:00 The Invisible Woman 17:00 Atlas Shrugged Part 2: The

19:00 Blue Ruin 21:00 71 23:00 Beloved

08:00 Brannigan 09:50 Still Life: A Three Pines Mystery 11:20 Shattered Glass

12:55 Big Screen 13:10 The Great Escape 16:00 Punks 17:35 Separate Tables

19:15 The Wilby Conspiracy 21:00 Into The Badlands 22:00 Into The Badlands 23:00 Into The Badlands 00:00 Blue Steel 01:40 The Big Mar

06:02 Tanked

06:49 Tanked

03:35 Tanked 05:15 Tanked

> ВВС entertainment

07:36 Call Of The Wildman

08:00 Call Of The Wildman

08:25 Treehouse Masters

03:25 The Vicar Of Dibley Christmas Special 1996 04:10 Our Queen 05:00 Teletubbies 05:25 The Green Balloon Club 05:50 Nina And The Neurons: In The Lab

06:05 Nuzzle & Scratch: Frock n

19:40 Johnny Test 19:51 Adventure Time 20:15 Steven Universe 20:40 Teen Titans Go! 21:25 Ben 10: Omniverse 22:15 Uncle Grandpa 22:40 Adventure Time

03:40 Serial Killer Profile 05:25 My Ghost Story 06:15 Crimes That Shook Britain

07:05 The First 48 10:00 Nightmare In Suburbia 16:00 I Killed My BFF

20:00 Killers: Behind The Myth 21:00 Killers: Behind The Myth 22:00 Killers: Behind The Myth



CLASSIFIEDS

Kuwait Times

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2015





KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (24/12/2015 TO 30/12/2015)

CUADOIA 1	
SHARQIA-1	11.45 004
THE PEANUTS MOVIE	11:45 AM
THE PEANUTS MOVIE	1:45 PM
THE PEANUTS MOVIE	4:00 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	6:00 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	9:00 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	12:05 AM
SHARQIA-2	
POINT BREAK	12:45 PM
POINT BREAK	3:00 PM
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	5:15 PM
POINT BREAK	8:00 PM
POINT BREAK	10:15 PM
POINT BREAK	12:30 AM
SHARQIA-3	1.00 DM
KHANET EL YEK	1:00 PM
STOMPING GROUND	3:00 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR KHANET EL YEK	4:45 PM 7:00 PM
STOMPING GROUND	7:00 PM 9:00 PM
KHANET EL YEK	10:45 PM
STOMPING GROUND	12:45 AM
310MFING GROUND	12.43 AW
MUHALAB-1	
DILWALE - Hindi	11:45 AM
NARCOPOLIS	2:45 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	4:45 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	7:45 PM
NARCOPOLIS	10:45 PM
NARCOPOLIS	12:45 AM
MUHALAB-2	
MUHALAB-2 KHANET EL YEK	12:15 PM
	12:15 PM 2:15 PM
KHANET EL YEK	
KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM
KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	2:15 PM 4:15 PM
KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM
KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS SOUKHYAM - Telugu SOUKHYAM - Telugu KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM
KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS SOUKHYAM - Telugu SOUKHYAM - Telugu	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM
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	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM
KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS SOUKHYAM - Telugu SOUKHYAM - Telugu KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM
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	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM
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	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM
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	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM
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	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM
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	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM
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	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM
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	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM
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 POINT BREAK POINT BREAK THE PEANUTS MOVIE	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM
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 POINT BREAK THE PEANUTS MOVIE	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM
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 POINT BREAK POINT BREAK FANAR-1 THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM
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 POINT BREAK POINT BREAK THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK THE PEANUTS MOVIE	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM
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 POINT BREAK POINT BREAK FANAR-1 THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM 12:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM
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 POINT BREAK POINT BREAK THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM 12:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM
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 KHANET EL YEK THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM 12:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM
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 POINT BREAK THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK FANAR-1 THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 7:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM 12:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM
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 POINT BREAK POINT BREAK THE PEANUTS MOVIE EN THE PEANUTS MOVIE FOR THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 7:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM 12:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 10:00 PM
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 POINT BREAK THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK FANAR-1 THE PEANUTS MOVIE THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK THE PEANUTS MOVIE KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 7:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM 12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM 12:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM

STOMPING GROUND	5:15 PM	AVENUES-2	
NARCOPOLIS	7:00 PM	STOMPING GROUND	12:45 PM
STOMPING GROUND	9:00 PM	STOMPING GROUND	2:45 PM
NARCOPOLIS	10:45 PM	STOMPING GROUND	4:45 PM
STOMPING GROUND	12:45 AM	STOMPING GROUND	6:45 PM
		STOMPING GROUND	8:45 PM
FANAR-3		STOMPING GROUND	10:45 PM
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	12:15 PM	STOMPING GROUND	12:45 AM
DARK MOUNTAIN	3:00 PM		
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	4:45 PM	AVENUES-3	
DARK MOUNTAIN	7:30 PM	DILWALE - Hindi	11:30 AM
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	9:30 PM	DILWALE - Hindi	2:30 PM
SOUKHYAM - Telugu	3:30 PM	DILWALE - Hindi	5:45 PM
MAMA MANCHU ALLUDU KANCHU - Telugu	6:30 PM	DILWALE - Hindi	9:00 PM
SOUKHYAM - Telugu	9:30 PM	DILWALE - Hindi	12:05 AM
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	12:30 AM		
		360°- 1	
FANAR-4	12.00 DM	POINT BREAK -3D	1:15 PM
POINT BREAK -3D	12:00 PM	POINT BREAK -3D	3:45 PM
POINT BREAK	2:30 PM	POINT BREAK -3D	6:15 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR	5:00 PM	POINT BREAK	8:45 PM
POINT BREAK -3D POINT BREAK	7:15 PM 9:45 PM	POINT BREAK	11:15 PM
POINT BREAK	12:15 AM		
POINT BREAK	12.13 AIVI	360° 2	
FANAR-5		KHANET EL YEK	12:00 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	11:30 AM	KHANET EL YEK	2:15 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	2:30 PM	KHANET EL YEK	4:30 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	5:30 PM	KHANET EL YEK	6:45 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	8:30 PM	KHANET EL YEK	9:00 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	11:30 PM	KHANET EL YEK	11:15 PM
		KHANET EL YEK	1:15 AM
MARINA-1		2600 2	
DILWALE - Hindi	12:45 PM	360°- 3	44.45.444
ROOM	1:30 PM	STOMPING GROUND	11:45 AM
KHANET EL YEK	3:45 PM	STOMPING GROUND	1:45 PM
ROOM	6:00 PM	STOMPING GROUND	3:45 PM
KHANET EL YEK	8:30 PM	STOMPING GROUND STOMPING GROUND	5:45 PM 7:45 PM
KHANET EL YEK	10:30 PM	STOMPING GROUND	9:45 PM
ROOM	12:30 AM	STOMPING GROUND	9:43 PM 11:45 PM
*******		STOWIF ING GROUND	11.45 FW
MARINA-2	10.15.014	AL-KOUT.1	
POINT BREAK	12:15 PM	POINT BREAK	11:30 AM
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	2:45 PM	POINT BREAK	2:00 PM
POINT BREAK POINT BREAK	5:30 PM 8:00 PM	POINT BREAK	4:30 PM
POINT BREAK	10:15 PM	POINT BREAK	7:00 PM
POINT BREAK	12:45 AM	POINT BREAK	9:30 PM
POINT BREAK	12.45 AW	POINT BREAK	12:05 AM
MARINA-3			12.007.111
THE PEANUTS MOVIE	1:15 PM	AL-KOUT.2	
THE PEANUTS MOVIE -3D	3:15 PM	KHANET EL YEK	12:00 PM
THE GOOD DINOSAUR	5:15 PM	KHANET EL YEK	2:00 PM
THE PEANUTS MOVIE	7:30 PM	KHANET EL YEK	4:00 PM
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	9:30 PM	KHANET EL YEK	6:00 PM
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS	12:15 AM	KHANET EL YEK	8:00 PM
		KHANET EL YEK	10:00 PM
AVENUES-1		KHANET EL YEK	12:05 AM
NARCOPOLIS	1:15 PM		
NARCOPOLIS	3:30 PM	AL-KOUT.3	
NARCOPOLIS	5:45 PM	STOMPING GROUND	11:45 AM
NARCOPOLIS	8:00 PM	NARCOPOLIS	1:30 PM
NADCODOLIS	10.15 DM	CTO ADDING CDOLLIND	2 20 014

10:15 PM

12:30 AM

STOMPING GROUND

NARCOPOLIS

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.



