

English Children's books read more than Arabic ones

4



More than 500,000 people homeless in US

7



NFL: Jaguars edge Titans in division clash

43



150 Fils

ISLAMISTS STORM LUXURY HOTEL IN MALI; 27 KILLED

JIHADIST GROUP AL MOURABITOUN CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY



Min 11°
Max 24°



BAMAKO: Malian troops take position outside the Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako yesterday. (Inset) Malian security forces evacuate a man from an area surrounding the Radisson Blu hotel. Gunmen went on a shooting rampage at the luxury hotel in Mali's capital Bamako. — AFP

BAMAKO: At least 27 people were reported dead yesterday after Malian commandos stormed a luxury hotel in the capital Bamako with at least 170 people inside, many of them foreigners, that had been seized by Islamist gunmen. The former French colony has been battling Islamist rebels for several years, and the jihadist group Al Mourabitoun, allied to Al-Qaeda and based in the deserts of northern Mali, claimed responsibility for the attack in a tweet.

By late afternoon, ministerial adviser Amadou Sangho told the French television station BFMTV that no more hostages were being held. But a UN official said UN peacekeepers on the scene had seen 27 bodies in a preliminary count, and that a search of hotel was continuing. It was not clear whether any of the gunmen, who were said to have dug in on the seventh floor of the hotel as Special Forces advanced on them, were still active.

State television showed footage of troops in camouflage fatigues wielding AK47s in the lobby of the Radisson Blu, one of Bamako's smartest hotels and beloved of foreigners. In the background, a body lay under a brown blanket at the bottom of a flight of stairs. The peacekeepers saw 12 dead bodies in the basement of the hotel and another 15 on the second floor, the UN official said on condition of anonymity. He added that the UN troops were still helping Malian authorities search the hotel. A man working for a Belgian regional parliament was among the dead, the assembly said. Minister of Internal Security Colonel Salif Traoré said the gunmen had burst through a security barrier at 7 am, spraying the area with gunfire and shouting "Allahu Akbar", or "God is great" in Arabic.

Occasional bursts of gunfire were heard as the assailants went through the seven-storey building, room-by-room and floor-by-floor, one senior security source and a witness said. Some people were freed by the attackers after showing they could recite verses from the Quran, while others were brought out by security forces or managed to escape under their own steam. One of the rescued hostages, celebrated Guinean singer Sékouba 'Bambino' Diabate, said he had overheard two of the assailants speaking in English as they searched the room next to his. "We heard shots coming from the reception area. I didn't dare go out of my room because it felt like this wasn't just simple pistols - these were shots from military weapons," Diabate said. "The attackers went into the room next to mine. I stayed still, hidden under the bed, not making a noise," he said. "I heard them say in English 'Did you load it?', 'Let's go!'"

The raid on the hotel, which lies just west of the city centre near government ministries and diplomatic offices, came a week after Islamic State militants killed 129 people in Paris, raising fears that French nationals were being specifically targeted. Twelve Air France flight crew were in the building but all were extracted safely, the French national carrier said. A Turkish official said five of seven Turkish Airlines staff had also managed to flee. The Chinese state news agency Xinhua said three of 10 Chinese tourists caught inside had been rescued.

Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita cut short a trip to a regional summit in Chad, his office said. Northern Mali was occupied by Islamist fighters, some with links to Al-Qaeda, for most of 2012. They were driven out by a French-led military operation, but sporadic violence has continued in Mali's central belt on the southern reaches of the Sahara, and in Bamako. One security source said as many as 10 gunmen had stormed the building, although the company that runs the hotel, Rezidor Group, said it understood that there were only two attackers. Al Mourabitoun has claimed responsibility for a number of attacks in Mali, including an assault on a hotel in the town of Sevare, 600 km northeast of Bamako, in August in which 17 people including five UN staff were killed. — Reuters

JEWISH AMERICAN SPY FREED

BUTNER: Jewish American spy Jonathan Pollard was released from a US prison yesterday after serving nearly 30 years for passing American secrets to Israel, in a move welcomed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The decades-long punishment has been deemed disproportionate by the Jewish state, where Pollard is seen by some as a national hero. Netanyahu, who has long pressed for Pollard's release, said yesterday that "after three long and difficult decades Jonathan is at last reunited with his family." "The people of Israel welcome the release of Jonathan Pollard," he said.

The Pollard case has been a major bone of contention between Israel and the United States, with successive US presidents beginning with Ronald Reagan through Barack Obama refusing Pollard's early release. "As someone who raised Jonathan's case for years with successive American presidents, I had long hoped this day would come," Netanyahu said. The Federal Bureau of Prisons confirmed Pollard's release. "Jonathan Pollard is no longer in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons. He is now under the supervision of the US Probation Office," it said in a statement.

Jacques Semmelman and Eliot Lauer, Pollard's two lawyers, also confirmed to AFP the 61-year-old's pre-dawn release from a federal prison in Butner, North Carolina. Announcement of his release was made by his main support group in Israel, as well. But

despite being free, Pollard still remains barred from leaving the United States for five years. A US court jailed Pollard, a Stanford University graduate and former US Navy intelligence analyst, for life in 1987 after he pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to deliver national defense information to a foreign government.

Pollard's release on parole comes almost 30 years to the day of his arrest on November 21, 1985. Perception of Pollard, who was granted Israeli citizenship in 1995, has evolved there over the years, with rightwing activists seeking to turn him into an icon. In the United States, however, Pentagon and CIA officials are still reeling with anger from the classified defense documents that Pollard leaked. In a sign of the case's sensitivity, Netanyahu had asked his ministers to refrain from claiming a victory upon Pollard's release, according to local media.

Pollard's lawyers have shown similar discretion in recent days, refusing to give details of the prisoner's plans once he is freed. However, they have said that he has given assurances that he has a job and a place to live in the New York area. A spokesman for his Israeli supporters group had no immediate word on Pollard's whereabouts after his release. Obama's deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes said returning Pollard to Israel is an issue "Netanyahu has regularly raised." "Again the president does not have any plans to alter the terms of his parole," Rhodes said, speaking of Pollard. — AFP

CROWN PRINCE PATRONIZES HORSE FESTIVAL

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has patronized the National Arabian Horse Festival held at Bait Al-Arab (Arabian Horse Center), or Kuwait State Stud. His Highness the Crown Prince, the sports event's sponsor, will be represented, at today's conclusion ceremony due at 6 pm, by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. The festival will be capped with the Egyptian Horses Tournament today.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

— KUNA

FRANCE PRAISES KUWAITI STING AGAINST IS CELL

PARIS: France yesterday praised Kuwait for a sting operation carried out Thursday against a terrorist cell belonging to the Islamic State (IS), according to official reactions. Kuwaiti security forces busted and dismantled the IS cell, arresting a number of individuals of different Western and Arab nationalities. "We praise the results which have just been obtained in matters of the fight against terrorism" in Kuwait, French Foreign Ministry spokesman Romain Nadal said in answer to KUNA questions on the Kuwaiti operation. He said that France and Kuwait collaborate very closely in this area as in many others. "We have very high quality cooperation with Kuwait in all domains," the French spokesman remarked. France has been calling for international mobilization against IS after its terror attacks here November 13 which killed 129 people and wounded over 350. A French-sponsored UN Security Council resolution is due to be imminently submitted for a vote, calling for all countries to join the fight against the terrorist group.



French Foreign Ministry spokesman Romain Nadal

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MINISTER CALLS FOR ARAB SYSTEM TO PREVENT UNCONVENTIONAL CRIME

CAIRO: Kuwaiti Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ya'qoub Al-Sane urged doubling the Arab anti-terror effort and developing an unconventional crime prevention system. Speaking to KUNA after the conclusion of the 31st meeting of the Arab ministers of justice, Sane said the menace of terrorism poses a serious threat to the Arab region and the world at large. "The meeting focused on how to join forces to defeat terrorism which has no specific religion or nationality," he pointed out. "There is another kind of terrorism; that is the state terrorism being practiced by Israel against the Palestinian people," the minister said, noting that this is "a more disgusting and abhorring for anybody who has a grain of humanity." He called for new specific legislations that could contribute to prevention of all kinds of crimes and coordinate the efforts of other ministries, notably the ministries of the interior and the social affairs. Sane noted that the Kuwaiti delegation to the ministerial meeting proposed launching an Arab center for preventive measures, adding that the suggestion was widely welcomed. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti winner Dr Salah Al-Enezi (third from left) receives his award. — KUNA

KUWAITI INVENTORS WIN SEVERAL AWARDS AT INT'L INVENTION FAIR

KUWAIT: Five Kuwaiti inventions won awards at the 8th International Invention Fair of the Middle East (IIFME) which concluded on Thursday, said Chairman of the Scientific Club of Kuwait Ahmad Al-Manfouhi. Up to 36 works were presented, but only 20 of the inventions were registered for contest. Sixteen others were exhibited as products ready for marketing.

Five of the Kuwaiti inventions won two awards at the exhibition, Al-Manfouhi said in a yesterday, explaining that Kuwaiti institutions namely Kuwait

Foundation for Advancement of Sciences and the Scientific Club of Kuwait granted a number of the awards. "Some of the Kuwaiti improvised products are ready for marketing and await a chance from traders," he said.

The three first ranks of KFAS's award were won by Dr Salah Al-Enezi (KD 2,500) for improvising a device for measuring plastic temperature and gas absorption, Bassam Al-Rujaib (KD 1,500) for his tool that prevents seeping and algae sticking on boats and Mohammad

Al-Azmi (KD 1,000) for making a plaster for broken legs.

The Club award was won by Ahmad Al-Saleh and Nasser Al-Khalidi (\$10,000) for inventing the 'snow ball,' the simplest electronic programming unit in the world. They also won two gold medals. KFAS's Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, which presented 11 inventions, won three gold medals, three silver ones and a single bronze medal. Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) won one gold and two silver medals. — KUNA

KRCS DISTRIBUTES NECESSITIES TO SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

BEIRUT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) yesterday continued to hand out necessities to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The KRCS delivered around

950 food packages and cleaning materials to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, said KRCS envoy Ahmad Al-Faqaa. The number of Syrian

refugees in Lebanon has reached more than one million, most of them are situated in northern areas of the country. — KUNA





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ENGLISH CHILDREN'S BOOKS READ MORE THAN ARABIC ONES: AUTHORS

KUWAIT: As Kuwait International Book Fair is opening its doors to the public, expectations may grow on whether Children's books in Arabic would sell more this year than those of illustrated kids' books in English, especially since the latter have been hogging the markets for many years and have been the go-to choice for parents.

A KUNA survey concluded that 58 percent of parents encourage their kids to read in English to strengthen their command of that language since a large number of kids go to American or British schools where English is the dominant language. Even kids who do not go to these private schools, they dabble their little minds in English Children's books because of a culture based on globalization where products, movies, TV shows, magazines and little gadgets are presented in a foreign language.

Enticing presentation

Earlier this month at Sharjah International Book Fair, Kuwaiti author Hibba Meshari Hamadah said that "children in the Arab World tend to read more English kids' books because of its enticing presentation and intriguing content to the curious minds of the little ones."

Children's books in English are far more interesting because they tell a short and simple story through colorful artwork that allows kids to expand their young minds through interesting poetic language, fun alliteration and advanced vocabulary.

"Arabic Children's books; however, tend to 'preach a lot' to teach kids a moral," Arabic



KUWAIT: School children buy coloring books at a stand at Kuwait International Book Fair. — KUNA

children's books author Abir Ballan said. They are void of fun and entertainment; two elements that make books "attractive to children." "Kids want to be entertained. They want to get excited about an adventure. They want to laugh. They want to be kids. They don't want to hear morals all the time," Ballan explained. "In the primary years, the most vital task we (parents) have is to install the love of reading in children, not to teach through reading. Teaching information through reading will become a goal later on

in life. If we don't succeed in the early stage then we miss both goals (i.e. to make them become readers and learners)," she said.

Important habit

Arabic children's books author Amal Al-Randi stressed that reading is an important habit for children to acquire at a young age; hence, it is essential to provide them with books that are fun, attractive and interactive.

The quality of a book is so important for each stage in the life of a child to keep the

child entertained and interested in reading more books, Randi pointed out, noting that producing children's books are highly expensive and need extensive efforts.

Successful kid's books require three elements: good production, attractive illustrations and enticing narrative, Randi said. "A lack of any of these elements creates imbalance and a loss of its attractiveness to children. That is why English children's books are more appealing to the eye and the mind," she pointed out.

Both authors, Randi and Ballan, agreed that Arabic picture books have been increasing in the past 5 years and there are many serious attempts to produce children's books as good as the English ones. "We are on the right path to give Arab children rich and fun books," Al-Randi said; nonetheless, their mass production is not quite there yet.

On her part, Ballan said that Arabic illustrated books should be more "accessible in bookstores and available on digital platforms where kids can access them independently." Randi also explained that translated children's books from English into Arabic have been also increasing in the past 5 years. They take up 30 percent of the kids' books market than the ones originally written in Arabic.

This increasing tendency to translate books is due to its low production cost: less expensive payments for Arab authors and Arab illustrators, she said. However, Randi cautioned parents to watch for these translated books because might teach values and lessons that are contradictory to that of the Arab culture. — KUNA

ARTISTS: DRAMA SHEDS LIGHT ON PROBLEMS, SOCIAL ISSUES

KUWAIT: A host of Kuwaiti artists have stressed that the mission of TV drama is to transfer issues, problems and incidents take place in the society to audience, not to solve them. Spectators are artistic critics, they said during a seminar themed 'Gulf dramas and their role in changing the image of society,' held on the sidelines of the 40th edition of Kuwait International Book Fair, which kicked off last Wednesday and runs until November 28.

Heba Hamada, a Kuwait writer, underlined that writers should be acquainted with the society's issues, adding they seek to focus on artworks pertaining to social and daily life. Ahlam Hassan, a Kuwait actress, said that there are many burdens on authors and directors of drama as they should be keen on traditions of the Gulf societies.

Shedding light on negative aspects and issues in the society aims to raise awareness of people about them, she said, adding Ministry of Information is able to revive the missing part of the Kuwaiti drama.

Bashar Al-Kandari, a journalist, said there are some mistakes pertaining to the Kuwaiti heritage, as some non-Kuwaiti directors sometimes don't know many aspects of this heritage. The fair includes events, lectures and discussions in which several writers, journalists from Kuwait and overseas take part. — KUNA

KUWAITI-IRAQI RELATIONS DEEP-ROOTED: GOVERNOR

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations are deep-rooted and historic, said Farwaniya governor Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Sabah on Thursday. In a meeting with visiting Iraqi MP Shaalan Abdul-Jabbar Al-Karim, the governor stressed the wisdom of not ruffling up the past between the two countries especially now when the whole region is experiencing threats of terrorism and destabilization, requiring everyone to work together hand-in-hand for the security of the region.

He said Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations had been improving firmly due to the visits made by officials to each other's country in recent times. The Iraqi MP emphasized the good ties between both countries and thanked the governor for his great hospitality.

Investments

Separately, the Kurdistan Board of Investment said yesterday that Iraq's Kurdistan is eager to increase the number of Kuwaiti investments in the region. This statement came during a meeting between members of the board of investment and Kuwaiti General Consul to the region Dr Omar Al-Kanderi. Kanderi told KUNA that his meeting with the Board's Director General Dr Mukhles Murad and members focused on means to boost investment cooperation between Kuwait and the Kurdistan region.

The close proximity of Kuwait to Kurdistan made it paramount to increase investments in the region, said Kanderi who indicated that



KUWAIT: Farwaniya governor Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Sabah meets Iraqi MP Shaalan Abdul-Jabbar Al-Karim. — KUNA

there are already a number of Kuwaiti investors operating in Iraq's Kurdistan.

In 2006, the regional parliament approved the investment law facilitating business for local and foreign investors. According to recent statistics by the board foreign invest-

ments in the region had reached around \$22 billion since the investment law was approved until last year. The last statistics regarding Kuwaiti investments showed that the Gulf country had around \$1 billion worth of investments in the region. — KUNA

HEALTH MINISTRY SHOULD ANNOUNCE ANY NEW SWINE FLU CASES: ESSA

KUWAIT: The Health Ministry should announce any new case of swine flu, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa announced yesterday. Essa told KUNA that the Health Ministry should be the designated body that should announce any new cases of swine flu because some cases are discovered in health centers and hospitals than in schools.

He added that a number of parents go to health centers without notifying schools; hence, the Ministry of Education has inaccurate statistics on the number of children that catch the flu. On Thursday, four cases of swine flu were revealed in a number of public schools in Hawali and Adailiya. "Parents are the ones who notified schools about these cases so necessary precautions could go underway," he added. — KUNA

KUWAIT BACKS UP 'UMOJA'

NEW YORK: Kuwait believes that provision of leading-edge technologies to UN can make the organization better able to address the numerous challenges worldwide, said Mohammad Abdulrahman Al-Seri'e - the third secretary of Kuwait mission, on Thursday.

He was addressing the meeting of the UN General Assembly's Fifth Committee Administrative and Budgetary - being held as part of the 70th UNGA session. The session discusses the draft budget for the Enterprise Resource Planning (UMOJA) for FY 2016-2017.

The implementation of the UMOJA and other leading-edge technologies relies primarily on the UN member states' paying their respective annual contributions to the organization regularly in order to enable the UN shoulder its responsibilities effectively, Seri'e stressed.

He welcomed the progress of leveraging the system at six UN offices and departments, and 33 peacekeeping operations and diplomatic missions. He highlighted the importance of the system in promoting the performance of the UN agencies and improving their transparency and governance. This is the first time for Kuwait to take part in a UNGA Fifth Committee meeting.

Introducing his proposed \$5.5 billion budget for the work of the United Nations over the next two years on October 12, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the system encompasses the Organization's "vision and commitment to budget discipline and strict financial management."

"My proposals for the 2016-2017 program budget are built on our progress, Ban told delegates in the UN General Assembly's Fifth Committee, which focuses on administrative and budgetary issues. "In formulating the proposal before you, I continued to challenge my senior managers to find new and better ways of delivering mandates more effectively and efficiently. I urged them to rethink our business practices and embrace innovative synergies," the UN chief added.

Umoja which means 'unity' in Swahili is a complete re-working of the way the United Nations Secretariat manages its administration, in both business processes and Information Technology solutions. It will transform the UN work patterns, how it conducts its business and how it manages its resources. Umoja will be deployed to approximately 50,000 UN Staff members across the globe. It is replacing the multiple and fragmented legacy of software including IMIS, Mercury and Sun. — KUNA

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AHMADI'S MUNICIPAL TEAM CLEARS VIOLATIONS IN CAMPING AREAS

KUWAIT: A municipal team cleared violations threatening the desert environment at a number of camps in Ahmadi area, an official said yesterday. Head of the team Meshal Aba-Safa said that tickets were issued against those owning camps which are not up to environmental standards. He added that the team will continue to inspect the camping areas in Ahmadi governorate to make sure that violators are held accountable. — KUNA

Crime

Report

MAN KILLED IN KING FAHAD ROAD CRASH

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A two-vehicle collision on King Fahad Road left an unidentified person dead, as the body was recovered by the coroner. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to determine the circumstances behind the accident. In a separate incident, a 4-year-old child was rushed to Adan Hospital after he was run over by an unknown driver in front of his family's house in the Abdullah Port area.

Armed robbery

A 30-year-old citizen who works in Farwaniya prosecution told Taima police that he was robbed at gunpoint. He said that while driving on Salmi Road, he was stopped by a car with four men inside. One of the men pointed a pistol at him, then took his wallet and four mobile phones from him before they all escaped. Investigations are ongoing.

Reckless driving

Jahra police arrested several young men for reckless driving in Sulaibiya, in addition to four others for attacking police. The ministry's Relations and Security Information Department said that the suspects were charged with insulting police officers on duty and obstructing police from performing their job.



A vehicle is being impounded during a security campaign in Sulaibiya.

Fake maids' office

Residency Affairs Detectives arrested a number of people who ran a fake domestic helpers' office, where they harbored several absconding maids. The gang was led by two persons identified as Abdelhakeem and Mona, Ethiopian, and included 22 persons who were found in violation of labor regulations. They were arrested and sent to concerned authorities.

DRUG DEALER ARRESTED

KUWAIT: A man was sent to the Drugs Control General Department (DGCA) for possession of heroin with intention to sell. He was also charged with beating and insulting a public employee. Police patrol officers in Dhahar area had stopped the citizen for reckless driving, but as soon as he stopped he came out of his car and began swearing at the policemen. Twenty six capsules were found in his car.

Rock climber freed

A group of young men managed to free a Kuwaiti man's vehicle which was stuck in huge rocks in Subiya. The driver was reportedly climbing a hill when his sports-utility-vehicle (SUV) became trapped between boulders. According to a security source, the area has become popular among drivers, particular SUV owners who take rock climbing as a form of entertainment, yet risking their and people's safety in the process.

Thieves caught

Director of Ahmadi detectives department Lieutenant Colonel Omar Al-Rasheed sent four men to the public prosecution for stealing public property and selling it in Amghara. A security source said a company had complained that KD 8,000 were stolen, so Abu Hulaifa detectives were asked to handle the case. Using GPS to detect cell phone signals in the area, police identified and arrested an Asian national who lives in the same area, and he confessed that he along with three others formed a gang to steal cables. He added that they stole from at least eight sites, including the latest reported case.