FOR SALE

Chevy Caprice, 1994 model, white, must test. KD 700. Tel: 99058260. (C 5104) 28-12-2015

SITUATION VACANT

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 worker to help in cooking and cleaning. She must understand and speak English and her timing and salary are negotiable. Call 6641-7504. **(C 5100)** 19-12-2015

CHANGE OF NAME

Lirfan 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 Irfan Khan. (**C 5103**) 27-12-2015

I Dheemu Sudeep holder of Indian Passport No. F6768269 resident of Pulapathur (V & P) Rajampet (M), YSR Kadapa Dist, A.P., India. Now I have changed my name as Bheemu Sudeep Kumar Reddy instead of Dheemu Sudeep in future all transaction will be made in Bheemu Sudeep Kumar Reddy only. (C 5101) 21-12-2015

THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY FOR CIVIL INFORMATION

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	05:17
Shorook	06:41
Duhr:	11:50
Asr:	14:40
Maghrib:	16:58
Isha:	18:21



Flight Schedule

NARCOPOLIS

NARCOPOLIS

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

3:30 PM

5:15 PM

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers to use seats

30									95	c.b otilici b	<i>-</i> 4550	9	5 (0 05	e seats	
	Arrival Fligh	nts on Tuesday 29/12/2015		KAC	284	Dhaka	14:45		Departure Fli	ights on Tuesday 29/12/2015		MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KAC	672	Dubai	14:45	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
BBC	143	Dhaka	00:05	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05	JZR	324	Al Najaf	14:25
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05	GFA	221	Bahrain	15:00	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
		Amsterdam/Dammam		KNE	472	Jeddah	15:05					QTR	1079	Doha	15:10
KLM	411		00:20	OMA	645		15:30	MSC	404	Asyut	00:55	FDB	058		15:10
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	NIA		Muscat		JAI	573	Mumbai	00:55			Dubai	
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40		251	Alexandria	15:30	MSC	416	Sohag	01:00	AXB	394	Kozhikode	15:20
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55	KAC	562	Amman	15:40	BBC	143	Chittagong/Dhaka	01:35	FBA	832	Al Najaf	15:40
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:45	KLM	411	Amsterdam	01:35	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
DLH	635	Doha	01:35	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	KAC	283	Dhaka	02:10	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45	JAD	301	Amman	15:55	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	KAC	617	Doha	15:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	QTR	1072	Doha	16:10	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:35	KAC	613	Bahrain	15:50
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	FDB	051	Dubai	16:30	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45	KAC	773	Riyadh	15:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	16:40	KAC	381	Delhi	03:30	KAC	741	Dammam	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	RJA	640	Amman	16:55	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45	KNE	473	Jeddah	16:05
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05	KAC	542	Cairo	16:55	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:45	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:25
RJA	644	Amman	03:05	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15		644			NIA	252	Alexandria	16:30
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	OMA		Muscat	03:55	OMA	646		16:30
QTR	1076	Doha	03:10	KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	17:45	FDB	068	Dubai	04:00			Muscat	
				MSR	614	Cairo	17:50	MSR	613	Cairo	04:10	JAD	302	Amman	16:40
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20	JZR				ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:15	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25		325	Al Najaf	17:50	KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	17:30
JZR	503	Luxor	04:25	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:55	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00	JZR	238	Amman	17:30
THY	6376	Istanbul	05:05	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	THY	765	Istanbul	05:15	FDB	052	Dubai	17:35
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40	KAC	502	Beirut	18:00	JZR	560	Sohag	06:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	FDB	063	Dubai	18:05	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30	UAL	982	IAD	18:15	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	06:35	JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
BAW	157	London	06:40	JZR	177	Dubai	18:20	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
KAC	416	Jakarta/Kuala Lumpur	07:15	KAC	680	Muscat	18:25	RJA	645	Amman	07:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20	KAC	786	Jeddah	18:30	THY	771	Istanbul	07:05	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40	ABY	123	Sharjah	18:45					JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45	QTR	1080	Doha	18:55	FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10	MSR			
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50	KAC	742	Dammam	19:05	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15		615	Cairo	18:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50	KAC	614	Bahrain	19:10	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:10
OMA	641		08:00	KAC	774	Riyadh	19:25	QTR	1087	Doha	08:40	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
		Muscat		GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	BAW	156	London	08:45	ABY	124	Sharjah	19:25
KAC	354	BLR	08:15	KAC	166	Paris/Rome	19:30	SVA	513	Riyadh	08:50	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25					OMA	642	Muscat	08:55	UAL	982	Bahrain	19:30
THY	6676	Istanbul	08:30	KAC	618	Doha	19:35	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:25	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30	KAC	104	London	19:40	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	KAC	361	Colombo	20:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45	KAC	513	Tehran	09:45	KAC	351	Kochi	20:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50	MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05	KAC	101	London/New York	09:55	QTR	1081	Doha	20:50
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50	FDB	061	Dubai	20:20	KAC	541	Cairo	09:55	KAC	343	Chennai	21:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20	UAE		Dubai		MSR	607	Luxor	21:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20	FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50		856		09:55	KAC	331	Trivandrum	21:10
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:55	THY	6677	Istanbul	10:00				21:20
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55	KAC	561	Amman	10:00	OMA	648	Muscat	
IRC	6507	Shiraz	10:30	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	KAC	671	Dubai	10:05	FDB	062	Dubai	21:20
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:25	DLH	634	Doha	21:45
IRA	675	Lar	10:40	ALK	229	Colombo	21:25	KAC	501	Beirut	10:30	FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05	UAE	859	Dubai	21:40	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
RBG				GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45	KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:00	JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
	553	Alexandria	11:15	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00	QTR	1071	Doha	11:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:10
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	JZR	125	Bahrain	22:00	KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	11:25	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55					GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25	KLM	415	Amsterdam	22:05	IRC	6508	Shiraz	11:30	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25	IRA	674	Lar	11:40	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:25	RBG	554	Alexandria	11:55	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	FDB	059	Dubai	22:30	JZR	776			KAC	345	Ahmedabad	23:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	PIA	239	Sialkot	22:35			Jeddah Dubai	12:20	QTR	1083	Doha	23:05
KAC	382	Delhi	13:50	JZR	239	Amman	23:05	UAE	874	Dubai	12:30				
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	JZR	185	Dubai	23:15	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55	KLM	415	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10	UAL	981	Bahrain	23:25	KAC	679	Muscat	13:00	KAC	205	Islamabad	23:10
KAC	514	Tehran	14:10	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45	KAC	785	Jeddah	13:00	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:15
AXB	393	Kozhikode	14:20	THY	764	Istanbul	23:50	FDB	076	Dubai	13:10	KAC	411	Bangkok/Manila	23:35
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:55	MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30	FDB	060	Dubai	23:35
FBA	831	Al Najaf	14:40	MSC	403	Asyut	23:55	JZR	176	Dubai	13:45	PIA	240	Sialkot	23:35
1571	051	11ajai	1 1.40			•									



CROSSWORD 1122

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		12	13	14
15		\top		16					\top		\top		17		\top
18			19				20						21		\top
22					23	24		25				26		27	\top
		28	1	29				30	1		T				
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38		39			40		41			42			43		\top
44						45		46	47				48		\top
49				50	51			52	T		53	54			\top
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58		1	+	T			59		1			60			\top
			61	T							62				
63	64	65		T		66		67		68			69	70	71
72					73		74			75					\top
76		\top		77					78		\top		79		\top
80		T		81	+	+		T	+		T		82	+	+

ACROSS

- 1. A doctor's degree in education.
- 4. The wife or widow of a czar.
- 12. The compass point that is one point south of due east. 15. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- 16. A chain of mountains between France and Spain.
- 17. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- 18. Having short sharp turns or angles n. 20. Volatile liquid distilled from turpentine
- oleoresin. 21. A master's degree in business.
- 22. Tropical starchy tuberous root. 23. A soft gray ductile metallic element
- used in alloys. 25. A constellation in the southern hemi-
- sphere near Orion and Columba. 27. The blood group whose red cells carry
- both the A and B antigens. 28. Be in accord.
- 30. A compound that exists in forms having different arrangements of atoms but the same molecular weight.
- 31. A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neu-
- 33. Avatar of Vishnu.
- 34. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- 35. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- 38. Resembling or similar.
- 40. A legal document codifying the result of deliberations of a committee or society or legislative body.
- 44. A person regarded as arrogant and annoying.
- 45. United States writer noted for his stories about life during the California gold rush (1836-1902).
- 48. The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on. 49. An ester of adenosine that is converted to ATP for energy storage.
- 52. Pause or hold back in uncertainty or unwillingness.
- 55. Having the hair or wool cut or clipped off as if with shears or clippers.
- 57. Called forth from a latent or potential state by stimulation.
- 58. A geographical area and former kingdom in northeastern India in the Himalaya Mountains between Nepal and Bhutan.
- 60. Suggestive of the supernatural.
- 61. (informal) Of the highest quality. 63. Bark rich in tannin.

ple or culture or geography).

- 72. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its peo-
- 73. A sock with a separation for the big toe.
- 75. Harmony of people's opinions or actions or characters.
- 76. The upper side of the thighs of a seated
- person.
- 79. The cry made by sheep. 80. A loose sleeveless outer garment made
- from aba cloth. 81. A great raia.
- 82. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.

DOWN

- 1. The feeling of distress and disbelief that you have when something bad happens accidentally.
- 2. A town in north central Oklahoma. 3. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De
- 4. An accountant certified by the state. 5. Type genus of the family
- Zygnemataceae. 6. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- 7. Of flax, hemp, or jute, so as to promote loosening of the fibers form the woody tis-
- 8. Used to manufacture fructose and in assessing kidney function.
- 9. Indian nun and missionary (born in Albania) dedicated to helping the poor in India (1910-1997).
- 10. United States comedian.
- 11. Accepted as real or true without proof.
- 12. Any of various trees of the genus Ulmus. 13. A small cake leavened with yeast.
- 14. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- 19. The capital of Croatia.
- 24. On a beach.
- 26. Joint consisting of a line formed by joining two pieces.
- 29. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in ura-
- 32. The Indic language of the Sindhi people. 36. A bowl-shaped opening at the top of a
- volcano. 37. Act of correcting an error or a fault or an
- 39. 100 kopecks equal 1 ruble. 41. A hard gray lustrous metallic element
- 42. (Norse mythology) The chief race of
- gods living at Asgard. 43. Feeling or showing extreme anger. 46. Fertility goddess in ancient Greek
- mythology. 47. A member of the people in southeast-
- ern India (Andhra Pradesh) who speak the Telugu language. 50. Any plant of the genus Erica.
- 51. Proboscis worms.
- 53. Being nine more than ninety. 54. Bound or secured closely.
- 56. Jordan's port. 59. A unit of magnetomotive force equal to
- 0.7958 ampere-turns. 62. Genus of erect herbs of the Middle East
- having showy flowers.
- 64. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- 65. Type genus of the Nepidae.
- 66. The 11th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. 67. The basic unit of money in Ethiopia.
- 68. A pilgrimage to Mecca.
- 69. A desert in central Asia.
- 70. A steep rugged rock or cliff. 71. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- 74. A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur. 77. A unit of luminous flux equal to the
- amount of light given out through a solid angle of 1 steradian by a point source of 1 candela intensity radiating uniformly in all
- 78. A state in midwestern United States.

Yesterday's Solution

P	0	A		S	Е	L	F	S	A	M	Е		N	A	P
Е	S	R		Е	L	Α	M	I	T	I	С		Α	R	Α
С	Н	Α	L	K		M		Α	T	T	О	R	N	Е	Y
S	Α	В	Α	Н	Α	N		L	I		L	Е	Α	S	Е
			K	Е	В	Α	В		С	Н	О	С	K		
S	Н	Α	S	T	Α			T	Α	Е	G	U		T	В
Н	Е	T	Н		N	Е	О			L	I	S	P	Е	R
Α	G		M	Α	D			D	R	Α	С	A	Е	N	Α
M	Α	R	I	С	О	P	Α		F			N	Α	R	С
Е	R	Α		Α	N	Α	S			Е	N	T	R	Е	Е
D	I	R	Α	С		В	Н	Α	G	Α			L	С	D
		Е	R	I	С	Α		D	Α	С	Н	Α			
M	Α	F	I	Α			M	Α	T	Н		В	Α	Α	L
Ι	В	I	S		U	S	Α	G	Е		В	Α	В	K	Α
M	Е	Е	Т		F	О	L	I	Α	G	Е		О	Н	M
Е	D	D	A		A	S	S	0	U	A	N		R	A	P

STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)

ou won't have much of an opportunity to rest today if you left too many tasks undone yesterday. Nothing is to be gained by worrying about the outcome; instead, just get busy with your chores right off the bat. But even if you don't have any pressing obligations to fulfill now, you might still be too serious-minded to completely chill out. Thankfully, there will be plenty of time to play later on when you're in the mood. The math is simple; the sooner you get started with what's on your plate, the more likely you are to finish.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Although you're distracted by the pursuit of pleasure now, you might need to wait until a later date to actually obtain your object of desire. In the meantime, it's prudent to direct your attention to more mundane tasks. You're better off setting a measurable goal early in the day and then diligently tracking your progress. Even if you would be happier doing something else today, you can still derive sweet satisfaction from your list of accomplishments. Save the fun and games for when you can play without guilt.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Of course, you know that you should be grateful for the many blessings in your life, but you can't avoid feeling annoyed if you're blocked from chasing your dreams today. Your natural tendency is to sow your ideas like Johnny Appleseed; however, it's more useful now to keep them to yourself until you are certain you have found fertile ground. Even after testing the soil and waiting for the right temperature, take your time to share your thoughts and carefully nurture them until they reach fruition.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You could be overly protective of those you love as you attempt to balance your concerns with their needs. You might not even notice that you have overstepped your role in your haste to do the right thing. Although you want to initiate action for someone else's benefit, consider that your interference may not be in their interest. Sometimes a temporary setback or emotional hurt is the best teacher even if it is hard to witness. Taking responsibility for your actions inspires others to do the