Fire broke out

A fire broke out in a hall that hosted a social gathering for women, and two of them suffered smoke inhalation. They were taken to Jahra Hospital, and their conditions were described as stable. The fire had started in the buffet area, and firefighters' prompt intervention helped limit its spread.

Smuggling foiled

Customs officers at Kuwait International Airport stopped a woman's attempt to smuggle six bags of qat she hid in bags containing spices and flour. She was taken to Drugs Control General Department. The woman seemed nervous and worried upon arrival, so her luggage were searched and the qat were found.

Scam

A man accused another of swindling him after handing

him KD 225,000 to invest in goods, but he brought him items worth KD 80,000 only.

The Indian man went to Fahaheel police station and told them he agreed with a Kuwaiti national to bring goods worth KD 225,000 but he brought him items worth KD 80,000 and did not return the rest. Ahmadi detectives took over the case. Separately, a citizen accused her friend of swindling her after convincing her to open a women's beauty salon project, took KD 38,000 and disappeared. She told Sabah Al-Salem police that her friend did not answer her calls after receiving the money. Police are investigating.

Ex-wife threatened

A citizen attempted to hit his ex-wife's car then chased her to her house in Taima and waved a fire arm in front of her, according to her statements.

The woman went to Taima police station and told them that her ex-husband chased her, then made a sudden stop in front of her in an attempt to make her vehicle collide with his own.

She avoided the impact, however, then when she arrived home, he 'waved the fire arm' in front of her and escaped. Detectives are investigating.

Domestic violence

A woman accused her husband of beating and injuring her in their Sabah Al-Salem house. The woman gave police a medical report showing the injuries she sustained due to the attack. The husband is being questioned about the alleged attack. — Al-Anbaa, Al-Rai

AMIRI GRANT FOR FIELD SECURITY MEN

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department said the rewards given to field security men are gifts from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as an appreciation of their continued efforts to protect the country's security, and the achievements they made. It said this is not the first and will not be the last Amiri grant, adding that the interior ministry and its men promise His Highness to be loyal in protecting the country.

International

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Shepherd beheading adds to woes of the neglected corner of Tunisia 8

Neglect, injustice, poverty drive new Biafra protests in Nigeria 9

Boulahech: 'Cowgirl' turned suspected suicide bomber 10



WASHINGTON: A man helps his friend to pack up a sleeping bag at a tent encampment near K and 27th Street, NW in Washington, DC. The city has issued a warning to remove all personal items visible at the location after 2pm on November 20, 2015, saying the items are unlawfully occupying the public space. — AFP

MORE THAN 500,000 PEOPLE HOMELESS IN US

US CITIES DECLARE EMERGENCIES OVER THE RISE OF HOMELESSNESS

NEW YORK: More than 500,000 people - a quarter of them children - were homeless in the United States this year amid scarce affordable housing across much of the nation, according to a study released on Thursday. The report, from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), said the number was down slightly from 2014. Many US cities are confronting a sluggish economic recovery, stagnant or falling wages among the lowest-income earners and budget constraints for social welfare programs. Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, Oregon and Hawaii have all recently declared emergencies over the rise of

homelessness, and on Thursday Seattle's mayor toured a new encampment for his city's dispossessed.

"Despite national estimates, New York City continues to experience near record homelessness," said Giselle Routhier, a spokeswoman for the Coalition for the Homeless, an advocacy group. According to HUD's latest tally, nearly 565,000 people were living on the streets in cars, in homeless shelters or in subsidized transitional housing during a one-night national survey in January. Nearly one-fourth were aged 18 or under. That number was down 2 percent from the previous year's count and 11 percent from 2007, HUD said.

The actual US homeless population is likely higher than HUD's snapshot suggests because many people living without the means to put a roof over their heads are beyond the reach of the survey, sleeping on a friend's couch or a relative's basement. HUD reported separately this month that roughly 1.49 million individuals used a shelter in 2014, up 4.6 percent from 2013, agency spokeswoman Heather Fluit said. Even as homelessness has waned nationally, 17 states posted increases, including the two most populous - New York and California, up nearly 10 percent and 1.6 percent, respectively, from last year.

Thirty-three states and the District of Columbia recorded declines, with the biggest drops found in Florida, Texas, Georgia, Michigan and New Jersey. "I am glad it's trending downward, but a 2 percent change (nationally) is pretty much flat," said Nan Roman, president of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, in Washington. A lack of affordable housing, combined with slumping pay at the lower end of the US wage scale, has been cited by analysts as a driver of homelessness in a number of US cities. "We are 7 million units short of affordable housing for low-income people - that's a big gap," Roman said.— Reuters

GRIMY WATCHES, BRACELETS, PHOTOS: EVIDENCE OF BOAT MIGRANT TRAGEDIES

OVER 3,500 MIGRANTS ESTIMATED TO HAVE DIED IN 2015

PALERMO: Sandy and grimy, the watches, cell phones, family photos, \$100 bills, and passports from Pakistan, Syria and Sudan are the tattered possessions of migrants who died at sea. They offer a glimpse into the lives of a few of the 3,500 people who have died this year crossing the Mediterranean, desperate to reach Europe. Italian homicide police removed the items from the corpses of about 90 men, women and infants who perished aboard three different boats this summer. They preserved the personal effects—a beaded necklace, religious items both Christian and Muslim, a wedding picture, an Istanbul bus pass—as potential evidence to use in court against their smugglers, and to identify the corpses.

"We treat these cases as murder cases," said Giovanni Drago, a longtime member of Palermo's homicide squad which gave Reuters permission to photograph the possessions. Many of the corpses brought to Palermo had been removed from below the deck of a wooden fishing boat. Jammed together next to the motor, the migrants suffocated, autop-

sies revealed. The Africa-Italy route is the deadliest, recording more than 80 percent of the total Mediterranean migrant deaths in 2015. Italy has taken in more than 140,000 people amid the biggest immigration crisis Europe has seen since World War Two.

Escaping war, persecution or severe poverty, migrants pay from \$1,200 to \$1,600 to smugglers, according to Sicilian prosecutors, in a gamble to reach Europe in unseaworthy boats overloaded to maximize profit. After Greek officials said one of the Paris suicide bombers arrived on a migrant boat from Turkey, an increasing number of European Union countries have balked at taking in more asylum seekers, and some 25 US governors have vowed to resist hosting Syrian refugees.

But Italian authorities said that the sea route probably is too risky for well-funded and organized Islamist groups who want to efficiently sneak militants into Europe. And Italian police, who speak to survivors during their investigations, said the migrants they have met are regular people, not extremists. "They are simply people in search of a better life,"

Drago said. "They are just like us. They have the same desires and needs."

'My home was not safe'

Alpha Sesay, a 36-year-old man born in Sierra Leone, and his two-year-old daughter Prosperin survived a crossing in July, but his 30-year-old wife, Amanda, died. They were fleeing Tripoli, Libya, where he had lived for almost six years, after he said he was stabbed in the chest in his home for being a Christian. "I left Libya because I had nowhere to go. My home was not safe," Sesay said. He described how he was crammed by smugglers onto an overloaded rubber boat which began to deflate and take on water after about nine hours at sea. In charge of the vessel were two men, a Gambian and a Senegalese. "They beat people inside the boat because...some people were standing up," out of fear, Sesay said. When a rescue vessel arrived it was too late for his wife, who Sesay found lying dead. She had been beaten by the two men, he said. Several others died on the same boat, including Sesay's adult niece. — Reuters



SIDI BOUZID: Tunisians pray before the burial of 16-year-old shepherd, Mabrouk Soltani, who was slaughtered and beheaded by jihadists during his funeral in Jelma, a town in Tunisia's central governorate of Sidi Bouzid. — AFP

SHEPHERD BEHEADING ADDS TO WOES OF THE NEGLECTED CORNER OF TUNISIA

DAOUAR SLATNIYA: The beheading of a young shepherd by jihadists has aroused anger and frustration in Tunisia's Sidi Bouzid where extremist violence has compounded the woes of an impoverished region. Mabrouk Soltani, 16, was murdered as his sheep grazed on Mount Mghilla. The killers ordered a cousin, 14-year-old Choukri who witnessed the murder, to take the head wrapped in plastic to the family, according to relatives and the interior ministry. In the small village of Daouar Slatniya at the foot of the mountain, the family was horrified when the boy arrived, blood-soaked with his gruesome load. They immediately called the security forces but were left all night to their own devices, according to the family. "We called them at 5:00 pm, only to be told: 'We're not coming up.' 'Why? Because you're scared?'" said Mabrouk's brother, Mohamed Soltani, 20, in the account he gave local television broadcaster Nessma in a phone call. "It's the first time in history that someone's head

spends all night in the fridge and his body up on the mountain... Is that possible? Where's the police? Where's the army," he fumed. The morning after the murder on November 13, relatives told AFP, the family themselves braved the dangers to find Mabrouk's torso, which they discovered circled by dogs.

'A bit late'

Prime Minister Habib Essid has acknowledged the response was slow. "We have taken the necessary measures, a bit late, that's true," he said on television in the face of public alarm. Mabrouk was killed simply because he refused to hand over his flock to the jihadists and had no links to the security forces, the premier said. Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigades, the Tunisian branch of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, which last month warned civilians against passing on information to the security forces, denied its fighters were responsible for the shepherd's beheading. Last weekend, the

Tunisian army launched an operation on Mount Mghilla, killing at least one jihadist and losing a soldier. And on Saturday, Interior Minister Najem Gharsalli visited the site, only to be greeted by residents venting their fury at the prior absence of security forces and demanding they be armed to fend off the jihadists themselves.

'Outside history'

Since its 2011 revolution, Tunisia has been hit by an upsurge in jihadist violence in which dozens of police and soldiers have been killed. Fifty-nine foreign tourists have died this year in two attacks claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group. In Daouar Slatniya, the shepherd's murder has awoken a sense of abandonment in Sidi Bouzid, the same region where street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in protest at police harassment and unemployment in December 2010, igniting the so-called Arab Spring risings. —AFP

ISRAELIS, PALESTINIANS BURY THEIR DEAD AFTER SURGE IN VIOLENCE

JERUSALEM: Israelis and Palestinians buried their dead yesterday after one of the deadliest days in nearly eight weeks of lone wolf violence that is challenging Israeli security thinking. Three Israelis, an American and a Palestinian were killed on Thursday in two attacks by Palestinians in Tel Aviv and the occupied West Bank. Both assailants were arrested. The killings came after a few days of apparent calm, shattering hopes the wave of violence was subsiding.

Violence since the start of October has killed at least 86 people on the Palestinian side, including one Arab Israeli, 15 Israelis, an American and an Ethiopian. Israeli security officials quietly admit they are preparing for months of attacks while analysts said new checks will be needed to prevent further bloodshed. In Kfar Etzion south of Jerusalem, more than 1,000 mostly Orthodox Jews attended the funeral of Yaakov Don.

He was killed Thursday afternoon when an assailant opened fire from a car near a Jewish settlement block south of Jerusalem before crashing into pedestrians. In Hebron, around 2,000 Palestinian crowded outside the Al-Husseini Ibn Ali mosque to mourn Shadi Arafat, who was killed in the same attack. His brother Baha said he was hit by Israeli fire although an investigation is underway to determine the exact circumstances of his death.

Clashes between Palestinian youths and Israeli security forces erupted after the funeral. The body of the third victim, American Ezra Schwartz, is being flown back to the United States for burial. Two Israelis killed in the Tel Aviv attack when a Palestinian stormed into an office building with a knife were buried in separate funerals also on Friday.

New pressures

The Tel Aviv stabbing was the first attack to take place in Israel's commercial capital since the wave of unrest erupted in October. Analysts said it was a concerning new trend as the perpetrator had a permit to work in Israel, was married with five children and had no previous criminal record. Tens of thousands of Palestinians with work permits travel into Israel daily and are traditionally perceived as a low threat. Writing in the Israel Hayom newspaper, Yoav Limor suggested the attack may lead to tighter restrictions. "If there are more terror attacks committed by people with permits, this will necessitate, at the very least, more stringent checks," said Limor.

Benedetta Berti, senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies, said the latest attacks suggested that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's strategy for containing the violence was failing. "There has been a perception that the stabbings were going to wind down and eventually go away and this could be managed through additional deployment of troops or more checkpoints, but it has just been proven untrue," Berti said. The assailants have largely been acting alone rather than in coordination with militant parties, making it nearly impossible to predict where and when attacks will occur.

A senior military source said the security services had no previous records of over 90 percent of the attackers. Yoram Schweitzer, a former head of the Israeli army's counter-terrorism department, said it was likely such attacks would continue. "If somebody is doing an operation on a whim, with no prior planning, most probably we won't have any intelligence about it. So we have to try to defuse these operations on the ground." Berti said that for now the level of attacks was manageable, but there was pressure on the Fatah faction of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas and the Islamist Hamas movement to back the uprising. "If you start to see more organized backing then the genie is out of the bottle," she said. — AFP

NEGLECT, INJUSTICE, POVERTY DRIVE NEW BIAFRA PROTESTS IN NIGERIA

ONITSHA: Forty-five years after a brutal civil war, Nigeria is facing a new wave of protests for a separate Biafran state, driven by longstanding complaints about poverty, neglect and injustice. The impetus for the current agitation is not much different from that which led to Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu's unilateral declaration of a Republic of Biafra in 1967. The then-military governor of Nigeria's old eastern region accused the federal government of marginalizing and killing thousands of ethnic Igbos living in the north.

Some one million people died during the brutal 1967-70 conflict that followed, mainly from disease and starvation. The past few weeks have seen protests across the southeast where the Igbos are in the majority, following the arrest last month of Radio Biafra director Nnamdi Kanu. He is now facing charges of criminal conspiracy and membership of an illegal organization. Carrying Kanu's portrait, the Biafran flag and chanting freedom songs, the protesters called for his release and a separate state. One slogan read "Biafra or death".

Splinter group

Kanu, who heads the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) group, has emerged as the new face of the Biafra struggle. It was previously championed by the Movement for the Actualisation of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), formed in 1999 by Ralph Uwazurike. But internal wranglings split

MASSOB and a faction led by Uchenna Madu, its former spokesman, is now working with Kanu's IPOB group. Madu said the protesters had planned a symbolic blockade of the Niger bridge in Onitsha this week but the idea was shelved after warnings from the security services.

The strategic bridge linking Igboland with the rest of Nigeria was a key battleground during the civil war and the de facto border. "There would have been no move-

ment of vehicles on the bridge because we had planned a seven-day vigil to force the government to release Kanu and for Nigeria to give us freedom," he said. Anayochukwu Okpara, the IPOB coordinator in Abia state's commercial hub, Aba, said intimidation, harassment, arrest and detention would not stop the struggle. "We will step up non-violent campaigns to demand freedom from Nigeria. We are Biafrans. This forced marriage should be dissolved," he said.

Opposing views

The Nigerian army has vowed to "suppress insurrection and act in aid of civil authority to restore order when called upon to do so", stoking fears of a backlash and unrest. Southeast governors have condemned the mass protests, questioning why the pro-Biafra campaign has re-emerged with a new government in place under President Muhammadu Buhari. — AFP



ABA: Pro-Biafra supporters wave flags and chant songs as they march through the streets of Aba, southeastern Nigeria, to call for the release of a key activist. — AFP

TOP SUSPECT SEEN ON CCTV IN METRO DURING PARIS ATTACKS

WOMAN'S CORPSE IDENTIFIED, HANDBAG FOUND

PARIS: The top suspect behind the Paris attacks has been seen on CCTV footage recorded at a metro station while the massacre that killed 129 people was under way, a police source said yesterday. Abdelhamid Abaaoud was killed in a gun battle on Wednesday when police raided a house in a Paris suburb where he was holed up. Prosecutors said a total of three people were killed in the pre-dawn operation. Moroccan-born Abaaoud can be seen on closed circuit TV footage at the Croix de Chavaux metro station in the Paris suburb of Montreuil, not far from where one of the cars used in the attacks was found, the police source said.

He was spotted on the tape at 10:14 p.m. (2114 GMT) last Friday evening after shootings at several cafes and suicide bombings near a packed soccer stadium had taken place, but while an attack was still going on at a concert hall. In Morocco, a security source said authorities last month arrested Yassine Abaaoud, a younger brother of Abdelhamid Abaaoud, as his plane landed at the city of Agadir, his father's home. Yassine has been held in custody since then, the source told Reuters. It was unclear if Yassine has ties to his brother's militant cell. The source declined to give further details on the arrest.

Petty criminal

A petty criminal who went to fight in Syria in 2013, Abdelhamid Abaaoud is believed to have recruited similar young

men from immigrant families in his native Brussels district of Molenbeek and elsewhere in Belgium and France. Before the attacks, European governments thought that Abaaoud was still in Syria. Abaaoud's mangled body was identified on Thursday. A woman's body was identified as Hasna Aitboulahcen. Identification of the third body was still in progress. In the debris, a handbag was found containing a passport in the name of Aitboulahcen. A source said previously that a woman with that name may have blown herself up during the raid and may be a cousin of Abaaoud.

Abaaoud, 28, was accused of orchestrating last Friday's attacks. Seven assailants died in the attacks and a suspected eighth is still on the run. Even before last week's attacks, Abaaoud was one of Islamic State's highest-profile European recruits, appearing in the group's slick online English-language magazine Dabiq, where he boasted of crossing European borders to stage attacks. The group, which controls swathes of Iraq and Syria, has attracted thousands of young Europeans, and Abaaoud was seen as a leading figure in luring others to join, particularly from his home country Belgium.

Disowned by family

He claimed to have escaped a continent-wide manhunt after a police raid in Belgium in 2013 in which two other militants were killed. His own family has disowned him, accusing him of abducting his 13-year-old brother, who was later

promoted on the Internet as Islamic State's youngest foreign fighter in Syria. While quickly tracking him down will be seen as a major success for French authorities, his presence in Paris will focus more attention on the difficulty European security services have in monitoring the continent's borders.

Europe's interior ministers were meeting on Friday and were expected to tighten security measures and external border checks. France has called for changes to the functioning of the EU's Schengen border-free travel zone, which normally does not monitor the entry and exit of citizens of its 26 countries. Hundreds of thousands of people have reached Europe as Syrian refugees in recent months, including at least one person using a passport found at the scene of Friday's attacks.

The French National Assembly voted to extend the state of emergency for three months on Thursday. Belgium, stung by revelations that several of the attackers were based there, announced a 400-million-euro (\$430 million) security crackdown. France has called for a global coalition to defeat the group and has launched air strikes on Raqqa, the de-facto Islamic State capital in northern Syria, since the weekend. Russia has also targeted the city in retribution for the downing of a Russian airliner last month that killed 224. In Britain, police warned the government that planned budget cuts may significantly reduce their ability to respond to a Paris-style militant attack. — Reuters

ITALY NABS MOBSTERS PLOTTING TO ASSASSINATE INTERIOR MINISTER

ROME: Italy has thwarted a mobster plan to assassinate the country's interior minister, arresting six Mafia bosses in the Sicilian town of Corleone, police said yesterday. The six are close allies of ruthless Mafia king Salvatore "Totò" Riina, who is currently serving multiple life sentences for murder under Italy's ultra-hard Article 41-bis prison regime, which isolates inmates completely.

Wiretapped conversations between the six had revealed a plot to murder Interior Minister Angelino Alfano because they blamed him for strengthening Article 41-bis, Palermo prosecutor Francesco Lo Voi said at a press conference. "They made references to a possible attack on Alfano, some of them wanted to do it in Rome and others in Sicily," he said after a series of raids around Palermo with sniffer dogs and a helicopter landed the mobsters in cuffs.

"The plan was to attack when Alfano's security was lessened," Lo Voi said, adding that anti-mafia investigators had immediately warned the interior minister and his bodyguards of the danger. The six men were arrested after an investigation, begun in September 2014, revealed not only the assassination bid but also deep divisions within the organized crime group, where Riina's wife Ninetta now calls the shots. The wiretaps were taken a few months ago and the plan initially appeared to have been dropped, but police heard chatter between the men over the past few weeks about hiding firearms, sparking the arrests.

'Kill him like JFK'

"This morning's important operation in Corleone confirms the perils of the Mafia, which only appears subdued and silent," the head of Italy's anti-mafia commission Rosi Bindi said. Justice Minister Andrea Orlando agreed, warning that "the Mafia has been dramatically reduced, but it still represents a danger for security and the country not to be underestimated", expressing the "utmost solidarity with Alfano". The six arrested men lived rural lives on farms in the area of Sicily made famous by the Godfather films and were led by Rosario Lo Bue, 62, who walked miles to secret meetings with accomplices in vineyards in a bid to elude wiretaps. In phone-tapped conversations the gang said they wanted Alfano to meet the same fate as John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the US president assassinated in an open-top car in Dallas, Texas in 1963. They also claimed the Sicilian Mafia was behind his murder. "Who killed Kennedy? Our clan in America. — AFP

ANC VOTE STIRS DEBATE OVER SUCCESSION OF ZUMA ZUMA'S EX-WIFE DLAMINI-ZUMA GAINS MOMENTUM

JOHANNESBURG: A hotly contested party vote earlier this month has deepened divisions within South Africa's ruling African National Congress and stirred debate over President Jacob Zuma's successor. His ex-wife, African Union head Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, has just edged ahead of the front-runner, deputy president Cyril Ramaphosa, after a vote in the ANC's Zulu heartland swung in her favour, exposing rifts in the ruling alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and trade union group, COSATU.