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your life may already be in a state of flux now that a significant cycle is reaching a turning point. You know you need to narrow your focus, but you're receiving mixed signals from the cosmos. Instead of closing down your mind in fear of making the wrong choice, visualize all the things that make your heart happy. You don't have to do anything at all about your fantasies today if you commit to executing your new strategy tomorrow. Your dreams are the roots of your future.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your creative juices are flowing and your drive for self-expression is strong, but you might not be confident enough to fully trust your impulses today. Instead of taking an unnecessary risk, play things more conservatively for now. After all, you're not interested in an easy come, easy go solution. Demonstrate your wisdom by building on your previous accomplishments while still progressing on your long-term goals.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Hawaii

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 48 letters spell a secret message

Μ	Т	Н	S	Ε	Е	W	Α	L	0	0	Н	Α	K	R	Ε	S	Α	U	Т
U	R	R	Ε	Е	0	Ν	М	Α	Μ	Ν	G	Т	L	Υ	Т	S	L	Κ	R
Н	Т	Α	Ρ	Н	0	0	Α	Α	L	Ν	1	Ρ	0	U	R	U	Α	Е	0
Α	Т	Ρ	W	Α	L	Ν	Ν	-1	-1	0	E	Е	Ν	U	E	R	Ν	L	Ρ
0	0	Ν	-1	0	С	Т	Α	L	1	Α	Н	Α	S	S	R	F	А	Ε	1
Ε	Т	G	K	Ν	Α	-	Е	С	R	Α	1	Α	Е	С	Α	Ι	-1	L	С
Ν	R	Α	Α	R	Ε	K	F	L	L	Μ	W	Υ	L	U	G	Ν	S	Е	Α
Α	1	U	Α	L	R	Α	Н	1	Α	0	Α	Α	Α	В	Ν	G	D	Т	L
С	Κ	Υ	L	0	Ε	Α	Ρ	D	С	В	٧	L	Н	Α	1	Κ	Ε	-1	S
R	S	Ν	Ν	U	R	Ρ	А	Ρ	Α	0	1	Т	W	D	K	0	Ε	S	Т
Α	S	S	-1	В	L	С	-	E	L	K	С	Т	K	1	А	Ν	Ε	L	R
G	S	Е	0	1	Α	0	М	Н	1	E	٧	Е	С	٧	Υ	Α	F	Α	0
U	А	R	R	М	Н	1	Ν	K	С	Α	S	S	Α	1	А	С	F	Ν	S
S	R	1	Ν	S	Α	Α	-	0	С	R	Т	Н	В	Ν	Κ	0	0	D	E
Ε	G	Н	Т	W	Α	Α	U	А	Н	W	Α	Α	Ρ	G	1	Α	С	S	R
W	Н	Α	L	Е	W	Α	Т	С	Н	-1	Ν	G	М	1	А	S	U	Ν	Α
L	Т	S	Α	0	С	-	L	Α	Ρ	Α	Ν	L	U	Α	U	Т	Ρ	Α	Н
Ε	Α	С	Α	Ν	0	E		Ν	G	В	S	Ε	Н	С	Α	Ε	В	Ε	-1
Н	U	L	Α	Ν	Т	Ν	0	R	Т	Н	S	Н	0	R	E	1	U	Α	Μ

ALOHA ARCHIPELAGO **BEACHES** CANOEING COFFEE LANA'I GRASS SKIRT HAWAIIAN

IUMPBACK WHALES

ISLANDS

MAUI

NAPALI COAST

KAHO'OLAWE NI'IHAU KAUA'I KAYAKING NORTH SHORE O'AHU KONA COAST PACIFIC OCEAN PEARL HARBOR PINEAPPLES MACADAMIA NUTS RESORTS MANTA RAYS SCUBA DIVING

TOURISTS UKELELE

VOLCANOES WAIMEA BAY WARM WHALE WATCHING

SUGARCANE

Libra (September 23-October 22)

Although you're quite adept at balancing work and play, relaxing can be challenging today until you complete your unfinished business. Free-floating anxiety may throw you off schedule now, especially if you believe that you are running out of time. Fortunately, an impending deadline is more flexible than you think; instead of wasting your energy on panic and despair, just breathe deeply and continue doing the very best job you can. A moment or two of meditation is the fastest trick to regain-



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

People may be making too many demands on your time these days. They might not think twice before asking you for what they want, even if their neediness poses a major inconvenience. It's hard to tell if your associates are aware of the impact of their behavior, so you can't really accuse them of being selfish. However, your loyalty runs deep enough that if a friend requests your help now, you will be there in an instant. Follow your instincts today, but remember that setting healthy boundaries won't detract from supporting those you love.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You're so concerned now about what others think of you today that you tiptoe around deciding what is appropriate in your current social sphere. However, you're not any less confident of your judgment just because it differs from the crowd. But you really want to be a team player and will sacrifice some of your personal needs now for the good of the family, group, or community. Honorable intentions bring positive results.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You might be feeling a bit ornery today, especially if an acquaintance is pushing your buttons. You're short on patience, especially when it comes to situations that aren't your immediate concern. You're not willing to waste your time on trivial matters just because someone else does. But don't be too quick to judge others; politely playing within the rules of social etiquette now will serve you well. Kindness is key.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You're likely to jump to conclusions now, unless you consciously slow down your mental process. But there's a special trick to making this proactive strategy work; you don't have to change the speed of your thinking. Instead, just increase the amount of time between a thought and the moment you respond. You'll be surprised with the difference you can make if you slowly count to ten before saying a word. A moment of patience in the height of emotion saves many moments of regret.

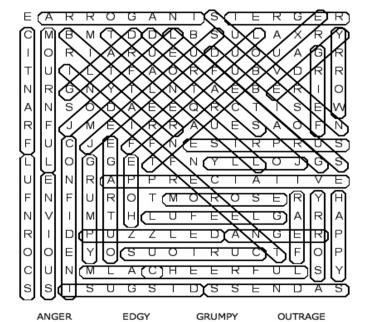


Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Someone you admire may stubbornly stand in the way of your satisfaction today, and you might not even have a clue as to their motives. Your first impulse is to ignore the whole situation or just laugh it off to reduce the pressure. But instead of making light of a potential problem, find the courage to initiate a conversation in a nonthreatening manner. Nearly all complicated dynamics are easier to resolve once you commit to handling it together. Just remember that it takes two willing participants to

Yesterday's Solution

Moods & Emotions 3



ANGER APPRECIATIVE ARROGANT CALM CHEERFUL CONFIDENT **CURIOUS**

DISGUST

DUBIOUS

ENVIOUS EXUBERANT FRANTIC FRETFUL GLAD GLEEFUL **GRATEFUL** GRIEF

HAPPY HOPE INDIFFERENT **JEALOUS** JOLLY JOYFUL MOROSE MOURNFUL **NERVOUS**

OUTRAGE PUZZLED REGRET SADNESS SCARED SCORNFUL SORRY SURPRISE TRANQUIL WORRY

The hidden word is: EMBARRASSMENT

Daily SuDoku

		4	1		3			7
3					2	9		
	5		6					
6	3			2	5			9
1		2	7	4	9	5		6 2
1 5			3	1			7	2
					1		5	
		6	5 9					1
2			9		7	3		