Zuma, who is expected to stay president until a 2019 election and is likely to be influential behind the scenes in picking a new ANC leader at a conference in 2017, is expected to support Dlamini-Zuma. But Ramaphosa, who as vice president was assumed to be the incumbent to the position, has the support of powerful business lobbies and possibly of the ANC secretary-general. "The provincial election has exposed two clear factions: one behind Dlamini-Zuma and the other supporting Ramaphosa," said political analyst Nic Borain.

Neither Dlamini-Zuma or Ramaphosa have declared their intention to run for leadership of

the ANC, the party that has dominated since the end of apartheid in 1994, and spokesman in both their offices did not respond to a request for comment. A newly-emerged "kingmaker", Sihle Zikalala, a Zuma ally who won a tight Nov 8 race to become the ANC chairman in its most important province of KwaZulu-Natal, has called for party unity.

Dlamini-Zuma is a Zulu, the largest ethnic group in South Africa, and were she to run would likely have the support of Zuma's powerful voting block within the ANC.

Despite their separation, he backed her for the AU job and gave her a position in his cabinet. Analysts say she would be unlikely to follow up on the scandals including several high-profile corruption cases that have plagued his tenure. She was regarded as a capable technocrat during her time as South Africa minister of home affairs between 2009-2012 and has since gained international exposure during her time at the AU. Her supporters within the ANC have said it is also time South Africa had a female leader, a rarity on a continent with strong patriarchal heritage. Zuma has previously said that South Africa is ready for a female president.

Party loyalty

Ramaphosa, a wealthy businessman who was once touted as a successor to Nelson Mandela, would be the first choice for many investors because his background in commerce suggests he will support more pro-business policies than many in the traditionally left-wing ANC. However, he will face criticism from opponents for his role at Lonmin where he was a director and shareholder at the time of violence that led to police shooting dead 34 striking miners in 2012. An investigation has cleared him of wrongdoing.

He must also find his own "kingmaker" to build support for him within the ANC to counterbalance the growing support for Dlamini-Zuma. Like other ANC leaders, Zuma, has prioritized cementing loyalty to the party, and its liberation legacy, over backing for himself since his presidency began in 2009. This has meant that the party has stayed popular even as his own ratings dipped due to the scandals and criticism over his handling of Africa's most developed economy.

"A common mistake is to assume Ramaphosa will win because he has business support and strong policy credentials," said Mark Rosenberg, southern Africa analyst at Eurasia Group. "People

vote for the party and that is why the ANC has remained successful despite Zuma's poor performance. Dlamini-Zuma is currently the favorite." One potentially powerful backer is ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe, who criticized an investigation that cleared Zuma of wrongdoing in a controversial state-funded security upgrade to his home. Mantashe, who has also been touted as a potential ANC leader, could now be in the Ramaphosa camp.

The SACP could also support him after falling out recently with the ANC rump, even though its political ideology runs in stark contrast with Ramaphosa. Higher education minister and SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande said during the KwaZulu-Natal election that the SACP was tired of defending Zuma, prompting sections of the ANC to call for his suspension from cabinet. Reflecting divisions in the ruling alliance, there have been several local newspaper stories with ANC sources and junior officials from both camps slinging muck. Meanwhile, COSATU's position on the future ANC leadership is unclear. "The SACP and other factions are extremely opportunistic. There are many twists and turns to play out," Rosenberg said. — Reuters

BOULAHCEN: 'COWGIRL' TURNED SUSPECTED SUICIDE BOMBER

AULNAY-SOUS-BOIS: Hasna Ait Boulahcen, the woman believed to have blown herself up during the police raid that killed the suspected ringleader of the Paris attacks, swapped her party-girl persona for that of an Islamist radical just months before her death. Boulahcen's story is that of a young woman from a broken home with an unstable disposition, who was nicknamed "Cowgirl" because of her penchant for cowboy hats before her dramatic conversion to radical Islam.

During Wednesday's dawn raid in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, she was heard responding to a member of the crack police team that was hunting for her cousin Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the alleged brains behind the attacks that killed 129 people last Friday. "Where's your boyfriend, where is he?" the officer is heard shouting on a clip filmed by local residents. "He's not my boyfriend!" a high-pitched voice screams back. Several loud explosions are then heard, with Boulahcen understood to have detonated her explosives vest to become France's first female suicide bomber. Speaking to AFP on Thursday, both her mother and her brother said they recognized her voice from the recording immediately.

Her brother, who did not want to give his name, said she had suddenly become radicalized about six months ago when she began wearing the niqab. "She was unstable, she created her own bubble. She wasn't looking to study religion, I have never even seen her open a Quran," he told AFP. "It's brainwashing," added her 58-year-old mother, with whom she had been living in the gritty Paris suburb of Aulnay-sous-Bois until a few weeks ago. For Sofiane, a neighbor in Aulnay-sous-Bois, Boulahcen had "the gift of the gab" but was also "a bit crazy". "She might appear suddenly in front of you and start rapping."

'Brainwashing'

In the eastern town of Creutzwald near the German border, where her 74-year-old father lives, a longtime friend Jerome described her as a bon vivant who often wore a cowboy hat and boots and "smoked occasionally and drank on nights out". Her father, a devout Muslim who had moved from Paris to work at Peugeot carmaker, is believed to be currently in Morocco. Born in August 1989, Hasna Ait Boulahcen had a turbulent childhood, part of which she spent in a foster home. Her brother recalls her years in care, from age 8 to 15, as a time when she was "happy and blossomed".

"Initially, everything went well. She was a kid like any other," albeit markedly unaffectionate, her former foster mother said, speaking on condition of anonymity. But then things took a turn for the worse. The foster mother, who wept when she saw Boulahcen's picture on television, recalled her young charge "applauding in front of the telly" when the Al-Qaeda terror network attacked the US on September 11, 2001. —AFP



NANTES: Muslim women observe a minute of silence at the Assalam Mosque of Nantes, western France, to pay tribute to the victims of the November 13 Paris terror attacks. — AFP

EU MINISTERS TO BACK FRANCE, TIGHTEN CONTROLS AFTER ATTACKS

TRAVELERS' DATA, PASSPORT CHECKS, GUN CONTROL AGREED

BRUSSELS: EU interior and justice ministers in Brussels yesterday pledged solidarity with France in the wake of the Paris attacks a week ago and agreed a series of new measures on surveillance, border checks and gun control. French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve asked for the crisis meeting after the attack in Paris last Friday in which Islamic State radicals with ties to Syria and a planning cell based in Belgium killed 129 people across the city. "We must be implacable in our determination, we must speed up our action, otherwise Europe will lose its way," he said after the 28 governments agreed to speed new legislation to share air passengers' data, curb firearms trafficking and ensure closer checks on EU citizens crossing Europe's external borders.

"We need to act firmly, we need to act

swiftly and with force," Cazeneuve said after the Luxembourg minister who chaired the meeting confirmed the formal approval of an agreement reached among officials earlier in the week.

Those draft conclusions, seen by Reuters on Thursday, included agreement to "implement immediately the necessary systematic and coordinated checks at external borders, including on individuals enjoying the right of free movement".

Citizens of the 26 Schengen countries have their documents visually checked by security forces when they leave or enter the area. The new proposal is likely to upgrade the controls so documents are systematically checked against criminal and security databases. Some of the Belgian and French suspects involved in the Paris attacks had trav-

elled to fight in Syria and returned, apparently undetected, to Europe. Officials have said some may have taken advantage of the large influx of refugees from Syria over the summer to evade normal border controls. The EU agency for border controls, Frontex, is to get a stronger mandate to contribute to the fight against terrorism.

Solidarity

German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere said before the meeting: "We are here to show our French colleagues, and the French people, that we stand by them and that we are determined to make a tough, clear response." He said it was vital that Europe's national security services do more to share information, something echoed by his Italian counterpart. —Reuters

INDIA'S WOMEN STUDENTS DEFY UNIVERSITY CURFEWS

NEW DELHI: Twenty-year-old zoology student Rani Choudhary left her family home in Bihar for the bright lights and freedom of the Indian capital. But like most female students in New Delhi she is barred from leaving her dorm at night except with the express permission of her father, thanks to a curfew designed to safeguard her in the city dubbed "India's rape capital".

Wary of the city's disturbing reputation for sexual violence, universities force women to return to their dorms as early as 7:00 pm while their male counterparts can stay out much later. With the Pinjra Tod ("Break the Cage") campaign, launched in August, female students are fighting back against what they say is outright discrimination. "You are supposed to go and be back at 7:00 pm, at 7:30 pm and 8:00 pm, while your friends studying with you, boys, the men in your class, they can (go out at) night and they can enter the hostel by 10 or 12," said Shambhawi Vikkam, one of the ringleaders of the movement.

"And even if they have rules and regulations it doesn't really apply so strictly," the 23-year-old arts student at the University of Delhi said. At a night-time protest in the capital, about a hundred young female students gathered outside a subway station singing as they held up placards proclaiming: "no more curbing late nights".

Other slogans brazenly mocked the rules, declaring "I got a feeling that tonight's gonna be a good night". Several of the nocturnal protesters wear dresses or skirts, defying



NEW DELHI: Indian student activists Shambhawi Vikram (left) and Shriya Subhashini (center) speak to fellow students as they distribute leaflets outside Delhi University's North Campus in New Delhi. — AFP

warnings from parents or the university administration about night-time dangers in the city dubbed "India's rape capital".

But for many of India's female students, the desire for independence also conflicts with family attitudes in the deeply patriarchal country. Choudhary is theoretically allowed out until 11:00 pm four times a month and is permitted to spend five nights away from her dorm-but says it is impossible in reality.

"I need the permission of my parents and I

know that my father will never allow me to go out at 10:00 pm," Choudhary said. "There is a generational gap with my father," she said, adding he has always lived in Bihar, a poor, rural state. Concern for the safety of young women is the main justification for the curfews put forward by the heads of university residences. The fatal gang rape of a medical student in Delhi in December 2012 left a profound mark on the capital, and violence against women has not declined since.

A spokesman for Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi said a plan to reform the curfew was "under consideration". "(Safety) measures are the need of the hour. We have to be very mindful, there are global concerns over safety of women in India," Mukesh Ranjan said.

'Wrong approach'

Yet students argue that confining them inside is not the answer. "If you really want to make a city safe for a woman... you have to make the city accessible to her, you have to have more women out in the streets," she said. "So that is the solution, not locking people inside." The students are willing to allow their dorms to set a time to return by, as long as they are not deprived of a social life.

"One thing we are demanding is... let hostel curfews be at least half an hour after the library closes or the last metro, so that you're not locking women out of the public space that they have the right to access," said Shriya Subhashini, 25, a law student at the University of North Delhi.

A petition by the students addressed to the Delhi Commission for Women-an official body responsible for upholding the rights of women in the city-has collected about 1,200 signatures. Swati Maliwal, the president of the commission, promises to help the women fight discrimination. "I've requested the students to list all the discriminations they suffer from and I will work with them," Maliwal told AFP. —AFP

NEPAL FACING 'MEDICAL CRISIS' AS SUPPLIES RUN SHORT

KATHMANDU: Bindu Ghimire's chemotherapy appointment is approaching, but supplies of the drugs the 61-year-old desperately needs are in short supply as a political crisis in her native Nepal deepens. Protests at the border with India have already led to crippling fuel shortages in the landlocked Himalayan nation, and now medical supplies are also running short.

"So far, the medicine had been available, but the pharmacy is not sure if they can provide it next time," the 61-year-old's son Shashi Shekhar Ghimire said. "I don't know what I will do if we don't get it," said Ghimire, whose mother has stage two colon cancer and needs a chemotherapy session every 21 days.

"It is getting very difficult." Nepal is heavily dependent on its giant neighbor for fuel and other supplies, but little cargo has crossed the border since protests against a new constitution broke out in late September. Demonstrators from the Madhesi ethnic minority have been blockading the main Birgunj crossing ever since, protesting a new constitution they say leaves them politically marginalised.

Movement across other border checkpoints has also slowed to a crawl, prompting fuel rationing and forcing the government to start selling firewood as residents run out of cooking gas.

Who is to blame for all this is a matter of dispute. Nepal's government accuses India, which has criticized the new constitution, of retaliating with an "unofficial blockade"-a charge New Delhi denies. "The issues facing Nepal are political in nature. They are internal to Nepal and the Nepalese leadership has to resolve them through dialogue with agitating parties," said Indian foreign ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup at a briefing on Thursday.

Whatever the explanation, the Nepal Chemists and Druggists Association says around 350 cargo trucks carrying medicines are stranded at the key crossing point. "We are suffering from a shortage of imported life-saving injections and vaccines," said Mrigendra Shrestha, president of the association. "Medicines are crucial. We are now trying to airlift emergency supplies." Meanwhile the head of Bir hospital-Nepal's oldest-said both fuel and vital drugs were running short. "Operations have become difficult without fuel. If this blockade continues, we will have a medical crisis on our hands," Swayam Prakash Pandit told AFP.

Landlocked Nepal imports 60 percent of its medicines, and most of them come from India. Even those that are locally produced have been affected by the political crisis, which comes just months after a devastating earthquake that killed nearly 9,000 people. Most of the factories are located along the southern border with India, where protests against the new constitution have been fiercest, and many have been forced to close. Those that do remain open are struggling with a shortage of raw materials and packaging. —AFP

EX-STAR INDIA CEO ACCUSED IN MURDER CASE GRIPPING INDIA

MUKERJEA REMANDED IN JUDICIAL CUSTODY

MUMBAI: One of India's most successful media magnates appeared in court yesterday to face initial charges he took part in a criminal conspiracy to murder his step-daughter. Peter Mukerjea, a former chief executive of media behemoth Star India, was remanded in custody after being arrested by India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with the murder case gripping the country.

A magistrate granted the CBI three days to interrogate Mukerjea, after which the agency will decide whether to formally charge him with involvement in the death of his wife's daughter.

"The court has given us custody of Peter Mukerjea until November 23," a CBI official, who asked not to be named, told AFP. The CBI, India's leading investigative agency, arrested Mukerjea late on Thursday after formally charging his wife Indrani Mukerjea with murdering her daughter from a previous relationship.

Indrani is accused along with her driver and ex-husband of strangling Sheena Bora to death before dumping her body in a forest and setting it alight. Bora, 22, was murdered in April 2012 and her burnt body was discovered the following month in woods in India's western state of Maharashtra, of which Mumbai is the capital. Indrani was arrested in August on suspicion of murdering the young woman, who was having an affair with Peter Mukerjea's son from a previous marriage.

Peter Mukerjea was chief executive of Fox-owned Star India from 1997 to 2007 before leaving to start his own television venture and is seen as one of India's most successful media magnates.

His arrest came as the CBI released a statement saying they had filed charges against Indrani Mukerjea and two others over the murder three years ago. "The Central Bureau of Investigation has today filed charge sheet in the alleged murder of Ms. Sheena Bora against three private persons, including her mother, on charges of criminal conspiracy, abduction, murder, destruction of evidence, giving false information, creation and use of forged documents etc," the statement said. The official at the CBI confirmed that the others

charged were Indrani's driver Shyam Rai and former husband Sanjeev Khanna.

India's newspapers and TV news channels have been abuzz with details of the scandal since it first broke, with many carrying complex family trees illustrating who's who in the case.

Various motives have been put forward, including a financial dispute over property dealings and a dislike of Bora's relationship with Peter Mukerjea's son, Rahul. Mumbai police initially registered the case before the CBI took it over in September. —AFP



PARIS: Indian Muslim students hold posters during a gathering to denounce the Islamic State, in Mumbai yesterday. —AFP

NORTH, SOUTH KOREA SET FOR TALKS ON EASING TENSION

SEOUL: North and South Korea agreed yesterday to hold talks on Nov 26, setting the stage for the first government-level meeting focused on easing tension since the two pledged to improve ties following an armed standoff in August.

The North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea, its main agency handling inter-Korean ties, proposed to hold working-level contact for government talks, at a truce village on their militarised border. The South's Unification Ministry, which handles ties with Pyongyang, said it had accepted the proposal. The South has proposed to hold government talks on several occasions following the Aug. 25 agreement that ended a standoff which involved an exchange of artillery fire amid an escalation of tension following landmine blasts at the border.

The North expressed regret over the landmine incident that wounded South Korean soldiers, which Seoul blamed on Pyongyang. The South said the North's expression of regret was in effect an apology, although Pyongyang subsequently denied it.— Reuters

INDONESIAN HOUSE SPEAKER UNDER PRESSURE TO RESIGN

JAKARTA: A senior official of the largest opposition party in Indonesia's parliament briefly created confusion yesterday about the status of the house speaker, who is under public pressure over alleged ethical misconduct. Fahmi Idris, a senior Golkar party official, told Reuters that Setya Novanto had resigned as speaker. But less than an hour later, Idris said Novanto had not resigned and retained the backing of his party.

Novanto is at the centre of a controversy related to efforts by mining giant Freeport McMoRan Inc. to get its contract to work in Indonesia extended. Energy Minister Sudirman Said this week lodged a complaint against Novanto with the parliament ethics committee, alleging that the house speaker had used the president and vice president's names to demand a stake in Freeport's Indonesian unit.

Novanto could not be immediately reached for comment. Indonesian media have quoted him acknowledging he met Freeport executives but denying he used the names of President Joko Widodo and Vice-President Jusuf Kalla in the talks. Some members of parliament have called on Novanto to step down as the ethics committee undertakes a probe into the allegations against him.

Adlan Napitupulu, an MP from Widodo's ruling PDIP party, told a press conference yesterday "Parliament cannot run like this. If the ethics committee is not firm, we plan to file a no-confidence motion against Novanto."

An online petition calling for Novanto's resignation had received around 50,000 signatures. Golkar, the party that longtime president Suharto used as his political and elections vehicle, supported Widodo's opponent in the country's 2014 presidential election.—Reuters



CIANJUR: A group of asylum-seeker survivors rest on the beach after being rescued by residents in the coastal village of Cianjur, on Indonesia's western Java island. Indonesia is in talks with Australia about temporarily housing asylum-seekers stranded in Indonesia on an island in the archipelago if Canberra covers the cost, according to a report yesterday.—AFP



SEPANG: China's President Xi Jinping (L) and his wife Peng Liyuan (R) wave from their aircraft as they arrive to attend the 27th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit, at the Bunga Raya Complex at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang yesterday.— AFP

CHINA'S LIMITED OPTIONS EXPOSED BY IS KILLING

BEIJING MULLS LAW ENABLING COUNTER-TERRORISM MISSIONS ABROAD

BEIJING: The killing of a Chinese citizen by Islamic State has shone the spotlight on China's paucity of options when its people are kidnapped abroad, despite its growing military prowess and international profile. With its forces untried abroad and its diplomatic influence limited in the Middle East, it is handicapped when faced with cases like Fan Jinghui, whose killing militants announced this week.

China has previously obtained the release of workers kidnapped in places like Pakistan and Africa, though diplomats say it is often by paying ransoms. On social media, some users urged a more combative response. "China should have sent troops and joined the international coalition against IS to take real steps to fight terrorism," wrote one person on Weibo, China's answer to Twitter.

To address the vulnerability of its growing global commercial and diplomatic interests, Beijing is currently considering a law that would create a legal framework for sending troops abroad on counter-terrorism missions. Article 76 would authorise the military, as well as state and public security personnel, to conduct counterterrorism operations abroad with the approval of the relevant country.

The draft law was made public late last year, but it's not clear when it may be passed. China's security chief said this week in the wake of the Paris attacks that the government needed to get on with it. Japan is speeding up

the creation of a unit dedicated to gathering intelligence about terror attacks after Islamic State killed Japanese hostages.

China's ability to deal with security issues at home was in evidence on Friday in the western province of Xinjiang, where it said it killed 28 "terrorists" from a group that carried out a deadly attack at a coal mine in September.

But a legal framework wouldn't compensate for its inexperience overseas. "We can certainly deal with terrorism at home, but it's totally different if you talk about sending people abroad to do this. Our experience is here, not abroad. And there are so many diplomatic issues to consider," said Pan Zhiping, a terrorism expert at the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences. "You'd need permission from so many countries to fly people there. It would be terribly complicated."

BEST AVOIDED

While relying on the region for oil supplies, China tends to leave Middle Eastern diplomacy to the other five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, namely the United States, Britain, France and Russia. China has long said there is no military solution to Syria's problems and has criticised the West and Russia for bombing campaigns there not sanctioned by the UN.

"China would not do anything without United Nations' authority,"

said a source familiar with China's diplomatic thinking, dismissing the possibility of secret raids in Syria by Chinese military rescuers. China's Defence Ministry did not respond to a request for comment on whether it had considered trying to rescue Fan. The Foreign Ministry said it activated an emergency mechanism to try to save him, but has given no details.