Yesterday's Solution



easy

hard

Liberia

Libya

Lithuania

00961

00231

00218

00370

Yugoslavia

Zambia

Zimbabwe

00967

00381

00260

00263

Sabah Hospital

Amiri Hospital

Chest Hospital

Adan Hospital

Ibn Sina Hospital

Al-Razi Hospital

Kaizen center

Rawda

Adaliya

Khaldiya

Shamiya

Shuwaikh

Nuzha

Qadsiya

Dasmah

Shaab

Qibla

Mirqab

Sharq

Salmiya

Jabriya

Bayan

Mishref

Sabah

Jahra

W Hawally

New Jahra

West Jahra

South Jahra

North Jahra

North Jleeb

Ardhiya

Firdous

Omariya

N Khaitan

Fintas

Bneid Al-Gar

Ayoun Al-Qibla

Maidan Hawally

Abdullah Salem

Industrial Shuwaikh

Kaifan

Physiotherapy Hospital

Maternity Hospital

Farwaniya Hospital

Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital

INFORMATION

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

Hospitals

Clinics

24812000

22450005

24843100

25312700

24849400

24892010

23940620

24840300

24846000

24874330/9

25716707

22517733

22517144

24848075

24849807

24848913

24814507

22549134

22526804

24814764

22515088

22532265

22531908

22518752

22459381

22451082

22456536

22465401

25746401

25316254

25623444

25388462

25381200

22630786

24810221

24770319

24575755

24772608

24775066

24775992

24311795

24884079

24892674

24719048

24710044

23900322

Soor Center

Tel: 2290-1677

Fax: 2290 1688

PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION

METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630 Fax: (+965) 24348714 www.met.gov.kw

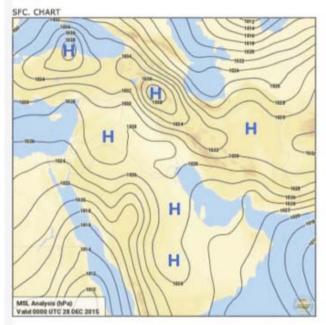
no warnings or weather watches



xpe	ected	Weather	tor	the	Next	24	Hours
ssued	28/12/	2015-07:00 LT	UTC	+3hr			

Max Temperature 20 °C

By Day : Sunny with variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h By Night : Cold with light to moderate north westerly to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h



Fou	r-Day	Forecast

	lucaudy	rreunesuay	Indisuay	rimay
	*	*	*	*
Expected Weather	clouds to increase + scattered rain later on	cloudy + scattered rain	sunny + scattered clouds	partly cloudy + scattered rain
Min Temp °C	05	08	06	06
Max Temp °C	18	16	17	17
Wind Direction	variable	south easterly changing to north westerly later on	north westerly changing to south easterly later on	south easterly changing to south westerly later on
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 20	15 - 40	08 - 28	15 - 40

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	10	19
KUWAIT AIRPORT	05	20
ABDALY	05	18
BUBYAN	07	18
JAHRA	07	20
FAILAKA ISLAND	06	17
SALMIYAH	13	17
AHMADI	12	17
JAL ALIYAH	06	18
QAROH ISLAND	16	17
UMM AL-MARADEM	16	18
NUWAISIB	08	21
WAFRA	04	20
MANAGISH	06	18
SALMY	05	17
MUTRIBA	05	19

Recorded	Yesterday at Kur	wait Airport
Max Temp	(°C)	19
Min Temp	(°C)	04
Max Rel H	um (%)	100
Min Rel Hi	um (%)	26
Max Wind and Direct	Speed (km/h) ion	25 NW
TOTAL RA	INFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm
N.	Sunrise	06:41

16:58

Prayer Times	
Fajr	05:16
Sunrise	06:41
Zuhr	11:49
Asr	14:39
Sunset	16:58
Isha	18:20



PRIVATE CLINICS

Opinina iniologi.			
Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor	25622444		
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222		
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171		
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999		
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700		
Dr Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223		
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223		
Ear, Nose & Throat	(ENT)		
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510		
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660		
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478		
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996		
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daaory	25731988		
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166		
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426		
General Practition	ners		
Dr. Mohamme Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123		
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312		
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem	23926920		
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465		
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528		
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781		
Dr. Dina Abidallah Al-Refae	25333501		
Urologists			
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534		
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955		
Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awad	i 22616660		
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120		
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427		

Psychologists

/Psychotherapists

Plastic Surgeons			
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272		
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700		
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60		
Family Doc	tor		
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581		
Psychiatris	its		
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047		
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0		
Gynaecologists & Ol	bstetricians		
DrAdrian arbe	23729596/23729581		
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321		
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539		
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami	25343406		
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272		
Dr. Salem soso	22618787		
General Surg	eons		
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044		
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Bash	er 25327148		
Internists, Chest & Heart			
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939		
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300		
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004		
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515		
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446		
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3		

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raediatricians			
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898		
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300		
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444		
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099		
Dr. Snaa Maaroof	25713514		
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100		
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282		
Dermatolog	ıy		
Dr. Mohammed Salam			
Bern University	23845955		
Dentists			
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581		
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2		
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226		
Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer	22561444		
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557		
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888		
Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan	25653755		
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111		
Neurologists			
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324		
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875		
Gastrologists			
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464		
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030		
Dr. Foad Abidallah Al-Ali	22633135		

Kaizen center

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Noor Clinic

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	Endocrinologi :	st		
_	Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330		
	Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari 25658888			
	Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr 25329924			
	Physiotherapists 8	&VD		
	Dr. Deyaa Shehab 25722291			
	Dr. Musaed Faraj Khamees	22666288		
	Rheumatologists:			
,	Dr. Adel Al-Awadi 25330060			
81	Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290		
	Internist, Chest & I	leart		
	Internist, Chest & I	Heart 24555050 Ext 210		
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	DR.Mohammes Akkad Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCPC, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicir Head, Division of Cardiology	24555050 Ext 210 ne 25339667		
	DR.Mohammes Akkad Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCPC, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicir Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	24555050 Ext 210 ne 25339667		

William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677

Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677

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INTERNAT CALL		i S	7
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Argentina Armenia	0054 00374	Malaysia Maldives	0060 00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
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Benin	00229	Moldova	00373
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Brunei	00673	Namibia	00264
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Croatia	00385	Papua New Guinea	00675
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Czech Republic Denmark	00420 0045	Poland	0048 00351
Diego Garcia	00246	Puerto Rico	00351
Djibouti	00253	Qatar	00974
Dominican Republic	001767 001809	Romania Russian Federation	0040 007
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Egypt El Salvador	0020 00503	Saint Helena Saint Kitts	00290 001869
England (UK)	0044	Saint Lucia	001758
Equatorial Guinea Eritrea	00240 00291	Saint Pierre Saint Vincent	00508 001784
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Ethiopia Falkland Islands	00251 00500	Samoa West San Marino	00685 00378
Faroe Islands	00298	Sao Tone	00239
Fiji Finland	00679 00358	Saudi Arabia Scotland (UK)	00966 0044
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Germany	0049	Solomon Islands	00677
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Greece	0030	South Korea	0027
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Guadeloupe	00590	Sudan	00249
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Guinea	00224	Sweden	00268
Guyana Haiti	00592 00509	Switzerland Syria	0041 00963
Holland (Netherlands)		Serbia	00381
Honduras	00504	Taiwan	00886
Hong Kong Hungary	00852 0036	Tanzania Thailand	00255 0066
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Toga	00228
Iceland India	00354 0091	Tonga Tokelau	00676 00690
Indian Ocean	00873	Trinidad	001868
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Iraq	00964	Tuvalu	00688
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Fashion







Models present creations of Pakistani designer FHS by HUB at the Karachi Fashion Week men's in Karachi. — AP/AFP photos

KARACHI MEN'S FASHION WEEK









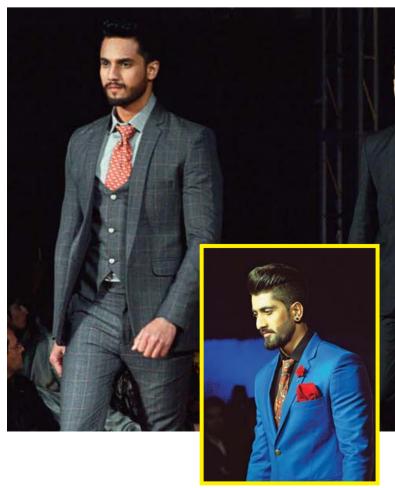
Models present creations of Pakistani designer Umar Saeed.





Models present creations of Pakistani designer Deepak and Fahad.







Models present creations of Pakistani designer Emraan Rajput.



Pakistani actor and TV host Faisal Qureshi presents creations of designer Emraan Rajput.

Music & Movies

'Come Together' on top as Beatles start streaming

streaming and listeners have an early verdict-"Come Together" is their favorite song from the Fab Four. The best-selling band in history on Thursday ended a long boycott and made its catalog available through streaming, the fast-growing sector of on-demand online music. Spotify, the largest streaming service, said that fans in the first three days had streamed Beatles songs 70 million timeswhich means that on average every user of the site listened to one Beatles song around the Christmas holiday.

"Come Together" was well ahead as the most popular song, with more than 2.3 million streams as of early Monday on Spotify. While the company did not offer analysis, the bluesy rock song from 1969 was the opener on "Abbey Road," The Beatles' best-selling album, so it may have benefited from listeners who immediately hit play on the album. "Here Comes the Sun," also off "Abbey Road," was also among the most listened although it was outpaced by two other Beatles tunes with themes of hope-"Let It Be" and "Hey Jude."

Spotify said that 65 percent of its Beatles listeners were under age 34 — too young to have direct memories of the band that broke up in 1970. "We're helping introduce a new generation of fans to the most important band in hisposting. Spotify has been beset by criticism by artists, notably Taylor Swift, who argue that the streaming service does not pay back enough to artists. The company has disputed the charges and tried to portray streaming as a rare source of growth in a largely stagnant music industry.

Ek, 32, described The Beatles' arrival on Spotify as a "personal triumph" in light of the Swedish entrepreneur's own childhood. "My grandmother was into jazz and my grandfather was an opera singer. The one thing in my youth that everyone in my family-my mom, uncle, aunt and grandparents-could all agree on musically was The Beatles," he wrote. Unlike a growing number of artists who have forged exclusive deals, The Beatles are streaming on all major services including Apple Music, Deezer, Google Play Music, Rhapsody and Tidal. — AFP

> Beatles dolls are displayed, during an auction preview in Beverly Hills, California, in this September 9, 2015, file photo. — AFP



This file photo taken on February 13, 1964 shows Fritz Bauer (center), German general prosecutor, giving a press conference on the death of so-called Euthanasie Professor, German psychiatrist and Nazi Werner Heyde. — AFP photos

German cinema rediscovers Nazi hunter Fritz Bauer

th two new films, German cinema has rediscovered the country's fiercest Nazi hunter, former prosecuagainst post-war amnesia about the Holocaust. A Jewish atheist and Social Democrat who spent time in a Nazi concentration camp before going into war-time exile, Bauer became "the most hated lawyer in Germany" after World War II, one of his biographers, Ronen Steinke, told AFP. Honoring him on the big screen with the stories of his two biggest battles places him "finally back where he belongs: in the collective consciousness," said Munich daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

"Labyrinth of Lies" by Giulio Ricciarelli-



This file photo taken on November 6, 2015 shows Fritz Bauer, German general prosecutor, who was in charge of the socalled Frankfurt Auschwitz trials starting on December 20, 1963 and ending in **August 1965.**

Germany's short-listed submission for Best Foreign Language Feature at February's Oscars-describes one of Bauer's chief accomplishments, bringing to justice 22 former Auschwitz officials in the 1960s. The story focuses on a fictional young, idealistic public prosecutor who works under Bauer and fights against a conspiracy of silence and resistance in a judicial establishment still filled with ex-Nazis.

"Do you want every German to ask if their father was a murderer?" the young prosecutor is asked angrily in the movie. "Yes, that's exactly what I want," he replies firmly. "I want these lies and this silence to end." Before the 1963-65 trial in Frankfurt, "a significant proportion of Germans believed the pictures of the (concentration) camps were Allied propaganda," wrote prosecutor Erardo Cristoforo Rautenberg in news weekly Die Zeit. Bauer "wanted to break the silence on the Nazi crimes" at a time when West German society during its economic miracle years "preferred to turn the page" on the horrors of the Holocaust, said Steinke.

In enemy territory

The target of hate mail, anti-Semitic phone Bauer, honoring a man who fought—calls and a bomb threat. Bauer, then the chief prosecutor of central Hesse state in Frankfurt, was also the subject of a "neo-Nazi plot to assassinate him", said his biographer. "In the Frankfurt courtroom, dogs had to search for explosives every morning," Steinke said. A second movie, "The People vs. Fritz Bauer" by Lars Kraume, released at Switzerland's Locarno International Film Festival, tells the story of how Bauer helped track down fugitive top Nazi Adolf Eichmann, known as the "architect of the Holocaust", in Argentina.

> The film portrays Bauer aged in his fifties-a stocky figure with a white mane, gruff manner and piercing eyes behind thick glasses-also evoking his rumored homosexuality, at a time when sex between men was still punished with prison. "As soon as I come out of my office, I enter enemy territory," Bauer once said as he faced massive obstruction by lawyers who had served during the "Third Reich", according to historian Werner Renz. In 1957, in a deliberate act of "high treason" that could have landed him in jail, Bauer passed on to Israel's Mossad secret service information that led to the spectacular kidnapping of Eichmann.

Posthumous triumph

Eichmann was abducted by Israeli agents in Buenos Aires in 1960, convicted in 1961 and hanged in Israel a year later. For Bauer, it was only a partial victory: Eichmann did not face justice in Germany. Berlin had never requested the extradition of the top Nazi, whose testimony could have implicated former Nazi collaborators in high places. The influence of Bauerwho was in 1933 interned in a concentration camp and then went into exile in Denmark and Sweden during the war-has continued to grow after his death, inside the courts and

His notion that the Nazi extermination camps were "collective enterprises of death", where every "cog in the machine" shared part of the guilt, did not triumph at the Frankfurt trial. But the principle was eventually confirmed by German courts in landmark trials of former Nazi camp guards almost 50 years laterat the 2011 trial of John Demjanjuk, and in this year's trial of Oskar Groening. Bauer-a passionate teacher who passed "his confidence and hopes" onto a younger generation, according to Renz-was found dead in his bathtub in July

1968, under still unclear circumstances. At the time, "a younger generation was preparing to demand the democratization of society and a break with the authoritarian tradition of Germany", a development to which the deceased prosecutor "had contributed like no-one else," said Rautenberg. A few months later, in November 1968, a young activist called Beate Klarsfeld slapped Germany's then chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger in parliament and called him a Nazi, an act that came to symbolize the 'house-cleaning' by Germany's post-war generation against their parents. — AFP

Oscar winning cameraman Haskell Wexler dies at 93

askell Wexler, one of Hollywood's most famous and honored cinematographers and one whose innovative approach helped him win Oscars for "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" and the Woody Guthrie biopic "Bound for Glory," died Sunday. He was 93. Wexler died peacefully in his sleep, his son, Oscar-nominated sound man Jeff Wexler, told The Associated Press. A liberal activist, Wexler photographed some of the most socially relevant and influential films of the 1960s and 1970s, including the Jane Fonda-Jon Voight anti-war classic, "Coming Home," the Sidney Poitier-Rod Steiger racial drama "In the Heat of the Night" and the Oscar-winning adaptation of Ken Kesey's "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

He was also the rare cinematographer known enough to the general public to receive a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame. "He was a wonderful father. I owe most of who I am to his wisdom and guidance," said his son, nominated for Oscars himself for "Independence Day" and "The Last Samurai." "Even in an industry where, when you're working on a movie, there is not much else you can do, he was always there for me," Jeff Wexler said. Fonda praised Wexler on her Twitter account.