Security operations by China abroad are not unprecedented. It sent gunboats down the Mekong River in cooperation with Thailand, Myanmar and Laos in 2011 to combat drug running, and its navy has conducted anti-piracy patrols off the Horn of Africa.

The killing of Fan has prompted handwringing in China about the difficulties of responding effectively to such incidents. Influential tabloid the Global Times said while China is often successful in rescue operations in other places, its options were limited when dealing with a group like Islamic State in a region where China is a diplomatic outsider.

"East Asian countries are far from the Middle East, and have basically not gotten involved in the disputes there," it said in an editorial, adding the best solution was for Chinese to avoid dangerous regions. That looked like a forlorn hope late yesterday, as China's state-run Xinhua news agency said there were several Chinese guests among those taken hostage by gunmen at a hotel in Mali's capital Bamako.— Reuters

ARGENTINA'S SCIOLI, A SPORTSMAN AND SURVIVOR... SO FAR

BUENOS AIRES: Argentine presidential hopeful Daniel Scioli is a former powerboating champion, a sports fanatic, a skilled politician and above all a survivor—at least, he has been so far. The Buenos Aires governor survived a 1989 powerboat accident that cost him his right arm and years of internecine political clashes. But now he faces his toughest battle yet.

After spending most of this year's presidential campaign as the front-runner, Scioli is now the underdog as Argentina heads to the polls tomorrow for a run-off election pitting him against conservative rival Mauricio Macri. Scioli was left reeling by the first-round election on October 25, when his three-percentage-point victory over Macri—a far smaller margin than expected—was perceived as a virtual defeat. With the momentum in his favor, Macri leaped to a lead in the polls. But Scioli has fought back with the same tenacity that has marked his career. Scioli, 58, got into politics 25 years ago, after a horrific accident cut short his career as a successful powerboat racer.

An eight-time world champion in the sport, he was racing across Argentina's Parana River when his boat flipped over and a propeller shredded his arm, which had to be amputated. Starting over, he received a prosthetic limb, trained himself to function left-handed and launched a political career, winning election to Congress in 1997. He was named minister of sport and tourism in 2002. — AFP



BUENOS AIRES: Buenos Aires province governor and presidential candidate for the "Frente para la Victoria" (Front for Victory), Daniel Scioli speaks during the campaign closing rally in La Matanza, Buenos Aires province, on Thursday. — AFP

NEW ZEALAND VOTES IN FLAG REFERENDUM

CONTROVERSIAL PUSH TO DROP UNION JACK FROM FLAG

WELLINGTON: New Zealanders began voting yesterday to select a potential new flag, part of a controversial push for the South Pacific country to drop Britain's Union Jack from its national banner.

Voters are being asked to choose between five flag options in a postal referendum that will continue until December 11. The winning design will then go head-to-head with the existing flag in a second referendum to be held in March next year.

Prime Minister John Key has made the flag reform issue a pet project since his conservative government won a third term late last year. He sees the current flag, which has the Union Jack in the corner, as an anachronism, arguing the country needs a standard "that screams New Zealand". Key has also expressed frustration that the flag—which features four red stars representing the Southern Cross on a dark blue background—is frequently confused with Australia's. Elections NZ said about three million ballot papers were being sent out in the nation of 4.5 million.

The cost of the exercise is an estimated NZ\$25 million (\$16.4 million), which critics such as veterans group the Returned and Services' Association (RSA) call a waste of money. In a rare show of civil disobedience, the normally conservative RSA has encouraged Kiwis to spoil their ballot rather than take part in the first referendum. "One way they can do that is by writing 'I support the current flag' on their ballot paper," RSA president B.J. Clark said in a statement this week.

The RSA argues that to change the flag



CANAKKALE: In this file picture taken on April 24, 2014, people are seen behind a New Zealand flag as they wait for the dawn ceremony in the Anzac cove during the ceremony celebrating the 99th anniversary of the Anzac Day in Canakkale. — AFP

disrespects previous generations of soldiers who have died fighting under the banner. "When they have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, our flag has been draped over their casket at military funerals," it says on its website.

"It is to the flag that we turn to honor their courage, commitment and sacrifice."

Once-in-a-lifetime chance
Four of the five designs in the first referen-

dum feature the fern, New Zealand's unofficial national emblem. The fifth, dubbed "Red Peak", consists of red, black and blue triangles with a white chevron. It was a late addition to the line-up after a social media campaign for its inclusion. An opinion poll last month predicted a design featuring a white fern on a red and blue background would win the first referendum. But separate polling suggests the existing flag is likely to decisively win the second referendum in March with about 65 percent of the vote. — AFP

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WASHINGTON: Secretary of State Kerry speaks to reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington on Thursday after briefing members of the Senate Intelligence Committee on the US strategy in Syria in the wake of the Paris terror attacks. — AP

IN AMERICA'S LITTLE SYRIA, A SPLIT ON ACCEPTING REFUGEES

'PROBLEMS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN'

ALLENTOWN, Pa: A few days ago, a pastor asked Syrian-born restaurant owner Marie Jarrah to donate food to a welcoming event for recently arrived Syrian refugees. Jarrah, who said she regularly helps people in need, declined. Like many of Allentown's establishment Syrians, she doesn't think it's a good idea to bring refugees to the city. She clung to that view even before last week's terrorist attacks in Paris. "Problems are going to happen," said Jarrah, co-owner of Damascus Restaurant in a heavily Syrian enclave.

As debate intensifies nationally over the federal government's plan to accept an addi-

tional 10,000 refugees from war-ravaged Syria, a similar argument is taking place in Allentown - one with a sectarian twist. Pennsylvania's third-largest city is home to one of the nation's largest populations of Syrians. They are mostly Christian and, in no small number, support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad - a dynamic that's prompting some of them to oppose the resettlement of refugees, who are Muslim and say they fled violence perpetrated by the Assad regime.

Aziz Wehbey, an Allentown auto dealer and president of the American Amarian Syrian Charity Society, worries some Syrian refugees

might have taken part in the fighting in Syria's civil war and have "blood on their hands."

"We need to know who we are welcoming in our society," said Wehbey, who immigrated to the United States a quarter-century ago and became a citizen. The Obama administration says refugees must undergo a rigorous screening process that can take years. Nevertheless, the US House voted overwhelmingly Thursday to make it more difficult for Syrian and Iraqi refugees to come to America.

Refugees say that they are aware of the opposition of some of Allentown's Syrians to their presence, but that they have not witnessed overt acts of hostility or discrimination. Three refugees spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they worry the Assad government has informants in the city of about 120,000 - a widely held belief among Syrians here, both Christian and Muslim - and will retaliate against family back home.

The refugees said they're here to make a new life for themselves, not to stir up trouble. They have formed their own miniature support network, with earlier arrivals helping newcomers. Dozens have resettled in Allentown since March, with dozens more slated to come.

"I hope that one day I'm going to be a citizen of this great country," said one man, a married father of four. The Muslim Association of Lehigh Valley, a mosque and school outside Allentown, has been working with the refugees, integrating them socially, sorting through donations of clothes, appliances and school supplies, and enrolling them in English-language classes.

"There's a lot of rhetoric, but we try not to even acknowledge the rhetoric, because right now there's a crisis," said Sherrine Eid, refugee coordinator at the Muslim Association. "We have much bigger fish to fry."

The refugees are joining a Syrian community that dates to the late 1800s. Now numbering some 5,200 in the greater Lehigh Valley region, Syrian-Americans are deeply intertwined in Allentown's business and political life. The retired police chief, of Syrian descent, was elected county sheriff this month. — AP

MEXICAN GIRL'S MEDICAL POT WIN RAISES HOPES FOR OTHERS

MONTERREY, Mexico: Grace can finally sleep through the night without being awakened by one of her epileptic crises since the eight-year-old Mexican girl started taking cannabis-based medicine a month ago. Her parents have seen a marked improvement in their daughter's conditions since she became the first person authorized to take medicinal marijuana in October.

"Her reaction has been very good. Since she took the medicine, we noticed that she could sleep all night," her father, Raul Elizalde, said from the family's home in an upper-class neighborhood of the northern industrial hub of Monterrey. "Her nocturnal epileptic crises have practically disappeared and she's sleeping very well. This was the main change that we saw," he said, as his wife fed Grace, who sat in a baby high chair, and her younger sister, Valentina in their living room.

Grace has become a symbol for those battling to break Mexico's prohibitionist laws against marijuana in a country that has endured a decade of drug cartel violence.

The girl's parents secured an exception

to Mexico's laws after they won a court battle in August, forcing health authorities to grant them the right to obtain cannabidiol (CBD), a therapeutic oil. It was a first victory for those advocating for legalization.

The Supreme Court issued a historic ruling on November 4 that opened the door to the legalization of marijuana by authorizing four people to grow and consume cannabis for their personal, recreational use. Days later, Senator Cristina Diaz, a member of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), introduced a measure that would allow imports and consumption of medical marijuana, saying it would benefit 5,000 Mexicans.

While President Enrique Pena Nieto has reiterated his opposition to legalization, he suggested that his government could change its mind depending on the outcome of a debate of experts in the coming months. Other countries in the region are moving faster. More than 20 US states authorize medical marijuana while Colombia said last week that it would do the same. Chile's Congress is debating whether to legalize the drug while Uruguay has done so already. — AFP

'SYRIANS ARE NOT TERRORISTS,' REFUGEE TELLS AMERICA

JERSEY CITY: Hussam al-Roustom lost everything in Syria. After fleeing the horrors of war, he's working 12-hour night shifts in a bakery, learning English and watching his children flourish in America. After resettling in Jersey City as a refugee, he now has a message for the country that gave him a second chance.

"Syrians are not terrorists," he told reporters, speaking on the same day that the House of Representatives voted to ban Syrian and Iraqi refugees from entering the United States without tougher screening measures. It was the first legislative response to last week's terror attacks in Paris over fears that one of the attackers may have entered Europe by posing as a Syrian migrant.

Syrian refugees have become a political football in US election season, with Republicans determined to stop President Barack Obama's pledge to resettle 10,000 in the coming year.

Obama has threatened to veto the bill and accuses Republicans of "hysteria." Republicans defend the measure as a common-sense necessity after extremists slaughtered 129 people in Paris. "The Syrian people like to work, they want to live... they yearn for a better freedom, a better opportunity," Roustom said.

"They are the ones who are fleeing from terrorists, they're not going to... create terrorism in another country."

Since October 2011, America has admitted fewer than 2,180 Syrian refugees. Turkey has taken in two million, Lebanon more than one million and Jordan more than 500,000. The Rostoums were the first of just four Syrian families to be resettled in Jersey City, a city of 262,000 where around 41 percent of the population is foreign born.

Depressing

At least 27 US state governors oppose taking in further Syrians. The issue burst into ugly view this week when a vetted family of three was rerouted out of Indiana, and sent to Connecticut. But the resettlement program, overseen by the federal government, goes on.

"At this moment in time, it's business as usual," said Mahmoud Mahmoud, director of the Church World Service, the local agency in charge in Jersey City. He is frustrated by the fear mongering. US refugee vetting is already the most stringent in the world, taking on average 12 to 24 months for various federal agencies to approve each person.

Roustom said his family trekked four and a half hours through the desert to Jordan, when they realized they could no longer survive. "We reached a point in Syria when we couldn't even find food. We couldn't find medicine for children."

His daughter was a year old at the time, and the shops ran out of her milk. "That's when I decided to leave." Speaking in Arabic through a translator, he described Thursday's vote as "upsetting" and "depressing." His children had never seen a park until coming to America. In the refugee camp they had no toys. His seven-year-old son, who is autistic, is getting treatment and an education that he could never have had in Syria.

At home in Homs, Roustom owned a supermarket and a metal-working business. Now he measures out loafs of bread-a hard won promotion. "Before I left, there was a little bit of fear, fear of the unknown, fear of starting my life from scratch. "But once I arrived, I found it to be contrary. I found the welcome to be amazing," he said. — AFP



NEW JERSEY: Mahmoud Mahmoud (right), Church World Service and NJ Refugee Resettlement Center director, and Syrian refugee Hussam Al-Roustom, speak at a news conference in Jersey City on Thursday. — AFP



Volkswagen cuts 1bn euros from 2016 investment plan



SEOUL: A woman stands beside her shopping at a clothes market in Seoul yesterday. South Korea's central bank on November 12 left its key interest rate unchanged at a record-low 1.5 percent for the fifth straight month ahead of a possible US rate hike.—AFP

ECB 'WON'T HESITATE' TO EXPAND STIMULUS: DRAGHI BANK ASSESSING IF ECONOMY COULD ACHIEVE SELF-SUSTAINING TRAJECTORY

FRANKFURT: European Central Bank head Mario Draghi said the chief monetary authority for the euro-zone "will not hesitate" to expand its stimulus program at its next meeting if needed to support the economic recovery. Draghi's speech at a banking forum in Frankfurt yesterday reinforced earlier statements taken by markets as a green light for the bank to take action at the Dec. 3 meeting of its governing council.

He said the ECB needed to assess whether "if left to its own forces, the economy will be able to achieve a self-sustaining trajectory." "If not, then it will require more monetary stimulus." Europe's recovery is important for the troubled global economy, which has seen growth slow in emerging markets such as China even as Europe and the United States recover from the financial crisis of 2007-2009 and the euro-zone's troubles over government debt. The ECB could increase its 1.1 trillion euro (\$1.2 trillion) program of bond purchases, which injects newly printed money into the economy. It could also lower its rate on money deposited at the ECB by banks farther into negative territory, a move that pushes the banks to lend more. Currently, that rate is minus 0.2 percent.

Draghi argued that the current stimulus has had a strong effect in supporting the economy, which has this year been

growing gradually. He said the ECB's efforts have cut borrowing rates for companies and increased their access to the credit they need to do business and expand.

Lower fuel prices are also helping demand by putting more money in consumers' pockets. The 19 countries that use the euro currency saw economic activity grow 0.3 percent in the third quarter from the quarter before. That was less than expected, and unemployment remains high at 10.8 percent. Draghi warned that the modest recovery is facing headwinds from an economic slowdown in emerging markets. And he said that increased growth has not led to a pickup in inflation, which at an annual 0.1 percent remains far below the ECB's goal of just under 2 percent.

Draghi's remarks were countered by cautionary statements at the forum from stimulus skeptic Jens Weidmann, who sits on the ECB's policy-setting council by virtue of his job as head of Germany's national central bank, the Bundesbank.

Weidmann said current measures need time to work, and that weak inflation is largely due to low oil prices, which are a boost for the economy. "All things combined, I see no reason to talk down the economic outlook and paint a gloomy picture," he said. Weidmann has only one vote on the 25-member gov-

erning council, and his views appear to be in the minority among the bank's leadership. But his stance carries weight because he's from Germany, the biggest euro-zone economy. There, his outlook is shared by many economists, legislators and members of the public.

One consequence of more stimulus should be a lower euro against other currencies, especially the dollar. While not an explicit goal of the ECB, a weaker euro has been one of the major results so far of the bank's stimulus and has provided a boost to euro-zone exporters.

The downward pressure on the euro versus the dollar is also coming from the Federal Reserve, which is expected by many to raise interest rates for the first time in years at a Dec. 15-16 meeting. Higher rates in the US tend to raise the dollar's exchange rate against other currencies. Investors appear to be already pricing in, or anticipating more stimulus Dec. 3. That means that Draghi may have to announce even more drastic measures than markets expect if he wants to move the currency even lower towards parity, or \$1 per euro. That difficulty was illustrated by the euro's move yesterday after his speech. It fell from around \$1.0720 by about a half cent, but then quickly rose again to near its previous level. — AP



WOLFSBURG: Matthias Mueller, Volkswagen AG CEO, is displayed on a TV screen, as he speaks during a news conference in Wolfsburg yesterday. Volkswagen CEO Michael Mueller says the company's board has decided to reduce capital expenditures by 1 billion euros (\$1.07 billion) in 2016 as it deals with the fallout of its emissions-rigging scandal. — AP

VOLKSWAGEN CUTS 1BN EUROS FROM 2016 INVESTMENT PLAN

AUTOMAKER PREPARES FOR US ENGINES FIX

WOLFSBURG: Volkswagen cut 1 billion euros (\$1.1 billion) from its investment plan for next year yesterday, as the German carmaker braces for a multi-billion-euro hit from its emissions cheating scandal.

The supervisory board of Europe's biggest auto manufacturer said it would cap spending on property, plant and equipment at around 12 billion euros (\$12.8 billion) in 2016, down about 8 percent on its previous plan of around 13 billion euros. Volkswagen (VW) is battling the biggest business crisis in its 78-year history after admitting in September that it cheated US diesel emissions tests. It said earlier this month it had also overstated fuel consumption in some vehicles.

Analysts have said the scandal could cost the company 40 billion euros or more in fines, lawsuits and vehicle refits. "We are operating in uncertain and volatile times and are responding to this," Chief Executive Matthias Mueller said in a statement.

"We will strictly prioritize all planned invest-

ments ... anything that is not absolutely necessary will be cancelled or postponed." The cut in capital spending is VW's first since the height of the financial crisis in 2009. Some analysts have long urged the company to reduce spending and become more efficient, with profit margins at its mass-market namesake brand lagging those at rivals.

They have suggested the emissions scandal could provide an opportunity for management to force through changes that otherwise might have been resisted by the company's powerful trade unions, and ultimately boost VW shares.

VW's preference shares, down about 34 percent since the crisis broke, were up 1.6 percent to 107.55 euros at 1240 GMT. Amid fears the emissions scandal could hit sales of diesel vehicles, Mueller said VW would increase spending on alternative technologies such as electric and hybrid vehicles by 100 million euros next year compared with previous targets.

He said construction of a planned new design centre in VW's home town of Wolfsburg

was being put on hold, saving about 100 million euros, while the construction of a paint shop in Mexico was under review. In the model range, the successor to the high-end Phaeton saloon, an electric model, is being delayed.

US fix

Volkswagen's board is discussing the automaker's future financial strategy in the wake of its emissions-rigging scandal, and was due to present to US authorities later yesterday its plan to fix the affected diesel engines.

The 20-member board began meeting yesterday morning behind closed doors to talk about how to best balance savings and investment in light of the massive costs it can expect to incur from the scandal.

Volkswagen in September admitted that almost 500,000 of its four-cylinder diesel cars in the US had cheated on emissions tests thanks to a piece of software. A total of 11 million cars worldwide have the software, though it has not yet been confirmed that it helped cheat on emissions tests outside the US. The carmaker has set aside 6.7 billion euros (\$7.4 billion) to cover the costs of recalling the vehicles installed with the software but experts say the total expense, including fines and lost sales, could be several times higher.

Volkswagen had a Friday deadline to submit a draft plan to fix four-cylinder diesels to the US Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board, the two agencies that forced the German automaker to admit to the cheating. The company met with the agencies on Thursday, with a final submission yesterday. It will have two options to fix most of the cars. It can install a bigger exhaust system to trap harmful nitrogen oxide, or it can retrofit a chemical treatment process that cuts pollution.

The bigger exhaust will likely hurt performance and gas mileage, angering car owners. But the chemical treatment, while saving acceleration and mileage, needs a clumsy storage tank and multiple hardware changes to work. In either case, almost a half-million cars would have to be recalled for the repairs. — Agencies



LOS ANGELES: The Volkswagen Golf GTE Sport plug-in hybrid concept car is displayed at the 2015 Los Angeles Auto Show in Los Angeles on Thursday. The LA Auto Show opened to the public yesterday. — AFP

OIL TRADES NEAR 3-MONTH LOW AS EXCESS SUPPLY TAKES TOLL

LONDON: Brent crude oil futures edged higher yesterday but were still trading near three-month lows as the pressure of a persistent supply glut weighed on prices.

The overhang that has cut prices by more than 10 percent since the start of November kept a lid on prices, and US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) was on track for a weekly loss. The front-month Brent crude contract was 25 cents higher at \$44.43 a barrel at 1000 GMT. The contract finished just 4 cents higher on Thursday at \$44.18.

US WTI crude was trading flat at \$40.54 a barrel. It ended down 21 cents on Thursday, after dipping to \$39.89 during the previous session, its lowest since Aug. 27. Analysts said that while the supply demand balance remained shaky, traders were taking a step back from bearish indications.

"The market is fatigued from having looked at the production statistics and the ever increasing supply glut," said Sudden analyst Kash Kamal. "Fundamentals are taking a back seat for now."

Kamal also said fluctuations in the US dollar, which traded near a seven-month high this week, could impact crude prices. A strong dollar makes oil and other commodities more expensive for holders of other currencies. Crude futures are already down around 60 percent since mid-2014 as supply has exceeded demand by 0.7 million to 2.5 million barrels per day, creating a glut that analysts say will last well into 2016.

The glut has seen Iraqi crude grades selling as low as \$30 a barrel, while official selling prices from Nigeria have fallen to their lowest in more than a decade.