Favorite causes

"The brilliant, beloved Oscar-winning cinematographer, Haskell Wexler has died. He was my friend. He filmed 'Coming Home' and a documentary with me and Tom Hayden in North Vietnam in 1973. He was brave & gorgeous and I loved him," she wrote. When the elder Wexler wasn't working on big-budget studio fare, he traveled the world directing and photographing documentaries for favorite causes. His 1969 "Medium Cool" mixed documentary and dramatic elements, telling the story of a fictional television photographer (Robert Forster) who covers the violence between Chicago police and protesters at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. The real-life unrest was filmed on the spot for the movie, and its "cinema verite" approach was closely studied by aspiring filmmakers.

"I was under surveillance for the entire seven weeks I was in Chicago, by the police, the Army and the Secret Service," Wexler once



In this Nov 2, 2009, file photo, cinematographer Haskell Wexler arrives at a premiere in Los Angeles.

told a reporter. Throughout his career, Wexler was noted for his versatile and intuitive approach. For "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf," the last film to receive an Oscar for best black and white cinematography, he used handheld cameras to capture the tension of the tirades between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. For "In the Heat of the Night," he put silks over the tops of sets and aimed lights at their centers. His aim was to contribute to the tension between Poitier's big-city black detective and Steiger's Southern white lawman.

American policy

"American Graffiti," he hosed down the streets to achieve a moody, reflective style. He helped give Terence Malick's "Days of Heaven" a hazy, dreamlike atmosphere. Wexler was also noted for his clashes with directors. Francis Ford Coppola fired him during the filming of "The Conversation." Milos Forman dropped him during the filming of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" and Wexler shared the cinematography credit with Bill Butler.

"I don't think there's a movie I've been on that I didn't think I could direct better," he said in 2005. For one of his documentaries, 2006's 'Who Needs Sleep?" Wexler turned his attention to the film industry itself, decrying the long hours endured by Hollywood set workers. It was inspired by the death of a worker who fell asleep driving his car after a 19-hour stint on a movie set. —AP

Zhang Ziyi gives birth to baby girl

hinese actress Zhang Ziyi, who gained international fame for her role in "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," posted a photo of a baby's hand online yesterday to announce the arrival of her first child. Two adult hands hold the baby's hand and the caption reads: "December 27th, 2015, you, me, her ... With the birth of this little life, we have our own family. Everything went safely and smoothly. Infinite gratitude!"

Zhang's manager confirmed in a text message to The Associated Press that the 36-year-old actress had given birth following the post on the actress's Twitter-like Sina Weibo account. It is Zhang's first child, and the third for Chinese rock singer and composer Wang Feng who has two daughters from previous relationships. Zhang accepted a marriage proposal delivered by drone from Wang in February at her birthday party.

Reports said she gave birth in the United States. Zhang is one of China's biggest movie stars and catapulted to stardom in the West with the Oscar-nominated "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." A sequel is due out next year but she will not be in it. Her other English credits include "Rush Hour 2," "Memoirs of a Geisha" and "Horsemen." She also starred in the 2013 Hong Kong-Chinese acclaimed martial-arts epic "The Grandmaster," which led to several "Best Actress" trophies across Asia. Wang became a household name in China after appearing as a judge of the "Voice of China" singing show in 2013. — AP



Chinese actor Chen Xuedong, left, touches the tummy of actress and co-producer Zhang Ziyi during a press conference of their new movie 'Oh My God' in Beijing. — AP

'Force Awakens' becomes fastest movie to hit \$1bn

tar Wars: The Force Awakens" has reached \$1 billion at the box office, achieving the milestone with record-setting hyper speed. The Walt Disney Co said "The Force Awakens" crossed the billion-dollar mark Sunday, accomplishing the feat in just 12 days. The previous movie to reach \$1 billion the fastest was Universal's "Jurassic World," which did it in 13 days in June. "Jurassic World" also had the benefit of record grosses in China. "The Force Awakens" doesn't open in the world's second-largest movie market until Jan 9. JJ Abrams' installment of "Star Wars" also posted the biggest Christmas Day box office in history with \$49.3 million and the best secondweekend earnings with \$153.5 million.

"The Force Awakens" has been setting records since its debut Dec 17. It brought in a galactic \$238 million in North America over its opening weekend, besting previous record-setter "Jurassic World,"

and set international opening-weekend records in Australia, New Zealand and throughout Europe. It scored the biggest worldwide debut with \$529 million. It also topped \$100 million in IMAX screenings in 10 days, another global record.

"You almost have to rewrite all the record books for this movie," box office analyst Paul Dergarabedian of Rentrak said. "It's absolutely mind-blowing that 'Star Wars' could get to a billion dollars in 12 days and it hasn't even opened in China, the second biggest movie market in the world." The power of "Star Wars" meant the rest of the week's releases were competing for second place. That prize went to the Paramount comedy 'Daddy's Home," which opened with \$38.8 million, according to studio estimates Sunday. David O Russell's new drama starring Jennifer Lawrence, "Joy," debuted in third place with \$17.5 million.

A flurry of new films also opened in the top 10

this weekend. "Concussion," the Will Smith-NFL drama, took in \$11 million, good for sixth place, followed by the financial-crisis saga "The Big Short," which collected \$10.5 million. The remake of "Point Break" opened with \$10.2 million. And Quentin Tarantino's latest film, "The Hateful Eight," debuted in 10th place with \$4.5 million. A juggernaut like "Star Wars" empowers the entire industry, Dergarabedian said. "It's great for the audiences, great for studios and theater owners in particular who can point to this and say the movie theater industry is as viable and relevant as it's ever been,"

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included.

he said.

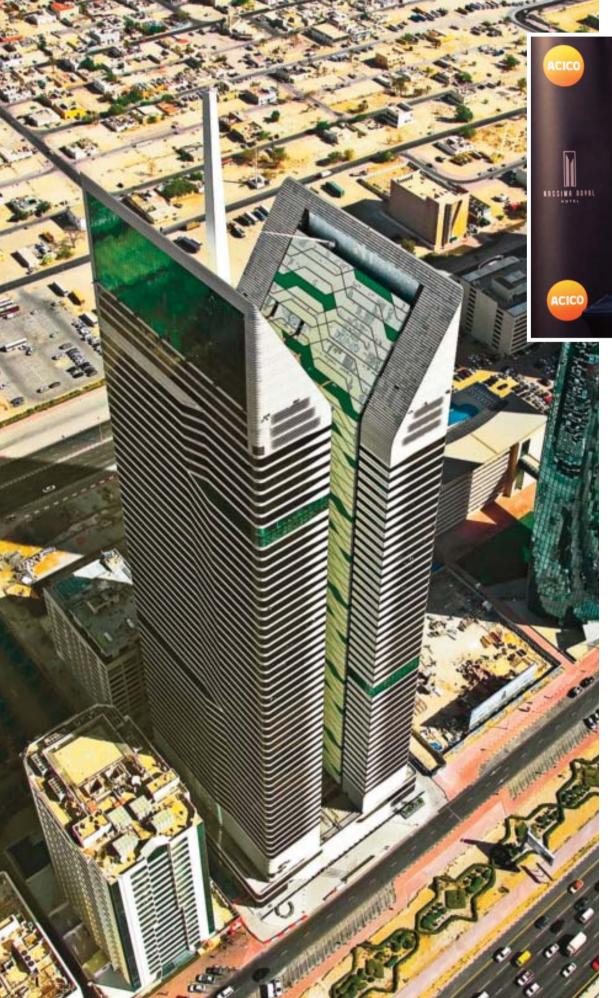
- "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," \$153.5 million (\$133.3 international).
- "Daddy's Home," \$38.8 million (\$4.4 million). "Joy," \$17.5 million (\$2 million international).
- "Sisters," \$13.9 million (\$300,000 international). "Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip,"
- \$12.7 million (\$8.1 million international). "Concussion," \$11 million.
- "The Big Short," \$10.5 million (\$1.4 million international).
- "Point Break," \$10.2 million (\$2 million). "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay-Part 2," \$5.3
- million (\$6.4 million). 10. "The Hateful Eight," \$4.5 million. — AP