US crude futures have been particularly battered, with data from the country's Energy Information Administration showing an eighth straight week of stock builds. A growing discount between the front month and forward contracts, which was trading near a record wide \$8 a barrel, has sparked talk of traders storing more crude in the hope of delivering later at higher prices. Market data suggests oil traders are preparing for another downturn in prices by March 2016, as forecasts for an unusually warm winter dent demand and Iran prepares for post-sanctions crude oil exports. — Reuters

KUWAIT OIL PRICE RISES 52 CENTS TO \$36.10PB

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 52 cents to reach \$36.10 per barrel Thursday after it was \$35.58 pb the day before, said a statement by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation yesterday.

In the world markets, future contracts of crude oil went up by 12 cents to reach \$44.30 per barrel while the West Texas crude price was stable at \$40.54 per barrel. Since mid-2014, crude oil contracts lost 60 percent of their value due to the increase in supplies by 0.7 percent, around 2.5 million barrels. The supplies increase might remain as an issue in 2016. — KUNA

ARGENTINA VOTE HERALDS ECONOMIC SHAKE-UP

PRO-BUSINESS OPPOSITION MAY WIN ELECTION

BUENOS AIRES: Argentines decide tomorrow whether to end years of leftist government in a run-off vote that could see the pro-business opposition seize command of Latin America's third-biggest economy. Polls show that the mayor of Buenos Aires, former football executive Mauricio Macri, could force a sharp realignment by beating his left-wing rival Daniel Scioli, an ex-powerboating champion.

If Macri breaks the grip of Peronism, the broad movement that has dominated Argentine politics for decades, he could liberalize the economy and lift the current limits on buying of US dollars.

Observers have complained that the two candidates lack charisma, but the stakes of their contest are potentially dramatic.

The tone sharpened as campaigning wound up on Thursday with Scioli branding Macri a "stuck-up" elitist. "I want to save you from savage capitalism," Scioli told supporters at a rally in the seaside town of Mar del Plata. "Macri wants to leave you at the mercy of the markets."

Macri in turn branded Scioli a liar. "It's very bad what he is doing, based on lies. He has deceived everyone," said Macri, after attending an indigenous earth ritual in Jujuy, a poor northwestern province. "The idea that only a Peronist can govern Argentina is just a myth."

Argentine politics changing

The increasingly tense campaign has been fought on shifting political ground in the vast South American nation of 42 million people. If he wins, Macri will be the first leader to be elected who is neither a Peronist nor from the radical liberal movement.

Macri's Republican Proposal party, known as PRO, "draws mostly non-Peronists, but it is not virulently anti-Peronist. There are even Peronists within PRO," said Sergio Morresi, a political scientist at state research institute CONICET.

Macri could become Argentina's most economically liberal leader since the 1990s. That has raised hopes among financiers, but fears among domestic businesses and poorer Argentines who have benefited from the social and trade policies of the combative outgoing president, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner. Scioli, 58, a milder ally of Kirchner, won 37.8 percent of the vote in the first round on October 25. Macri, 56, was close behind, gaining 34.15 percent—a much closer result than polls had forecast.

Unusual election

The election has been unlike any other in Argentina's history, with the first ever national run-off vote and the first televised candidate debate. The debate drew huge audi-

ences but provided little entertainment. Media observed that the candidates dodged the questions and failed to land a knockout blow. Observers have complained the two lack charisma, but the stakes of their contest are potentially dramatic.

The winner will have to tackle soaring inflation, currently estimated at more than 20 percent. He will also face a dispute with so-called "holdout" creditors who have sued Argentina in the US courts for unpaid debts. Kirchner calls the creditors "vultures." She and her late husband Nestor Kirchner tried to restructure tens of billions of dollars of debt that Argentina defaulted on in 2001, when it was bailed out by the International Monetary Fund. That was then the biggest sovereign default in history.

The Kirchners presided over a spectacular economic turnaround that is now flagging. As well as political change, Macri has promised an easing of restrictions on imports. "I promise to do the opposite of kirchnerism" on the economy and state control of institutions, Macri said in a television interview this week. Scioli has vowed to keep defending Argentine workers and businesses, accusing Macri of wanting to cut welfare subsidies. "It is clear that Macri represents the market," Scioli said. "I defend national industry." — AFP

GLOBAL STOCK MARKETS FALTER BEFORE WEEKEND

LONDON: The global stocks rally faltered yesterday with European equities stumbling as some investors took profits and eyed overnight US losses. "We're seeing some profit taking," said analyst Craig Erlam at traders Oanda. "They've been on a good run since October and it's perfectly reasonable that traders will ... lock in some profits," he said. The start of this week was overshadowed by last Friday's deadly Paris attacks, which raised fears about security in Europe and its effect on the economy. Markets then bounced higher after the US Federal Reserve on Wednesday flagged a likely December interest rate hike amid the brightening economic outlook.

Minutes showing Fed policymakers are confident the US economy is strong enough to withstand a December hike had fuelled buying across global markets and sent the dollar climbing. Heading into the weekend yesterday, many investors paused for breath. Asian stocks tacked higher in a choppy session after Wall Street had finished in negative territory on Thursday.

"Europe had a lacklustre lead from the US and Asia ... and a lack of other positive catalysts leaves traders without the incentive to get back on board," Erlam added.

By 1130 GMT, Frankfurt's DAX 30 stocks index rose 0.1 percent, but the Paris CAC 40 nudged 0.2 percent lower compared with Thursday's close. Outside the eurozone, London's benchmark FTSE 100 index added a marginal 0.03 percent in value.

In foreign exchange, the euro dipped against the dollar, as traders digested fresh comments from European Central Bank chief



NEW YORK: Traders gather at the post of specialist John McNierney, background center, at the end of the trading day, on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Stocks slipped yesterday as traders were disappointed by several corporate earnings and outlooks. —AP

Mario Draghi. Draghi, speaking in Frankfurt, declared that the bank will "do what we must" to lift inflation as quickly as possible, in a new sign it could boost its anti-deflation defenses. He also warned that inflation was stubbornly way below the target of close to 2 percent even though the bank has deployed a 1.1-trillion-euro (\$1.2-trillion) stimulus scheme to help lift consumer prices.

The quantitative easing program to buy

sovereign bonds at a rate of 60 billion euros a month runs until at least September 2016, but inflation came in at zero in October. "The head of the ECB appears determined to fight the disinflationary environment," noted London Capital Group analyst Brenda Kelly. "A lower euro against both the dollar and the pound has been the result but any upside effects on euro-zone (stocks) indices has thus far been elusive." — Reuters

CASINO GIANT WYNN'S NEWEST MACAU RESORT DELAYED

HONG KONG: Hotel and casino giant Wynn said the opening of its new \$4.1 billion hotel in Macau will be delayed by three months as gaming revenue in the gambling enclave suffers a drawn-out decline.

Revenues dropped for the 17th consecutive month in October, by 28.4 percent from a year ago, as China suffers a painful growth slowdown and Beijing embarks on a corruption crackdown that has hammered Macau's key VIP sector.

In a statement Thursday, Wynn said its contractor for construction works at the Wynn Palace—a floral-themed 1,700-room resort featuring a lake with gondolas—notified them of the delay.

"Wynn Palace will not be ready to open by the projected early completion date of March 25, 2016. The revised opening date for Wynn Palace is currently June 25, 2016," Wynn said in its statement without stating a reason. Wynn Macau's shares in Hong Kong closed 1.32 percent lower yesterday at HK\$10.48 (\$1.35) per share.

Casino operators in Macau—the only place in China where gambling is allowed—are trying to lure mass market visitors to make up for the drop in high-roller gamblers who make up the bulk of the city's gaming income. This has led to a slew of mega-projects on former swamp land on the coastal Cotai strip. The latest launch was of the Studio City hotel and casino resort in October featuring the world's first figure-of-eight rollercoaster that was fronted by Robert De Niro, Martin Scorsese, Brad Pitt and Leonardo DiCaprio.

"We believe that some of the new Cotai projects face risks of delays amid a challenging operating environment," Daiwa Capital Markets said in a memo Thursday, following Wynn's announcement. Gaming analyst Aaron Fischer said operators would be hoping for quick returns once they do open their resort doors. "Operators are keen to get their properties open as soon as possible to start generating a return on that investment," said Fischer, head of consumer and gaming research at brokerage CLSA.

He added they may also do some "fine-tuning" to try to ensure greater growth over the medium term. "That might include switching out some of the VIP capacity and maybe converting it to mass-market gaming areas or maybe converting some of that VIP space to restaurants or other non-gaming entertainment," he said. Wynn Resorts founder billionaire Steve Wynn has previously said the situation in Macau was "uncertain". "There's no question that uncertainty is the plaguing word of the day in Macau," he said in April. Macau overtook Las Vegas as the world's casino capital in terms of revenue after the sector was opened up to foreign competition in 2002 and still leads its US counterpart, despite the downturn. — AFP

TURKISH CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REBOUNDS

ISTANBUL: Turkish consumer confidence rebounded to a 19-month high in November, official data showed yesterday, after an election restored the AK Party's single-party rule and eased political uncertainty which had unnerved investors for months.

The index jumped to 77.15 from 62.78 in October, the Turkish Statistics Institute said, hitting its highest level since April 2014. It still shows a pessimistic outlook, however, with only a level above 100 indicating optimism. In September, the index hit a 6-1/2 year low on concerns that the Nov. 1 vote would lead to a coalition government, prolonging uncertainty after an inconclusive June election. But the AKP won nearly 50 percent, giving it a strong mandate to push ahead with its reform agenda.

Investor attention has now turned to the make-up of a new cabinet, expected to be unveiled at the start of next week, with some concerned about the prospect of President Tayyip Erdogan meddling in economic and monetary policy.

Erdogan has repeatedly called for lower interest rates to boost investment and economic growth, which at around 3 percent is well below the levels sought to cut rising unemployment. Yesterday's data showed there was a particularly sharp rise in the index of expectations for the general economic situation, up nearly 31 percent from October to 105.9 in November. — Reuters

MASS FAINTINGS STRIKE CAMBODIAN FACTORIES

PHNOM PENH: Hundreds of workers have fainted at Cambodian factories after farmers sprayed insecticide on nearby rice fields, authorities said yesterday, in the latest mass fainting episode to hit the country.

About 250 workers vomited and fainted on Friday morning at six garment factories at an economic zone one hour outside the capital Phnom Penh, according to a report circulated by Cheav Bunrith, a spokesman for the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), a

government agency.

The report said the incident was caused by "poison from insecticide farmers sprayed at a rice paddy nearby" the factories.

The victims were taken to health centres to recover. Another 119 workers fainted at a toy factory in the economic zone on Thursday after they inhaled the insecticide, according to the NSSF. Mass faintings at Cambodian garment factories are relatively common. Earlier this month, a

Cambodian garment worker died and 21 others were hospitalised after they fainted at a Chinese-owned factory.

Around 700,000 factory workers form the backbone of the kingdom's multi-billion dollar textile industry, which supplies brands including Gap, Nike and H&M.

Safety worries are rife, with periodic mass fainting episodes often blamed on poor health, shoddy working conditions, bad ventilation or exposure to dangerous chemicals.

Psychologists also say episodes of mass hysteria can be contagious, with crowds of people suddenly feeling ill once others start to show symptoms—especially if they work in high-pressured environments. Last month, Cambodia said it would raise the minimum monthly wage for garment workers to \$140 from January, an increase of nearly 10 percent, but which fell short of union demands in an industry beset by strikes and protests. — AFP

US EYES FOOD EXPORTS TO GROWING ASIA UNDER TPP

OBAMA DEFENDS TPP SECRECY, SAYS NOW IS CHANCE FOR DEBATE

TOKYO: US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack defended yesterday a recently agreed-to 12-nation Pacific trade pact, saying the Trans-Pacific Partnership would provide a counterbalance to China's growing influence in the region while also opening up promising Asian markets with their burgeoning middle class.

Vilsack told The Associated Press in an interview that many Asian countries are concerned about the rise of Chinese power, "and whether or not it's disproportionate, and whether or not there needs to be a balance." The trade agreement, he said, "creates the kind of coalition of nations, if you will, that provides that balance."

Vilsack, who met with Japanese government officials, students and young farmers, is en route to China to take part in annual US-China trade talks in Guangzhou from today to Monday. The wide-ranging trade agreement, known as TPP, faces a tough ratification battle in the US.

Congress. Farmers in Japan also worry about the impact of lowering or eliminating tariffs on agricultural imports. Other signatories include Canada, Mexico, Australia and Vietnam, but not China.

The pact would help American beef producers and others tap into a growing population of Asian consumers who are demanding high-end, safe food products, Vilsack said. "There is an expanding market opportunity in Asia, and particularly the middle class consumers, which I think plays to the strengths of any country that can produce high value-added items," he said.

That includes Japan as well as the US, he added, while acknowledging the unease some farmers feel. "I had a fruit plate today at the hotel where I'm staying that was one of the best meals that I have ever eaten," he said. "And I will tell you that if the rest of the world could see that fruit plate in their kitchens, and in their restaurants, and in their homes, I guarantee you that there's a market opportunity there."

Besides Japan, Vilsack cited Vietnam and Malaysia as markets where TPP tariff reductions would help US exporters of meat, nuts and other products.

Japan is the fourth largest market for US agricultural exports, importing \$13.2 billion-worth in 2014. The TPP countries, led by Canada and Mexico, account for 42 percent of US agricultural exports.

US President Barack Obama launched a defense yesterday of a signature Pacific trade pact kept largely under wraps and said the public would get its say before legislators in each country debate the full details. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a "mega-regional accord" covering four-tenths of global GDP, was so complex it would not have materialized if all interest



TOKYO: US Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack speaks during an exclusive interview with The Associated Press in Tokyo yesterday. Vilsack said a recently agreed-to 12-nation Pacific trade pact would provide a counterbalance to China's growing influence in the region while also opening up promising Asian markets and their burgeoning middle class. — AP

groups were involved in the protracted talks, he said.

"If you are negotiating with 12 countries and there's no space for everyone to agree on the deal ... then it would never get done," Obama said during a town hall at a Kuala Lumpur University.

"The nature of the trade agreement is so many interests are involved, so what we've done instead is close the initial deal, it's subject to review ... each country then has to ratify and it's subject to the legislatures."

Obama was responding to a question from a Malaysian youth who said the TPP was elitist and excluded most voices. Barring occasional leaks, details of the TPP have been kept secret during the more than five years of negotiations, angering those affected by its broad implications.

"I still have to get it past Congress," Obama added. "I believe it's a good deal and we'll get it done, but there's no guarantee."

The pact could come up against some opposition in Washington. Obama has long championed the deal but needs to muster support

among moderates to ensure ratification. He recently said it would allow the United States to "write the rules of the road" for 21st century trade, but warned: "If America doesn't write those rules, then countries like China will."

The pact covers countries from Japan, Canada and Australia to Mexico, Vietnam and Malaysia and would slash tariffs between them and set common standards on issues ranging from workers' rights to intellectual property protection.

Obama used the US pharmaceutical industry as an example of resistance and how concessions needed to be made. "We were very specific in the chapter to say that we have to protect generics for low income persons," he said.

"Here's proof that this wasn't just some give-away to the drugs companies. Right now a lot of drugs companies in the United States are mad at me because they said 'how come we didn't get more protection?'"

"Well, part of our job is to promote the US drug industry but part of our job is also to be good partners with countries that have people who are sick." — Agencies

ADB APPROVES \$1.4BN FOR PAKISTAN ENERGY SECTOR

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank said yesterday it has approved combined loan assistance to Pakistan of nearly \$1.4 billion for programs targeting its power sector, a crucial boost as Islamabad struggles to resolve a years-long energy crisis. The Manila-based bank said \$990 million would go to a power distribution enhancement program that would introduce a metering system for power companies across the country, helping to reduce loss and improve revenue collection and load management.

A second program will receive a \$400 million loan to support ongoing policy reforms aiming to build an affordable, sustainable energy sector, the ADB statement said.

Pakistan has been struggling to provide enough power to its nearly 200 million citizens for years, and solving the energy crisis was a key campaign pledge for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in the run-up to the 2013 general election.

Chronic infrastructure problems and daily-load shedding are complicated by the vicious cycle of "circular debt", brought on by the dual effect of the government setting low electricity prices and customers failing to pay for it, resulting in state utilities being unable to pay their bills and suppliers cutting them off.

"Nearly 20 percent of generated electricity is lost due to high technical and commercial losses and measures like the installation of the AMI (advanced electricity metering infrastructure) system are necessary to counter this," the statement quoted Adnan Tareen, a senior energy specialist as saying.

"The two programs, collectively, will help create a more efficient, transparent, modern and sustainable energy sector". The new assistance comes on top of a \$1.2 billion annual package for Pakistan announced by the ADB in August to improve infrastructure and create jobs.

It was announced almost two weeks after Pakistan said it would receive the next instalment worth \$502 million of its loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in December as part of a three-year economic bailout package. — AFP

EMERGING MARKETS: THE COMEBACK KID FOR 2016

LONDON/NEW YORK: After a miserable few years, emerging markets are in line for a strong rebound in capital flows in 2016, some of the world's biggest investors predicted this week, although they warned that the benefits will not be shared evenly.

Speakers at the Reuters Global Investment Outlook Summit this year were mostly positive about emerging market prospects. In contrast to the gloom pervading last year's summit, the worst fears of a Chinese hard landing appear to have ebbed, while steep declines in asset prices may have opened up value. Losses of up to 30 percent in currencies such as the Brazilian real and Malaysian ringgit against the U.S. dollar have also convinced many that long-delayed economic adjustment is under way, with balance of payments gaps narrowing and reforms kicking off in some countries.

"Emerging as a theme is back going into next year," Pascal Blanque, who oversees \$1 trillion at Amundi Asset Management, told the summit in London.

"We will see inflows moving back into the so-called emerging space on a discriminatory basis. I am seeing appetite growing to play the combination of cheap currency and growth rebalancing." Blanque's "conviction" trade in EM, driven by belief in a soft landing in China, is ASEAN, the Asian trade bloc comprising countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines.

A turnaround, if it materializes, will ironically come during a year when many reckon the US Federal Reserve will be raising interest rates, in turn boosting the dollar: both have historically been harbingers of misery for developing countries. But Fed tightening looks likely to be less hawkish than anticipated, and will be countered by policy in Europe and Japan where, Blanque says, "unlimited" stimulus is forthcoming.

Reuters earlier this month reported that big asset managers had started to cautiously raise emerging market allocations, reckoning the selloff had gone far enough.

The new-found bullishness is also partly

down to signs of recovery in Western consumer demand as central bank stimulus and lower oil prices start feeding through to spending power. Percival Stanion, head of multi-asset at Swiss firm Pictet, predicts retailers will enjoy bumper Christmas sales after several lean years, in turn benefiting manufacturing hubs such as Taiwan, China and Korea. Until recently, Stanion had zero allocation to emerging markets, but he has started buying debt. He is holding off on equities pending proof of China's stabilization but has a positive view.

"We are expecting ... higher double-digits (returns) for places like emerging markets as a whole. It could well take some months before the rally gets established," he told the London leg of the summit.

OUTFLOWS TO INFLOWS

With its growth premium to richer peers hitting 16-year lows, the developing world will see the first net capital outflow this year since 1988, according to the Institute of

International Finance, the world's most closely watched monitor of capital flows to emerging markets.

Around \$60 billion has exited mutual funds dedicated to emerging stocks and bonds this year, according to fund tracker EPFR Global. Shares in EM-focused asset managers such as Ashmore and Aberdeen have fallen 10 to 20 percent this year. Many remain cautious - Bonnie Baha at DoubleLine Capital in New York sees more pitfalls ahead, especially from the stronger dollar. But others see value beneath the rubble. Aberdeen CIO Anne Richards, for instance, predicts double-digit equity gains in 2016. "The elastic is a bit stretched and it gets stretched to a point when value hunters start to sniff around," said Richards, who runs \$480 billion. "You can buy higher return-on-equity companies with lower multiples right across EM ... We can buy loads of companies that have lower debt-to-equity and we can buy them for less." — Reuters



ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (L) meets with Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos at the presidential palace in Athens yesterday. — AFP

GREECE PASSES BAILOUT BILL
BUT GOVT MAJORITY SHRINKS

EXPULSION OF TWO LAWMAKERS WEAKENS COALITION MAJORITY

ATHENS: Greece approved a reform bill on Thursday to secure further bailout funds from its international lenders but Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras' parliamentary majority shrank to just three seats after two dissenting lawmakers were expelled. The bill, outlining regulation on tax arrears and home foreclosures, paves the way for the disbursement of 2 billion euros (\$2.15 billion) to pay state arrears and a further 10 billion euro to recapitalize Greece's top four banks.

The reforms were agreed by Tsipras' government and its lenders on Tuesday after weeks of negotiations and are key for it to complete the first review of a new aid program worth up to 86 billion euros which Greece signed up to this summer. However the defections of Nikos Nikolopoulos of the right-wing Independent Greeks party and Stathis Panagoulis of Tsipras' Syriza party further weakened the left-right coalition.

Nikolopoulos voted against the bailout bill, while Panagoulis abstained. Both were expelled from the ruling coalition's parliamentary group, meaning the government can now count on 153 votes in the 300-seat chamber. That is exactly the number of "yes" votes obtained by the bill on Thursday.

A senior government official said the government was determined to carry on implementing the bailout program. The bill approved on Thursday provides foreclosure protection for primary homes to about 60 percent of mortgages among an estimated 400,000 homeowners whose loans have soured during the financial crisis. About a quarter of them - families with incomes below the poverty line - were accorded full protection from foreclosure. The rest were given protection for a three-year period provided they restructured their debts with their banks.

The issue has been a major sticking point

in talks with lenders. Tsipras had told Greeks no one would seize their homes. "I refuse to throw onto the street borrowers fighting for their lives, leaving them to the mercy of the banks that became richer during the years of corruption," Panagoulis, a leftist, said in a statement as parliament voted.

Dozens of people protested in central Athens on Thursday. "The government had said they would not confiscate a single home but today they crushed all our rights," said Giorgos Tzifonios, a retired steelmaker who was demonstrating outside the Bank of Greece. Earlier on Thursday, leftist lawmaker and former government spokesman Gabriel Sakellaridis resigned from parliament saying he could no longer support the bailout measures. However, his resignation will have no impact on the government's parliamentary majority since he was replaced by State Reform Minister Christoforos Vernardakis. — Reuters

INFLATION FIGURES,
US DATA IN FOCUS FOR
TOKYO INVESTORS

TOKYO: Investors will keep tabs on Japanese inflation figures and hints of supportive government policy next week for key trading cues, as well as the latest US economic data.

The United States is slated to release revised third quarter gross domestic product figures and existing home sales data for October. The numbers will provide more clarity about the health of the world's top economy, analysts said.

"The US economy will be in good condition if the housing figures turn out well, giving a sense of security to the Japanese market," said Hiroaki Hiwata, strategist at Toyo Securities.

"I think that investors will also focus on Japan's consumer price index," he told AFP, referring to the October inflation figures. Japan will also announce unemployment and consumption data for October next Friday. Yesterday, Tokyo stocks closed at a fresh three-month high as last minute bargain hunting erased losses from earlier in the day. The benchmark index dropped as much as 0.73 percent in intraday trading before recovering into positive territory shortly before the close, rising for the fourth session in a row.

The gains came as uncertainty about the direction of US monetary policy faded to the background on the release of the minutes of the Federal Reserve's October meeting, said Hiwata, who expects the market to break through the 20,000-point barrier.

The Fed minutes showed US policymakers were increasingly confident in the outlook of the US economy. The Nikkei 225 index at the Tokyo Stock Exchange gained 0.10 percent, or 20.00 points, to 19,879.81. For the week, the index added 1.44 percent.

The wider Topix index of all first-section shares finished up 0.17 percent, or 2.80 points, at 1,603.18. Over the week, the index rose 1.09 percent. "There's a lack of catalysts for the market but some people might trade to adjust their positions," Ichiro Yamada, general manager of equities at Fukoku Mutual Life Insurance Co, told Bloomberg News. "If the market is going anywhere, then up is the most likely direction."

In share trading yesterday, Toyota ended down 0.48 percent at 7,583 yen, while Nissan dropped 0.38 percent to 1,304.5 yen and Sony lost 0.36 percent to 3,285 yen. Embattled electronics maker Sharp soared nearly five percent on media reports Thursday that it expects its TV making business to return to profit next fiscal year.

Sharp, which posted a whopping six-month net loss of nearly \$700 million in October, finished up 4.76 percent at 132 yen yesterday. On Thursday, the Bank of Japan kept monetary policy unchanged, saying the world's number three economy "has continued to recover moderately", although it admitted exports and output had been hit by a slowdown in overseas economies.

Official data released Monday showed that Japan fell into recession in the six months to September—the second time in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's near three-year premiership. — AFP

FOR CHINA CARMAKERS, TAX CUT MAY MEAN DRIVING BLIND BEYOND 2016

GUANGZHOU, China: China's move to cut tax on small-engine cars may revive sales growth in 2016 only to leave the world's biggest auto market running on empty in years to come, analysts warn, raising the specter of industry restructuring at the end of the road.

As one of China's biggest auto shows got under way in Guangzhou yesterday, sector watchers said sales may rise from 1-8 percent next year after Beijing cut taxes to coax buyers who had turned fretful over China's slowing economic growth. The wide range of forecasts highlights the uncertainty now clouding China's auto market and the tax cut's impact. The 2016 projections could

mean improvement on the 2 percent growth seen for this year. Yet many analysts see the tax cut as "pulling forward" future car sales, and are lowering forecasts for 2017 and 2018 towards a single-digit percentage level that they say may force carmakers and Beijing to embrace a shake-out.

"China would have then no choice but to allow some painful restructuring to occur," said John Humphrey, a senior analyst for JD Power. Three or more years with growth "around 2 or 3 or 4 percent" would render the status quo of Beijing support through times of weaker sales growth "untenable", Humphrey said.

At the Guangzhou show, Weiming Soh,

vice president of sales for Volkswagen AG, predicted China's passenger vehicle market will grow 3-5 percent next year. "It's going to be better than 2015," Soh said, "I would say not as good as before." Benefiting from decades of double-digit percentage sales growth as it rose from humble beginnings, China's auto sector has yet to experience significant restructuring.

At times when China's carmakers have run into temporary sales dips, Beijing has stepped in with policy support, such as tax cuts and purchase subsidies. With the economy slowing, squeezing the government of tax revenue, automakers wouldn't be able to count on further policy support, analysts say.

FALTERING ECONOMY

The latest tax cut - on vehicles with 1.6 litre or smaller engines - was introduced on Oct. 1 after sales had threatened to slip into negative territory as the economy faltered.

Authorities similarly cut taxes in 2009 to boost car sales, only to see a negative correction once the breaks expired, said John Zeng, an analyst for LMC Automotive Consulting. LMC raised its 2016 forecast for passenger vehicle growth to 8.2 percent after October's move, but lowered its sales forecast for next two years: it now sees 2017 growth at 4.5 percent. For now, carmakers are standing by long-term sales, production and investment plans in China. — Reuters

CHINA BREAKS UP \$64BN UNDERGROUND BANKING

BEIJING: Chinese authorities have uncovered the country's biggest underground banking case involving transactions totalling more than 410 billion yuan (\$64 billion), official media reported, part of a drive to combat illegal capital outflows. The investigation, which started in September and focused on the coastal province of Zhejiang, found that dozens of Hong Kong-registered shell companies forged more than 1.3 million fake transactions to transfer money offshore, the official People's Daily reported yesterday.

China started cracking down on underground banks in April and has so far uncovered more than 170 cases of money laundering and illegal fund transfers, involving more than 800 billion yuan (\$125.34 billion). The cases come as capital outflows reach hundreds of billions of dollars, triggering alarm in some circles. A hundred suspects from eight gangs were detained in the latest case, the official Xinhua News Agency said. The principle suspect used non-resident accounts to facilitate more than 14,000 counterparties for the transfer of billions of yuan offshore, the newspaper said. Twenty-one counterparties' bank accounts illegally transferred more than 1 billion yuan overseas, the People's Daily said, adding that the suspect used the inability of some onshore commercial banks to identify non-residential accounts to help his operation.

Clients were asked to transfer yuan to domestic accounts and the money was then transferred to non-residential accounts the suspect controlled. Those accounts were then used to buy foreign currency with forged trade transactions, and directly funneled the cash to offshore banks in Hong Kong and elsewhere, the newspaper said. The People's Daily said one of the offshore banks used to receive foreign currency was HSBC Holdings. HSBC told Reuters it could not comment on individual cases but it has "zero tolerance" for money laundering. The underground banking operation profited as much as 1.53 million yuan a day, with an average profit of 2 million yuan per month, the newspaper reported citing police.

Another suspect registered 12 shell companies in the north-western province of Ningxia and illegally obtained 38.6 million yuan of export incentives from the local government by using an underground bank to report fictitious trade transactions, the People's Daily said. — Reuters



Military veteran Mark Cannon, of Miami (right) talks with Cynthia Carcillo, a veterans outreach representative for Career Source Broward, about employment opportunities at a job fair for veterans, in Pembroke Pines. The Labor Department reported on Thursday that fewer Americans sought unemployment aid a week earlier, fresh evidence that companies are confident enough in the economy to hold onto their workers. — AP

ABN AMRO MAKES RECORD RETURN TO DUTCH BOURSE

THE HAGUE: Seven years after nationalization, ABN Amro bounced back onto the stock market yesterday with shares rising in what is seen as one of the biggest IPOs by a European lender since the financial crisis. Top bank officials clapped and cheered at the Amsterdam stock exchange as the share price climbed steadily in early trading. Chairman of the bank's board, Gerrit Zalm, rang the gong symbolically marking the start of trading.

"We are back, and that's great," he said, adding his bank was "solid, and offered an attractive yield." "The process has gone well," agreed Dutch Finance Minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem, hailing the return to the market of the country's third largest bank.

It marks a new era for the institution after a troubled patch triggered by the 2008 crisis. The Dutch government, which led the bailout during the tumult of the financial meltdown, is hoping to recoup some of the 22 billion euros spent propping up the bank. Some two hours after opening 2.30 percent up at 18.18 percent, shares consolidated early gains settling at around 18.36 euros, up some 3.44 percent.

Initially, the price per share had been fixed at between 16 to 20 euros. But ABN Amro said

in a statement early Friday that the price had been set at 17.75 euros a share.

That will raise some 3.3 billion euros (\$3.5 billion), the bank said in a joint statement with the state administrators of the offering, adding it priced ABN Amro's current value at 16.7 billion euros. The government was monitoring carefully yesterday's IPO, Dijsselbloem said. "Naturally we want to see a small upwards movement, so there is no disappointment. As you know we have another 80 percent of the shares to sell," he added.

ABN Amro has confirmed that a further 3.0 percent share is available and "can be exercised to cover over-allotments or short positions" if there is a high demand. "It's a successful IPO," analyst Jos Versteeg, from the Dutch bank Theodoor Gilissen, told AFP.

"It has been properly handled. And it's a good price per share," he said, adding analysts did not see much room for big future price movement. To avoid all the shares being snapped up by major investment funds and other institutional investors, ABN Amro held back 10 percent for individual buyers in the Netherlands. Although the government has said the bailout cost it around 22 billion euros,

its main audit body estimated the true price tag at about 32 billion euros, Dutch media has reported.

Troubled years

The Netherlands' third-largest bank behind ING and Rabobank, ABN Amro traces its roots back to the 19th century. It was listed on the Amsterdam stock exchange before being bought in 2007 by a consortium consisting of Spanish lender Santander, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Belgian-Dutch outfit Fortis. But the 71 billion-euro-deal, one of the largest in banking history, proved calamitous for the three buyers.

Royal Bank of Scotland is now 73 percent owned by the British government after a £45.5 billion (\$71 billion, 53 billion euro) rescue in 2008.

Fortis was also dismantled during 2008 to avoid bankruptcy. Its Dutch activities, including its share in ABN Amro, were bailed out by the Dutch government, which then merged it back into ABN Amro Bank, and it has held the reins ever since. Today ABN Amro is largely a commercial bank focusing significantly on the highly competitive mortgage market. — AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan Finance Minister Ravi Karunanayake arrives at the parliament building to present the 2016 budget in Colombo yesterday. — AFP

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2015

Weekender

Kuwait Times
THE FIRST PAPER IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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Singer Natalia Lafourcade poses with the trophy during the 16th Annual Latin Grammy Awards on Thursday, in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

Lafourcade wins 4 Latin Grammys, Guerra takes 3

SEE PAGES 28 & 29

Kim Cattrall pulls out of West End play with a mystery illness



The 'Sex and the City' star was set to play the lead role in 'Linda' at the Royal Court Theatre in Chelsea, London from November 26 onwards but has now dropped out after receiving medical advice. She said in a statement released by the theatre: "With great sadness and at the advice of my doctors, I will not be able to continue with the Royal Court's production of Linda. "I appreciate all the support I have received from the theatre and cannot thank them enough for allowing me to put my health first." The 59-year-old actress - who was born in Liverpool - chose not to disclose her medical condition at this point. The actress Noma Dumezweni will now replace her as Linda, a 55-year-old woman embarking on ambitious plans to save the world. The Royal Court's artistic director Vicky Featherstone said: "We are all deeply sorry that Kim is unable to continue with the production and she has our warmest wishes. We are extremely grateful and also thrilled that Noma Dumezweni, one of our most brilliant actors, has agreed to take on this challenge at such short notice. We are delighted that in spite of these difficulties Penelope Skinner's important play can open to our audiences with minimal disruption."

One Direction think Zayn Malik wants to 'distance' himself from them

The 'Drag Me Down' hitmakers admitted they are no longer in frequent contact with their former bandmate - who quit the group in March - and believe he wants to put some space between them. Asked which band member was closest to Zayn, Louis Tomlinson said: "I think when we were in the band, yeah probably, maybe that was me..." He then hesitated when talk show host Jonathan Ross asked if they are still close, then when the presenter queried when they last spoke, Louis said: "I don't know a couple of weeks ago or something... I think he wants to distance himself a little bit." However, Louis insists he and the rest of One Direction - Liam Payne, Niall Horan and Harry Styles - understood Zayn's reasons for leaving and think it is fine he is now going his own way. He said: "You know, I think we all kind of noticed that he wasn't thoroughly enjoying it and we were and you know it can be an intense job at times and I think it got a little bit too much for him and he wanted to

be in a different place and that's fair enough and he's got his own way now so fair dos." Elsewhere in the interview, Harry insisted he "didn't know" the group's song 'Perfect' was speculated to be about his relationship with former girlfriend Taylor Swift and refused to confirm if that was the case. He said: "OK, I didn't know that was the speculation. "I'd say I think everyone writes from personal experience and I think you draw from lots of different things and songs aren't always necessarily about what people may take them to be about, sometimes they are."



Kim Kardashian finding her pregnancy wardrobe 'uncomfortable'

The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star - who already has two-year-old daughter North and is due to give birth next month - has sported a number of tight-fitting garments while pregnant with her second child but confided in super fan Charlotte Heyes, 18, that she isn't feeling very glamorous. Charlotte - who was flown from Bolton, North West England to Los Angeles to have lunch with Kim for her birthday last month - said: "Her bump was really big and she said it was uncomfortable, especially in tight dresses. "Kim told me she's worried she may suffer from pre-eclampsia, the same condition she had with North." And Kim also confided in Charlotte - who was chosen to meet Kim after the reality star's team saw her social media fan pages - that she isn't looking forward to giving birth. Charlotte told Closer mag-

azine: "When I saw Kim, she looked amazing. We sat down for lunch and chatted like best friends. "Kim revealed she's terrified of giving birth again and admitted she wasn't enjoying this pregnancy." As well as Kim, the student also got to meet her husband Kanye West and their daughter North at the luxury Four Seasons Hotel. She said: "Kanye and North came to the hotel too - he was friendly and North was so cute. "Kim gave me a gift basket with a note thanking me for celebrating with her. It was the best experience of my life."



Khloe Kardashian blamed her Twitter rant on 'antibiotics and painkillers'

The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star hit out at critics on social media who said she should chose between her current boyfriend James Harden and estranged husband Lamar Odom - who she is holding a bedside vigil for as he recovers from a four-day drink and drug binge but later claimed medication she is currently taking had influenced her rant. She tweeted: "antibiotics + painkillers + tweeting does not equal anything good. Khloe has reportedly contracted a staph infection at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, where Lamar is currently recovering, and her family are very worried about her. A source said: "It's so scary. She's so sick." And the 31-year-old beauty's mother Kris Jenner is said to be particularly

"freaked out" as her father, Robert Houghton, died after contracting staph when he was hospitalised after a car accident in 1975. Khloe's sister Kim Kardashian West has been ordered not to visit her younger sibling because she is eight months pregnant and doctors have deemed it too dangerous. Khloe - who recently called off her divorce from Lamar as he returns to health - had hit out on Twitter following posts from other users who urged her to "pick one or the other", insisting she was still planning to divorce the basketball player - as he "went against" their wedding vows. She wrote: "You should have said those to the man who went against all our vows. Judge yourself. "Divorce is still going forward."





Adele's son 'punishes' her when she spends too much time away from him

The 'Hello' singer has opened up about juggling her music career with parenthood and confessed her three-year-old son Angelo with partner Simon Konecki makes her feel guilty when she's away from home for too long. She said: "You know what the killer thing is? When you get home and cannot wait to see them and they punish you. "It is the worst when they kick off for you, and all you want to do is love them, and they are like, I don't want to play with you. "It is like the hardest thing ever. They make you cry and that is why they do it. They are so clever." However, the 27-year-old star - whose new album '25' is out next week - tries to take Angelo with her as often as possible when she's travelling. Speaking on Sirius XM radio station in New York, she added: "Even the time making the record, the guilt. I don't think any of us really get over it. It makes me emotional when I talk about it actually. "Leaving him when he would rather be with me is hard. But he comes everywhere with me. "He is in New York and he is having the greatest time ever."

Johnny Depp will always love Vanessa Paradis

The pair - who have children Lily-Rose, 16 and Jack, 12, together - split in 2012 and although Johnny has since married Amber Heard, 29, he admitted Vanessa, 42, will always have a special place in his heart. Johnny, 52, told the Daily Mail newspaper: "She's a great mother and a great woman. And when you've got a woman who's been good to you, who you have a couple of kids with, you don't just abandon ship. The love may change, but you keep loving her, no matter what." Meanwhile, Johnny revealed that he was surprised to find love with Amber because "actors and actresses don't find it easy to get on together". He said: "In a lot of ways I am everything Amber wouldn't want to be with, and in a lot of ways, she's everything I wouldn't want to be with, because actors and actresses don't find it easy to get on together. 'But she has a very good perspective on her career - she's a very smart woman who has a lot to say about a lot of things. Plus, she's into old blues musicians - she has the ability to bring up the names of really obscure old guys like

Slim Harpo or Tampa Red - and when I saw that, well, there was no way around it. She's a wonderful girl and I'm very lucky." And Amber also has a great relationship with Johnny's children. He said: "They are all close, like pals, and it's been great. It's amazing when you see things that you are proud of in your children. They're good kids - smart, polite and caring, and they've turned out incredibly well, especially having lived alongside me, because most parents' jobs don't require the sort of weirdness that mine does! "Jack draws really well and he also plays music very well. But aside from being in school plays, he hasn't shown any desire to be an actor, I'm relieved to say."



Will Smith sang on stage for the first time at Latin Grammys

The 'Gettin' Jiggy wit It' star showed off his rapping skills, performing with Colombian group Bomba Estereo on their collaborative track 'Fiesta'. The actor-and-singer rapped the lyrics trying to "find my Sofia Vergara" in both Spanish and English, and performed to the crowd at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas with his wife Jada Pinkett Smith and eldest son Trey Smith, 23, in the audience. The performance comes shortly after the 47-year-old star announced he's planning a tour with DJ Jazzy Jeff and is also working on new music. He previously said: "[I want to] get out there and do it for real. I keep a stash. I have

a couple new things." The Grammy-winning musician never got to tour his music last time round due to the success of his American sitcom 'The Fresh Prince of Bel Air', which he worked on from 1990. Will - who is better known for his acting - has also been celebrated for his music and has had several hit songs, including the soundtrack to his sitcom show.



All previous 'American Idol' judges will return for the final season

The long-running show is set to end after 15 seasons and host Ryan Seacrest revealed he has been in contact with all of the panellists, past and present, to ensure they mark the end of the series. He told 'Access Hollywood': "I've spoken to all of them recently and we as a team have talked to them about coming back to do something for the final season. "They are going to do it, it's just a matter of figuring what to do with them." The FOX show kicked off with Simon Cowell, Paula Abdul and Randy Jackson as judges and had a number of other stars join over the years. Upon the news of its cancellation, Simon paid tribute saying: "We had a blast! Me, Paula, Randy, Ryan - and not forgetting Brian [Dunkleman, season one co-host]. Thanks to the fans we were able to make some great shows and found some amaz-

ing artists. "Fox took a risk on a brand new show and I want to thank them for giving us the opportunity. They really were great times." Simon - who quit the show in 2010 to launch 'The X Factor' in America - also thanked the entire country for enjoying the show for so long. Among those who have been on the judging panel during its run are Mariah Carey, Nicki Minaj, Ellen DeGeneres, Steven Tyler and Kara DioGuardi.



Charlie Sheen is set to write his autobiography

The 50-year-old actor revealed he is HIV positive earlier this week, and since his confession on the 'Today' show, his manager Mark Burg has reportedly been "buried with offers" from publishers who are desperate for the 'Anger Management' star to tell his colourful life story. The former 'Two and a Half Men' actor revealed he had been diagnosed with the disease four years ago after initially believing he had a brain tumour. He said: "I thought based on migraines and cluster headaches and sweating the bed for nights in a row that I had a brain tumour. I thought it was over. After a battery of tests they told me this is what's going on. It's a hard three letters to absorb, it's a turning point in one's life." And Charlie also hopes that going public with his diagnosis will help to reduce the stigma surrounding HIV. He said: "I have a responsibility now to better myself and to help a lot of other people and hopefully with what we're doing today others will come forward and say, 'thanks Charlie, thanks for kicking the door open'.