From left, director JJ Abrams, producer Kathleen Kennedy, actress Daisy Ridley and actor John Boyega pose with droids character BB-8 and R2-D2 on stage during the premiere of 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' in Shanghai, China, Sunday.—AP



ACICO-Hotels sector launches Nassima Royal



Nabil Al-Khaled and Cornelia Erhardt during press conference

n the presence of elite Kuwaiti media and journalists, ACICO's hotels sector proudly announced the launch of its new luxury brand Nassima Royal, situated in the heart of the cosmopolitan city of Dubai. The announcement came during a press conference held on Sunday Dec 20, 2015 at Nassima Royal Hotel hosted by ACICO's hotels sector and headed by its Cheif Operating Officer Nabil Al-Khaled, who defined the project as "the core investment of the group in the emirate of Dubai" due to an increase in the number of tourists within the region, rising to more than 12 million in 2014 alone as stated by officials of the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing.

ACICO is a listed company with a broad portfolio of activities and interests. Established in 1990, it provides construction services across the GCC real estate spectrum as well as manufacturing building materials. The company's real estate portfolio includes a collection of properties in Dubai and Fujairah. During the press conference, Khaled highlighted "the entry into the luxurious hospitality market came after detailed feasibility studies and an analysis about the future growth in tourist travel trends".

Alliance

He expressed pride in the alliance of Nassima Royal brand ambassadors.

Hotel and Nassima Tower Hotel Apartments, which will strengthen and extend their current brand identity to reinforce their market position. ACICO Group is keen to invest and grow within the Gulf region while aiming to diversify in various sectors and areas. It continues to search for high yielding investment opportunities in stable markets such as those already achieved in Dubai and Fujairah. Khaled stated that "this entity will soon become a milestone in the field of tourism in Dubai".

"We are pleased to announce the opening of Nassima Royal. We now look forward to taking the property to the next level and creating the excellence that is truly is 'The Heart of Luxury," said General Manager Cornelia Erhardt.

Nassima Royal is an iconic architectural masterpiece fitted and finished to the highest level in order to differentiate it from other hospitality destinations within the region and combines all of the essential key elements within the business and leisure industry that emphasize on the success of the project. The Nassima Royal Brand represents a unique and lifestyle experience featuring impeccable design, exceptional cuisine and a refined level of hospitality in addition to offering exceptionally high levels of service, delivered by genuine and passionate brand ambassadors















Winning Combination

Both magnificent properties have 600 luxurious guestrooms, suites and luxury apartments which combine elegance with refined style and technology, creating the ultimate in comfort. The spacious rooms have breathtaking panoramic views of either the vibrant Sheikh Zayed Road or the Gulf, all of which are furnished with an excellent assortment of high-quality room amenities.

A winning combination of form and function, the property features the most unique meeting space in the city. An exclusive state-of-the-art modern space named Origami creates an authentic ambiance in addition to a further 18 meeting rooms. The property offers a diverse array of traditional and authentic cuisines including TRE, which offers fine-dining Italian cuisine.

In order to continue to expand, strengthen the brand and deliver an exemplary guest experience, ACICO is currently enhancing its properties facilities which will include a contemporary remodeling of the lobby space in the coming New Year. As a result of the above mentioned moves and rebranding of Nassima Royal Hotel, the property was approached by The Preferred Hotel & Resorts LVX Collection, which is responsible for representing renowned properties that feature the finest accommodations coupled with attentive, engaging and exclusive personal service, and is now proud to have Nassima Royal Hotel as part of its prestigious network.

For more information please contact Tel: **22969899** Website: www.nassimaroyalhotel.com





















A picture taken on December 27, 2015 shows a caravan of camels crossing the Liwa Oasis, southwest of the Emirati capital, Abu Dhabi, during the Dhafra Camel 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

Joy for Berlin family as cat returns for Christmas

and white cat which went missing in the German capital in 2008. "A family from Berlin-Charlottenburg (neighborhood) this year experienced a Christmas story with a particularly 'happy ending," announced an association for the protection of animals on Saturday.

"They learned on Christmas day that their cat Miko had been found-seven years later," said the group which runs a refuge for animals where the cat was identified. Miko had been discovered by people in Berlin's Kreuzberg neighbor-

orget the return of Star Wars. For a family in Berlin, this hood-just a few kilometers from its old home turf-and taken Christmas saw the return of Miko-their cherished black to the refuge where workers were able to contact the owners because the cat had an identity chip

> Elena Hanke was 11 years old when she searched in vain for missing Miko. Along with her father and sister Jennifer she came to the shelter to recover the long-lost pet, the association said. After years as a runway, Miko was "a bit too thin", but still healthy, the veterinarian at the refuge told the delighted family. — AFP



Elena Hanke poses for a photo with her cat named Miko at the animal refuge center in Berlin on December 26, 2105.



Abstract painter, sculptor Ellsworth Kelly dies at 92

nfluential American abstract painter and sculptor Ellsworth of Modern Art, among others over his decades-long career. "In Kelly died on Sunday, said an art gallery owner in New York. He was 92. Matthew Marks of the Matthew Marks Gallery said Kelly died of natural causes at his home in Spencertown, New York. Marks said he was told of the death by Kelly's partner, Jack Shear. Kelly was born in Newburgh, New York, in 1923 and served in the US military during World War Two. Afterward, he studied art in France for several years on the GI Bill and had his first solo show at the Galerie Arnaud Lefebvre in Paris in 1951.

He returned to New York several years later. "I think he bridged European and American modernism," Marks said. "He was a real American original." Kelly had retrospectives at New York's Guggenheim Museum and the San Francisco Museum

his work Kelly abstracts the forms in his paintings from observations of the real world, such as shadows cast by trees or the spaces between architectural elements," according to his biography on the Guggenheim's website.

He also carried out public commissions around the world, including a memorial for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Kelly, who named Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse among his influences, told the opening of a large contemporary art wing showcasing his work at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts in 2013: "I am nourished by the past, I am questioning the present, and I am stepping into the future." — Reuters

In this undated photo provided by Helen Woodward Animal Center, a man dressed as Santa Claus pets a dog named Dozer in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. For the fifth consecutive year, more than 1 million pets will have a forever home for Christmas, thanks to 4,000 shelters in 22 countries and an adoption program Blue Buffalo Home 4, the Holidays campaign started 17 years ago by Helen Woodward Animal Center president and CEO Mike Arms.—AP photos

Home for the Holidays



In this photo Rocky the Bitty Bruiser, a Chihuahua orphan



In this undated photo provided by Helen Woodward Animal Center, photos of pets, all of whom were adopted, hang from a tree in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.



In this photo Hershey, a former orphan dog, wearing a fes-