British singer Adele performs on stage at the 85th Annual Academy Awards in Hollywood, California. On Adele's third album "25," which came out yesterday, the singer has little interest in gloating about fame or experimenting in style, instead returning to the emotional depths that have so resonated with her vast fan base. — AFP

Adele's triumphant return a sentimental look back

Adele has had nearly five years to savor the massive success of her last album but, on a release that could be even bigger, she is looking back wistfully on what once had been. On Adele's third album "25," which came out Friday, the singer has little interest in gloating about fame or experimenting in style, instead returning to the emotional depths that have so resonated with her vast fan base. Adele, her soaring but soulful voice possessing the same power, retraces the memories of her working-class childhood around London as she reflects from her new, uncomfortable perch.

"I feel like my life is flashing by / And all I can do is watch and cry," she sings to a delicate, Spanish-tinged guitar on "Million Years Ago." "I miss the air, I miss my friends / I miss my mother / I miss it when life was a party to be thrown / But that was a million years ago." Adele's last album, "21," was led by the raw intimacy of the heartache song "Someone Like You." But the man who broke Adele's heart—whoever he was—is long gone, and Adele has since become a mother and found new love. Yet romantic tumult clearly still has a hold over Adele. "All I Ask," one of the most emotionally searing songs on the album, intimates at a future rather than a past breakup. In a booming voice sure to leave many listeners in tears or at least with goose bumps, Adele sings over the piano, "All I ask is / If this is my last night with you / Hold me like I'm more than just a friend / Give me a memory I can use ... 'Cause what if I never love again."



Great hope for music industry

Adele—who, despite the album's title, is 27 — has described "25" as a look at her life "teetering on the edge of being an old adolescent and a fully fledged adult."

Adele owes her success in no small part to her unpretentious, non-rock star image. She is not known to shake her body on stage or trash hotel rooms and is marking Friday's release by singing at Joe's Pub, a cozy club in New York's Greenwich Village.

Yet Adele nonetheless is carrying the hopes of the music industry. "21" was the top-selling album in the United States for two consecutive years and, by a comfortable margin, the biggest release in Britain so far this century. The music industry, which has been stagnant after stemming years of heavy losses, believes "25" could be the most successful album in more than a decade. In the United States alone, Adele's label has shipped 3.6 million physical copies to stores, according to industry journal *Billboard*. The shipment numbers are the highest since "No Strings Attached" by boy band NSYNC in 2000, which was the year before Apple's iTunes shook up the music business by mainstreaming digital sales. In a sign of confidence in "25," the album will not be available on streaming sites such as Spotify, making Adele one of the rare artists along with Taylor Swift to resist the fast-growing sector of on-demand online music. "Hello," the first song on "25," already broke the record for the biggest US debut for a single since the advent of iTunes.

Memories past and future

Like Swift, Adele has stayed at a small independent label—in Adele's case, London-based XL Recordings—that allowed her to keep strong editorial control. Adele invariably had her pick of the world's songwriters for such an eagerly awaited album.

"All I Ask" was co-written by another star, Bruno Mars. Canadian indie rocker Tobias Jesso Jr is credited on another of the more intense songs, "When We Were Young," whose bittersweet harmonies and backup choir have echoes of 1980s pop hits.

"You look like a movie / You look like a song / My God, this reminds me / Of when we were young," Adele sings to chords on a piano once owned by composer Philip Glass. Yet however much Adele wants in "25" to return to the world of memories, she knows she cannot. On "River Lea," Adele sees the Greater London waterway as a metaphor for childhood insecurities, yet she struggles to break free. "I can't go back," she sings, "but the reeds are growing out of my fingertips." —AFP

Bowie makes cosmic return with first single from new album

British rock icon David Bowie yesterday took another dive into the space theme that has run throughout his career, releasing "Blackstar", the first single from his album of the same name.

A 9:59-long music video appeared on YouTube and immediately had fans heralding a return to form for the 68-year-old and the latest chapter in the story of Major Tom—the fictional astronaut frequently referenced in his work.

"Super excited for the album now, it's going to be weird Bowie!" wrote commenter Marc Skeldon below the video, which had already clocked up more than 200,000 views. The video begins on a distant planet, where a young woman discovers a decomposed astronaut while Bowie chants over the top in a haunting Middle Eastern scale.

"This completes the trilogy: Space Oddity (introduction of Major Tom), Ashes to Ashes (the resurrection of Major Tom), BLACKSTAR (the god status of Major Tom). Well done Dave!" wrote commenter Tony Martin.

Packed with religious imagery, artistic references and nods to the past, the disturbing tension of both the song and video is only briefly released with a section of pure pop midway through.

The album "Blackstar" will be launched on January 8, 2016 — the artist's 69th birthday—and follows 2013's "The Next Day", one of more than 20 albums Bowie has released over a career spanning more than four decades.

A pioneer of glam rock, Bowie has long pursued interests in art and theatre and recently announced a series of new projects. The single is being used as the opening title song to the television crime series "The Last Panthers", currently being shown in Britain and France, Bowie's first foray into television music in two decades.

He also penned the music for "Lazarus", a play that due to open in New York next month that is inspired by the science fiction novel "The Man Who Fell to Earth". — AFP



British rock legend David Bowie performs on stage at the Bercy stadium in Paris, France. British rock icon David Bowie yesterday took another dive into the space theme that has run throughout his career, releasing "Blackstar", the first single from his album of the same name. The single is being used as the opening title song to the television crime series "The Last Panthers", currently being shown in Britain and France, Bowie's first foray into television music in two decades. — AFP



Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Tod Machover, bottom center, talks to a person monitoring sound during a break at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, in Detroit. —AP



Tod Machover talks to Detroit Achievement Academy third-graders after a rehearsal at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. — AP

MIT professor creates symphony featuring sounds of Detroit

International composer, inventor and Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Tod Machover spent the past year contemplating the question: "What does Detroit sound like?"

His answer comes to life on Friday when "Symphony in the D" debuts at Detroit's Orchestra Hall.

Machover's original musical composition, which he created with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, is a blend of melodies played by traditional orchestral instruments combined with everyday Detroit sounds collected, digitized and translated into music via software developed by Machover and his team at MIT's Media Lab.



Tod Machover

The sounds, some submitted by the public and others gathered by Machover during periodic visits to the Motor City over the past year, include crowd noise from a baseball game, the clanking and drilling of workers at an auto assembly plant, and the pulsing beat of a street drummer banging on plastic buckets.

Machover had 15,000 sound files - 100 hours of audio in all - from which to compose the piece. "I really wanted it to be a portrait of the city, so I invited everybody in the city - anybody who wanted to - to collaborate," Machover said.

Detroit is sonically represented not only in submissions from the public, but also by city residents themselves. Special guests will join music director Leonard

Slatkin and the DSO on stage, where they will perform original compositions, read poetry and provide visions of Detroit's past and future.

The in-person contributors include residents of a senior housing complex; a church choir made up of members of the city's Chaldean community; and a quartet of Detroit Achievement Academy third-graders, one of whom composed a piece of music that will be played.

Kyle Smitley, who founded Detroit Achievement Academy, said she wonders when it will set in for her young students that they took part in such an innovative project.

"Maybe in middle school, maybe in college, they might look back and say: 'Oh. That was insane,'" Smitley said.

Funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Machover's musical portrait of Detroit represents his first such effort in the U.S. He has completed similar "city symphonies" in Toronto; Edinburgh, Scotland; Perth, Australia; and Lucerne, Switzerland.

Machover has been contacted by other municipalities around the world about having him capture their sonic essence in music and hasn't yet decided when or if he'll do another.

Before such a determination is made, however, he first must unveil his ode to Detroit, which also will be performed today. "It somehow sounds like something that could only have been done here. And that makes me really happy," Machover said. —AP



Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Tod Machover greets supporters after a rehearsal at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, in Detroit. The DSO has teamed up with the international composer to create an original musical work designed to answer the question: "What does Detroit sound like?" The result is "Symphony in D," a blend of melodies played by traditional orchestral instruments combined with everyday Detroit sounds collected, digitized, and translated into music via software developed by Machover. — AP

Interracial pair's battle for right to marry

Vintage cars lined the Virginia drag racing track where men and women wearing high-waisted pants and long skirts waited eagerly for popcorn at the concession stand and children darted in and out of the crowd. But as soon as the movie director yelled "cut," the actors relaxed, chatted and pulled on coats to stay warm in between shots on a cold, rainy afternoon.

It was the final day of filming for "Loving," which transformed the Richmond Dragway and other locations across Virginia into scenes from the 1950s and '60s to tell the story of Richard and Mildred Loving - a couple with a bond so strong that it dismantled laws against interracial marriage, thrusting them into one of the most pivotal moments in American history.

Richard Loving, a white man, and Mildred Loving, a black woman, were thrown into a Virginia jail in 1958 for "unlawful cohabitation" a few weeks after getting married in Washington, DC. They avoided a one-year jail sentence only by leaving the state. Although they never aspired to become political lightning rods, they wanted to come home. So they fought all the way to the US Supreme Court, which struck down the Virginia law and those then in effect in roughly one-third of the states in 1967.

Filmmakers hope the Lovings' story will send a strong message about marriage at a time when debates over who should be allowed to wed still linger. The film comes on the heels of the Supreme Court victory for same-sex marriage advocates, who repeatedly invoked the story of the Lovings during their fight for legalization. The Lovings "were kind of these perfect candidates to talk about an issue about marriage equality and marriage rights without ever really bringing it up," said writer and director Jeff Nichols, best known for his film "Mud."

"Instead of talking about who deserves to be married or the meaning of marriage, let's just talk about people that love each other in a really straightforward, really honest way. Let's show people that and hopefully that will do the heavy lifting for us in terms of the debate," he said.

Inspiration

Nichols' movie isn't a courtroom drama, but a story about a love that shines through actions more than words, said Joel Edgerton, an Australian-born actor who recently starred alongside Johnny Depp in "Black Mass" and plays mild-mannered Richard Loving. Ethiopian-born Ruth Negga, known for her role on the TV show Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D., plays his wife.

"They weren't waving a flag for civil rights change. They weren't looking beyond themselves, I don't think," Edgerton said. "What it really is to me and to Jeff is a love story, primarily, and all that other political stuff that surrounded it enriches the story and provides other meanings for people to take away," he said.

As filmmakers raced to shoot the final scenes before the sun set on a gray afternoon in Virginia last week, actors and crew members who had been putting in 12-and-14-hour days since September handed each other cards and reminisced about their time on the set. They went silent when the camera started rolling and Edgerton as Richard Loving watched his car speed down the track. The film is expected to be ready for theaters sometime this spring, but a release date has not yet been set. Nichols said he invented some characters and scenes, but sought to stay as true to the Lovings' story as possible. He drew inspiration from an HBO documentary about the couple released in 2012. His film includes shots of the Virginia courthouse where the Lovings were sentenced and the jail in which they were initially held. Philip Hirschkop, who represented the Lovings before the Supreme Court and visited the set, said Edgerton and Negga captured the essence of the Lovings as well as he could remember. But the couple, who were averse to publicity, probably wouldn't be thrilled to see their lives played out on the big screen, he said. — AP



Joel Edgerton (right), an Australian-born actor and Ethiopian-born Ruth Negga.



Jennifer Flavin, actor/producer Sylvester Stallone, Sistine Rose Stallone, Sophia Rose Stallone and Scarlet Rose Stallone attend the Los Angeles World Premiere of New Line Cinema's and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer "Creed", in Westwood, California, on Thursday. — AFP

'Star Wars' sold over \$50m in advanced tickets

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens" is breaking records and it's still a month to go before the hotly anticipated space opera opens in theaters. Insiders confirm that the seventh film in the hugely popular franchise has generated more than \$50 million in advance ticket sales.

Fandango tells Variety that the picture is the biggest pre-seller in the history of the ticketing company, trumping the first "Hunger Games." Most Imax screenings have sold out, but outside of those premium formats, there are tickets remaining to many shows on opening weekend. Theater chains are continually adding extra showtimes to keep up with demand, a Fandango spokesman said. MovieTickets.com, the country's other major online ticketer reports that

advance sales for Star Wars represent the most tickets ever sold for one film by the company when compared to all other films at the same point in roll out.

The excitement surrounding the new "Star Wars" is a mixed blessing for Disney, which is trying to reboot the series and kick-off a new trilogy and spin-off adventures. While it doubtless is galvanized by the reception, it must also manage expectations.

Pundits are already predicting that "The Force Awakens" will sprint past the \$208.8 million earned by "Jurassic World's" debut to score the biggest opening in history. But no film has ever opened to more than \$100 million in December and the Christmas movie-going season is competitive one. At the very least, "The Force Awakens" seems

destined to eclipse the \$85 million bow of "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey" to set a new benchmark for December openings. Another major question is what kind of multiple will it have on its opening weekend. "Avatar," the highest-grossing film of all time, opened to a respectable \$77 million, but what made it a phenomenon was its endurance. Its debut was just 10% of the film's \$750 million global gross, whereas "Jurassic World's" kick-off was 32% of its \$652 million stateside haul.

It's too early to give a sense of how many theaters "The Force Awakens" will screen on, but sources predict it will be on at least 4,000 theaters. The Wall Street Journal first reported "The Force Awakens" record sales. — Reuters



Rich, famous to get special terminal at LA airport

Los Angeles International Airport officials have approved opening a special terminal for the rich and famous to wait for their flights far from the paparazzi and ruffraff.

The lounge, which was given the green light on Thursday, eclipses even the business class and first class areas available at major airports. "I am very excited about this service for celebrity and VIP guests at LAX," said Deborah Flint, executive director of Los Angeles World Airports.

"We are very focused on making LAX a world-class airport and offering a wide variety of amenities," Flint said in an e-mail to AFP.

The "remote lounge" as it is called, was approved by the Los Angeles Airport Commission and marks the first such space in a United States airport. Similar areas already exist however in London, Amsterdam, Istanbul, Dubai, Paris, Moscow, Munich, Frankfurt, Geneva, Madrid and Zurich, according to a project proposal.

Both US authorities and the Transportation Security Administration support the idea, the proposal said. The terminal will be constructed in a hangar already in need of renovation, and requires an investment of some \$3 million (2.8 million euros) by security firm Gavin de Becker, which will manage the project.

Celebrities, business executives and other well-heeled individuals can expect to pay \$1,500 to \$1,800 to access the space, according to US media. —AFP



This photo provided by Disney Junior shows Fuli, Kion, Ono, Beshte, and Bunga in a scene from "The Lion Guard: Return of the Roar," a primetime television movie event premiering Sunday, Nov. 22, 2015, on the Disney Channel. The movie stars Rob Lowe, Gabrielle Union and James Earl Jones, reprising his iconic role as Mufasa. — AP



This photo provided by Disney Junior shows Kion, left, and Mufasa in a scene from "The Lion Guard: Return of the Roar". — AP

'Lion King'

franchise roars again with TV movie, series

When Ford Riley was tasked with adding a new TV project to Disney's treasured - and lucrative - "Lion King" screen and stage franchise, he knew he had to do right by it.

Mulling the original 1994 animated movie and its 1998 home video sequel, Riley decided that creating another offspring for lion king Simba and mate Nala would open up a world of possibilities. Their first-born, daughter Kiara, was destined to become the lion queen. But if she had a kid brother - a furry version of England's Prince Harry, runner-up to older sibling William in the crown sweepstakes - what would his fate be?

"I've got two kids, and it seems like in story-telling the second-born never gets a really good job. So I was eager to tell his story for the TV series and make him the hero," Riley said.

So Riley created male cub Kion as the star of both a Disney Channel movie, "The Lion Guard: Return of the Roar" airing 7 p.m. EST Sunday (and on Disney on-demand platforms Monday), and the Disney Junior series "The Lion Guard," debuting in January. The writer-producer hit on an important job for Kion: Protector of his family's African savannah "Pride Lands" and its circle

of life (just try not to hum the tune). To build a security force, he turns to his best buddies, a varied group who are among nature's fiercest, fastest, strongest and sharpest-eyed.

Meet the gang: Bunga the fearless honey badger; confident cheetah Fuli; Beshte the friendly hippo, and brainy egret Ono. While honoring the original film's "epic storytelling," Riley said, the new project also carries "a definite message of diversity with these different animals learning how to work together."

The TV movie is aimed at a general family audience, with the upcoming series intended for Disney Junior's target audience of 2- to 7-year-olds.

The movie's voice cast includes James Earl Jones and Ernie Sabella, reprising their original big-screen roles as Mufasa and Pumbaa; Rob Lowe as Simba; Gabrielle Union as Nala; Max Charles as Kion, and Eden Riegel as Kiara.

Trusted critic

Before pitching his self-described concept of "Lion King" meets "The Avengers" to Disney executives, Riley ran it by a trusted critic: His son, Quinn, 12, who happens to be the younger sibling of 14-year-old Fiona, and whose own week-

ly superhero team game with his buddies helped inspire "The Lion Guard" idea.

"That's cool, dad," the then-8-year-old replied to the concept, and headed off to his bedroom - where Riley later found him playing his own version of "Lion Guard" with plastic animals.

"That's when I knew I had a great idea," Riley said. The new series is part of a vast and lucrative family tree. Besides the theatrical film, it includes the long-running, Tony Award-winning Broadway musical; attractions at the Disneyland and Walt Disney World parks; the 1990s TV series "The Lion King's Timon and Pumbaa," soundtracks and video games.

Disney declined to provide figures for the franchise's financial prowess, which includes a reported worldwide box-office gross of about \$1 billion for the original movie and \$6.2 billion for the stage show alone. But the company happily acknowledges its value to audiences.

Deeply touched families

"The story of 'The Lion King' has deeply touched families around the world since its original theatrical release 21 years ago," said Nancy Kanter, general manager for Disney Junior

Worldwide.

To connect with the original film in look as well as tone, Riley used the same 2D animation, with images hand-drawn on a computer, instead of the 3D computer-generated animation common on other Disney Junior shows.

Barry Atkinson, an artist who worked on the original "Lion King," was brought in to help with the background and "make it feel lush, like the Pride Lands did in the movie," Riley said.

Actor Jones' famously rich, booming voice was another key touchstone for "The Lion Guard." His involvement also provided a circle-of-life moment for Riley: Jones spoke at his New York University commencement, counseling graduates to embrace technology or get left behind.

"Many, many years later, I'm working with James Earl Jones, and we're connected digitally by a patch and the recording of his voice is all being done by computers. So I said to him, 'Thank you for the advice. That little piece of information made me look at technology as an opportunity.'" "He laughed and said, 'Really, it was about me trying to figure out how to work my cellphone.'" —AP

Lafourcade wins 4 Latin Grammys, Guerra takes 3



Natalia Lafourcade poses with the trophies during the 16th Annual Latin Grammy Awards. — AFP

Natalia Lafourcade was the big winner Thursday at the Latin Grammy Awards, making good on four of her five nominations for her album "Hasta la Raiz." But the Mexican singer-songwriter lost out on the top prize, album of the year, which went to Dominican bachata artist Juan Luis Guerra for "Todo Tiene su Hora."

Lafourcade still claimed two of the night's most prestigious awards, song of the year and record of the year for the title track of "Hasta la Raiz."

"My friend, how amazing that we made this disc together," Lafourcade said to her friend and collaborator Leonel Garcia, with whom she shared three nominations as cowriters of the album's title track. The biggest night in Latin music was presented in Spanish and English and featured a mix of rhythms, from alternative to mariachi.

Colorful performance mash-ups underscored the mix: Jamaican artist Omi shared the stage with reggaeton singer Nicky Jam, and Will Smith returned to his rap roots, performing "Fiesta" with Colombian trop-rockers Bomba Estereo.

The Latin Grammy Awards were broadcast live on Univision from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. For the first time, the telecast also reached viewers in China. Actresses Jacqueline Bracamontes and Roselyn Sanchez hosted the three-hour ceremony.

Lafourcade and Guerra each won two awards before the show even began. Her "Hasta la Raiz" claimed prizes for alternative album and song at the pre-telecast ceremony during which the bulk of the awards are presented. His "Todo Tiene su Hora" won for contemporary tropical album and its track "Tus Besos" was named best tropical song.

Wearing a blue suit and backed by a string section, the Latin Grammys' Person of the Year Roberto Carlos enchanted with a medley of his classics, including "Yo Te Amo" and "Propuesta." "Thank you all for this love," he said.

Rita Moreno delighted the audience when she busted out some reggaeton dance moves, belying her 84 years.



Musician Juan Luis Guerra poses with the trophy.

Things also got political, thanks to rockers Mana and Los Tigres del Norte, who urged fellow Hispanics to get out the vote. "This is how we can use our power," said Mana vocalist Fher as the group accepted their award for pop/rock album. "We have to exercise our right to vote, and vote for those who will give more quality (of life) to Latinos, to the candidates. Use your strength, Latinos!"

Los Tigres del Norte went further, hoisting a banner at the end of their performance that read, "Latinos united, don't vote for the racists." Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump drew ire from Hispanics and others when he said Mexican immigrants are rapists who bring drugs into the United States. Univision was among the companies that cut ties with Trump after the remarks. — AP



Monsieur Perine poses with the trophy for Best New Artist during the 16th Annual Latin Grammy Awards.



Espinoza Paz and the Mariachi Sol De Mexico, perform "Perdi La Pose" at the 16th annual Latin Grammy Awards.



Fher Olvera, of Mana, accepts the award for pop rock album for "Cama Incendiada" at the 16th annual Latin Grammy Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.



Mana poses with the trophy for Best Pop/Rock Album.



Motiff arrives for the 16th Annual Latin Grammy Awards.

Winners of 16th annual Latin Grammy Awards

Winners of the 16th annual Latin Grammy Awards, presented Thursday at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas:

Album of the year: "Todo Tiene su Hora," Juan Luis Guerra 4.40

Record of the year: "Hasta la Raiz," Natalia Lafourcade
Song of the year: "Hasta la Raiz," Leonel Garcia, Natalia Lafourcade

New artist: Monsieur Perine

Contemporary pop album: "Sirope," Alejandro Sanz

Urban music album: "El que Sabe, Sabe," Tego Calderon

Rock album: "B," Diamante Electrico

Alternative album: "Hasta la Raiz," Natalia Lafourcade

Salsa album: "Son de Panam·," Ruben Blades with Roberto Delgado

Folkloric album: "Balas y Chocolate," Lila Downs

Latin jazz album: "Jazz Meets The Classics," Paquito D'Rivera.



Nicky Jam (L) accepts the Best Urban Performance Grammy. — AFP



Gianluca Ginoble, from left, Ignazio Boschetto and Piero Barone, of Il Volo, pose in the press room at the 16th annual Latin Grammy Awards. — AP



J Balvin poses with the trophy during the 16th Annual Latin Grammy Awards.



SEOUL: In this Thursday July 16, 2015, file photo, South Korean high school students play games on their smartphones on a bench on the sidewalk in Seoul, South Korea. — AP

SOUTH KOREA CONSIDERS OPT OUT FOR CHILD MONITORING APP

SEOUL: South Korea is deciding whether it will allow parents to opt out of installing a monitoring app on their children's smartphones following criticism the system encourages a surveillance culture and has security flaws. Korea Communications Commission chairman Choi Sungjoon said yesterday that parliament is considering the issue.

South Korea enacted a law in April to require mobile companies and parents to install one of about a dozen apps that filter objectionable

material when people aged 18 or younger purchase a smartphone. South Korea has not allowed any exceptions. Japan has a similar law but allows parents to opt out.

Critics said the law legalized surveillance of children and jeopardized privacy. Many of the apps not only blocked content that authorities deemed to be unfit for children but also collected data such as web browsing history. The commission faced heavy criticism when government-sponsored Smart Sheriff, the most

popular of the apps, was revealed to have serious security flaws. Experts at Internet watchdog group Citizen Lab and German software auditing firm Cure53 warned in September that Smart Sheriff's weak security left the door wide open to hackers and put the personal information of some 380,000 users at risk. Smart Sheriff was later pulled from the market and it stopped new downloads from November.

In addition to giving an opt-out option to parents, the proposal by 10 lawmakers submit-

ted in October said mobile companies must explain to parents the functions of monitoring apps in detail, including the type of personal information collected from children.

Choi, the communications regulator, said the government should continue to play a role in protecting young smartphone users against harmful content. "I think we have a general understanding that blocking these obscene materials for the kids is good for their personal growth," he said. — AP

TECH GROUP REJECTS POST-PARIS CALL FOR DATA ENCRYPTION 'BACKDOORS'

WASHINGTON: A leading US-based technology industry group on Thursday, in its first statement since last week's Paris attacks, rejected calls to give US law enforcement authorities backdoor keys to let them circumvent encryption technology for cellphones.

Weakening encryption to help the government monitor electronic communications in the name of national security "simply does not make sense," the Information Technology Industry Council said in a statement released to Reuters.

"After a horrific tragedy like the Paris attacks, we naturally search for solutions: weakening encryption is not a solution," said Dean Garfield, president of the Washington-based organization, which represents Apple, Google, Microsoft and dozens of other blue-chip tech companies. The attacks in Paris last Friday killed 129 and wounded hundreds. The Islamic State militant group has claimed responsibility.

Some US intelligence officials and lawmakers have seized on the assault to rekindle a debate about whether tech companies should cooperate with authorities by building "backdoors" into encrypted devices and platforms.

Government authorities have said the growing prevalence of encrypted email and messaging platforms, such as iMessage or WhatsApp, hamstringing their

ability to monitor criminal suspects and thwart militant plots. Despite early reports the Paris attackers relied on encryption, no hard evidence has emerged they used any particular form of secure messaging. A mobile phone recovered by French authorities at the scene of one of the attacks and believed to be linked to one of the suspects was found with an unencrypted text message, according to French media.

Last month, the White House abandoned an effort to lobby tech companies and Congress to allow law enforcement and intelligence officials backdoor access to encrypted messaging. The idea has re-emerged in the wake of Paris, but congressional aides say federal legislation on the issue remains unlikely.

Privacy advocates, tech companies and security researchers say backdoors would expose data to malicious hackers. "Encryption is a security tool we rely on every day to stop criminals from draining our bank accounts, to shield our cars and airplanes from being taken over by malicious hacks," Garfield said in his statement. "We deeply appreciate law enforcement's and the national security community's work to protect us, but weakening encryption or creating backdoors to encrypted devices and data for use by the good guys would actually create vulnerabilities to be exploited by the bad guys." — Reuters

NATO FIGHTS MALWARE, BUGGED DEVICES AT ESTONIAN CYBER CENTER

TARTU: NATO nations and allies are battling malware in tablets and infected devices this week in the alliance's largest cyber drill to date aimed at improving members' data privacy in crisis situations. Some 400 participants from 33 countries were focused on solving scenarios including attacks on high-ranking officers' computer equipment during an exercise at a cyber-range in Tartu, Estonia's second-largest city.

"The idea is to replicate dynamics and threats that are real," said Lt. Col. Christian Braccini, a researcher from the NATO cyber think tank and training center in the capital, Tallinn. The five-day Cyber Coalition 2015 exercise, which ends Friday, included teams from non-NATO members Austria, Finland and Sweden, with Georgia, Japan and Jordan as observers.

It comes amid a flourish of NATO activity and recent visits by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg to the region, where Nordic and

Baltic countries have watched Russia's increasing military presence in the Baltic Sea with increasing trepidation.

US Navy Commander Robert Hoar, head of the NATO drill on behalf of the Allied Command Operations, stressed the scenarios do not include attacking or defending. He says teams were given realistic "story lines" to solve, including cyberattacks on devices. "The focus of the exercise is not competition, it's collaboration," Hoar told reporters.

Participating nations have at least one representative at the high-security cyber exercise range in Tartu, 190 kilometers (120 miles) southeast of Tallinn. It is the third time such an event was held in Estonia, one of the most wired and technologically advanced countries in the world. Estonia itself was targeted in 2007 by hackers in one of Europe's first major organized cyberattacks. — AP

PRESSURE FOR YAHOO TURNAROUND PUTS SQUEEZE ON MAYER

SAN FRANCISCO: Lack of a long-awaited turnaround at Yahoo has put pressure on chief executive Marissa Mayer to prove she has what it takes to revive the faded Internet pioneer. Investors, who were already disappointed by low momentum under Mayer, were given more to worry about this week.

A hedge fund with a stake in Yahoo urged the Internet giant Thursday to drop its planned spin off of its holdings in China's Alibaba. The hedge fund, Starboard Value, said the company should instead sell its 'core' Internet operations.

The request came with Yahoo on track to set up a new corporate entity holding its multi-billion dollar Alibaba stake in the coming months. 'We have grown increasingly frustrated with your unwillingness to accept our help and your dismissive approach to our serious concerns about the current situation at Yahoo,' Starboard said in a letter to Mayer.

Potential tax hit

The Alibaba stake spin off plan has been clouded by concerns that it may not get tax-free status from US authorities, resulting in a hefty tax bill for Yahoo shareholders. Starboard said in the letter that the spin off of the entity called Aabaco Holdings 'is not Yahoo's best alternative' and argued that 'instead, you should be exploring a sale of Yahoo's core search and display advertising businesses.' Based on current stock prices, Yahoo's market value is almost entirely from its stakes in Alibaba and Yahoo Japan, according to Starboard. The hedge fund was worried about the plan to transfer the Alibaba stake to the new company and distributing stock in what could amount to a taxable gift of some \$30 billion to shareholders. Starboard would prefer that Yahoo, instead, split off its own Internet operations in a technical move apparently aimed at avoiding a tax bill. However the outcome would be the same: one company running Yahoo's core business and another handling the investment in Alibaba.

'The important thing is for the spin off to happen one way or another,' BGC Financial analyst Colin Gillis told AFP. The original decision to split Yahoo's holding in Alibaba was seen as an attempt to calm restless shareholders, starting with activist fund Starboard which lobbied for the strategy.

From honeymoon to divorce

After slightly more than three years as Yahoo chief, the honeymoon seems to be over for Mayer, who is the latest in a line of chief executives who have tried to restore Yahoo to its former glory. Despite her lack of experience running a large Internet firm, investors embraced Mayer as a young engineer with proven credentials at Google and a fashionably glamorous image. She was welcomed as a savior after Yahoo was eclipsed by Google and left to wither in its shadow.

Mayer made a priority of tailoring Yahoo offerings to modern mobile lifestyles. On her watch, widely used products such as Yahoo Mail were modernized. Mayer also went on something of a startup buying binge, mostly using Alibaba money being pumped into Yahoo's coffers, in addition to launching a series of digital magazines.

A promising entry by Yahoo into the fantasy sports games arena has caught the attention of law enforcement officials in New York. Yahoo was issued a subpoena in an investigation into whether daily fantasy sports games violate gambling laws, sources close to the case said Thursday.

Like other fantasy sports sites, Yahoo allows participants to select players for a virtual team and then use the real-world performance of the athletes to win prizes. The companies claim they are games of skill rather than gambling operations.

Counting Mayer's days

An array of senior Yahoo executives have jumped ship in recent months, and some industry observers question how much longer Mayer will remain at the helm. A headline 'The last days of Marissa Mayer?' topped an article on Forbes magazine's website Thursday. If Yahoo's core business continues to deteriorate, 'there is a good chance that in 12 months from now, Marissa Mayer may not be there,' SunTrust analyst Bob Peck told CNBC.

BGC Financial's Gillis added that 'it's a difficult business to turn around.' 'It's a company that fundamentally needs to be restructured, and it's not her field of expertise.' Several analysts, however, contend that just replacing Mayer will not right Yahoo's listing ship. 'The job of the CEO is to innovate; to outsmart competition, to invest,' Global Equities analyst Trip Chowdhry told AFP. 'It is not her job to find a way to dodge paying taxes.' Chowdhry saw Mayer as the right person for the job because she understands the technology. If someone needs to go, Chowdhry reasoned, it is chief financial officer Ken Goldman who is 'not making the right decision.'

Silicon Valley analyst Robert Enderle faulted the Yahoo board, and not Mayer, for lack of turn-around momentum. 'They knew she was going to have a steep learning curve and didn't back her up well at all,' Enderle said. 'The right board likely could direct Mayer more successfully and avoid the disruption and cost of replacing yet one more CEO.' — AFP



MENLO PARK: This July 16, 2013 file photo shows a sign at Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park, California. — AP

FACEBOOK TRIES TO EASE BREAKUPS WITH NEW TOOL

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook is trying to ease the heartache of breaking up. A feature announced Thursday will allow people who have split up with a spouse or partner to turn on an option that spares them the emotional pain of constantly seeing their ex-lover's posts and pictures in their news feed on the world's largest social network. Facebook will begin testing the breakup protection on mobile devices in the US before deciding whether to offer it to all of its 1.5 billion accountholders worldwide. The option is designed for people who don't want to risk offending a former husband, wife, girlfriend or boyfriend by taking the more extreme step of ejecting or blocking them from their Facebook network.

After changing their relationship status on Facebook, people will also be allowed to remove their names from past posts linking them to a former partner. "This work is part of our ongoing effort to develop resources for people who may be going through difficult moments in their lives," Facebook product manager Kelly

Winters wrote in a blog post. The breakup protection serves as another reminder of how deeply ingrained Facebook has become in society. More than 1 billion people now hang out on Facebook at least once a day and those who have the network's addictive mobile application installed on their smartphones tend to visit even more frequently.

The Menlo Park, California, company has incentive to try to keep its users as happy as possible. People who become upset with what appears in their Facebook feeds are more likely to avoid coming to the network, depriving the company of the opportunity to collect more information about their preferences and show them ads aimed at those interests.

The formula has turned Facebook into a huge success story since Mark Zuckerberg founded the service in a Harvard University dorm room more than a decade ago. Facebook's market value now stands at \$300 billion. — AP

READ WHILE COMMUTING? SELF-DRIVING CARS HAVE YOU COVERED

LOS ANGELES: Ever dreamt of kicking back, letting go of the wheel and reading the paper on the commute to work? In large cities, that could soon be a reality, say auto manufacturers. Semi-autonomous cars have already hit the road, capable of gauging distance, accelerating and breaking automatically, and rectifying the situation if, say, a distracted driver approaches another car too quickly.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti got behind the wheel of one such vehicle, a Volvo XC90, as he kicked off a connected car exhibition at this week's Los Angeles auto show. "I think that 20 years from now it's going to be the norm," he said in a segment broadcast on television network ABC.

The vehicles are meant to help out "in case of commute and congestion," when drivers are most frustrated, Marcus Rothoff, Volvo's autonomous driving program director told AFP. Automakers are now focused on the next generation of smart vehicles: the fully autonomous car,

which would allow drivers to read, watch a movie, or even send emails.

Such vehicles are a dream for residents of large cities like Los Angeles, the capital of US traffic jams, where drivers frequently spend two hours a day on the road. "We plan to put 100 autonomous cars in consumer hands by the end of 2017," Lex Kerssemakers, head of American operations for the Swedish automaker said Wednesday in Los Angeles.

Who will be responsible?

Manufacturers worldwide are racing to capture the huge market potential. Japan's Nissan has said it wants to put a self-driving vehicle on Japanese highways by 2016. Honda and Toyota are targeting 2020. The driver will simply enter a destination and the navigation system, sensors and software will do the rest. Already Internet giant Google is testing prototypes in its Silicon Valley stronghold. And US auto giant General Motors and Tesla are working on their own ver-

sions. Tesla has already equipped its latest cars with software that allows them to parallel park automatically. Volvo on Wednesday in Los Angeles unveiled a prototype of the interior of its self-driving cars. Once on autopilot, the driver's seat reclines and a screen on the passenger side offers movies and the Internet.

"Within this decade the technology can be available," said Jessica Caldwell, an analyst at Edmunds.com. "The key question is the responsibility: What happens if the car hits a school bus or kills its driver? These questions will take more time," Caldwell said, even though the vehicles have a much faster reaction time "than for a human."

Rothoff said drivers must "trust the system because if you don't trust it you cannot use this (spare) time in a good way" for other activities like reading. The objective is for the technology to be so reliable that the manufacturer can tell customers that they won't be responsible for any accidents while on autopilot, he said. — AFP



00:50 Gator Boys
 01:45 Call Of The Wildman
 02:15 Call Of The Wildman
 02:40 River Monsters
 03:35 Tanked
 04:25 In Search Of The Giant Anaconda
 05:15 Gator Boys
 06:02 Treehouse Masters
 06:49 Roaring With Pride
 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
 08:25 Tanked
 09:15 Tanked
 10:10 Tanked
 11:05 Tanked
 12:00 Tanked
 12:55 Snake Sheila
 13:20 Snake Sheila
 13:50 Gangland Killers
 14:45 Shamwari: A Wild Life
 15:10 Shamwari: A Wild Life
 15:40 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
 16:05 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
 16:35 Wild Dog Island
 17:30 Roaring With Pride
 18:25 Gangland Killers
 19:20 Shamwari: A Wild Life
 19:45 Shamwari: A Wild Life
 20:15 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
 20:40 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
 21:10 Wild Dog Island
 22:05 Roaring With Pride
 23:00 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
 23:55 Snake Sheila



00:20 Ultimate Cops
 01:10 Misfit Garage
 02:00 Wheeler Dealers
 02:50 Cuban Chrome
 03:40 How It's Made
 04:05 How It's Made
 04:30 How It's Made
 05:00 How It's Made
 05:30 How It's Made
 06:00 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown
 06:50 Dual Survival
 07:40 Deadliest Catch
 08:30 Outback Truckers
 09:20 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
 10:10 Misfit Garage
 11:00 Wheeler Dealers
 11:50 Cuban Chrome
 12:40 Garage Gold
 13:05 Garage Gold
 13:30 Garage Gold
 13:55 Garage Gold
 14:20 Garage Gold
 14:45 Baggage Battles
 15:10 Baggage Battles
 15:35 Baggage Battles
 16:00 Baggage Battles
 16:25 Baggage Battles
 16:50 Yukon Men
 17:40 Alaska: The Last Frontier
 18:30 Troy
 19:20 What Happened Next?
 19:45 What Happened Next?
 20:10 The Pop Illusionist
 21:00 Yukon Men
 21:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
 22:40 Flying Wild Alaska
 23:30 Bear Grylls: Extreme...
 23:55 Bear Grylls: Extreme...



00:40 Storm Chasers
 01:30 You Have Been Warned
 02:20 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
 03:10 NASA's Greatest Missions
 04:00 Mythbusters
 04:48 NASA's Unexplained Files
 05:36 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
 06:24 NASA's Greatest Missions
 07:12 You Have Been Warned
 08:00 How It's Made
 08:25 How It's Made
 08:50 How It's Made
 09:15 How It's Made
 09:40 How It's Made
 10:05 How It's Made

10:30 How It's Made
 10:55 How It's Made
 11:20 How It's Made
 11:45 How It's Made
 12:10 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
 12:35 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
 13:00 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
 13:50 Race To Escape
 14:40 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
 15:30 Home Factory
 15:55 Home Factory
 16:20 Storm Chasers
 17:10 Storm Chasers
 18:00 Storm Chasers
 18:50 Storm Chasers
 19:40 Storm Chasers
 20:30 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
 20:55 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
 21:20 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
 22:10 Race To Escape
 23:00 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
 23:50 Home Factory



00:00 Violetta
 00:45 The Hive
 00:50 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 01:15 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 01:40 Wolfblood
 02:05 Wolfblood
 02:30 Violetta
 03:15 The Hive
 03:20 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 03:45 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 04:10 Wolfblood
 04:35 Wolfblood
 05:00 Violetta
 05:45 The Hive
 05:50 Mouk
 06:00 Lolirock
 06:25 Hank Zipzer
 06:50 Girl Meets World
 07:15 H2O: Just Add Water
 07:40 Wizards Of Waverly Place
 08:05 Wizards Of Waverly Place
 08:30 Wizards Of Waverly Place
 08:55 Wizards Of Waverly Place

09:20 Wizards Of Waverly Place
 09:45 I Love Violetta
 09:55 Violetta Recipes
 10:10 Good Luck Charlie
 10:35 Aladdin
 12:20 Jessie
 12:45 Girl Meets World
 13:10 Mako Mermaids
 13:35 Dog With A Blog
 14:00 Gravity Falls
 14:30 I Love Violetta
 14:40 Violetta Recipes
 14:55 Lolirock
 15:20 Austin & Ally
 15:45 Girl Meets World
 16:10 I Didn't Do It
 16:35 Austin & Ally
 17:00 Gravity Falls
 17:25 Girl Meets World
 17:50 I Love Violetta
 18:00 An Extremely Goofy Movie
 19:15 Get Frozen
 19:30 Liv And Maddie
 19:55 Dog With A Blog
 20:20 Jessie
 20:45 Good Luck Charlie
 21:10 Good Luck Charlie
 21:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
 22:00 Binny And The Ghost
 22:25 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 22:50 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 23:10 Wolfblood
 23:35 Wolfblood



00:00 House Of DVF
 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
 01:25 Hollywood Cycle
 02:20 E! News
 03:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 04:10 E! Entertainment Special
 05:05 E! Entertainment Special
 06:00 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
 06:55 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
 07:50 Style Star
 08:20 E! News
 09:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
 10:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
 11:10 New Money
 11:35 New Money
 12:05 E! News
 13:05 Stewarts And Hamiltons
 14:05 Hollywood Cycle
 15:00 Hollywood Cycle
 16:00 WAGs

17:00 WAGs
 18:00 E! News
 19:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 20:00 Dash Dolls
 21:00 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
 22:00 E! News
 23:00 The Soup
 23:30 Sex With Brody



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 01:00 Siba's Table
 01:30 Siba's Table
 02:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
 03:00 Man Fire Food
 03:30 Man Fire Food
 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
 06:00 Chopped
 07:00 Man Fire Food
 07:30 Man Fire Food
 08:00 Chopped
 09:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
 10:00 The Kitchen
 11:00 The Kitchen
 12:00 Chopped
 13:00 Guy's Big Bite
 13:30 Guy's Big Bite
 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 15:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 15:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 16:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 16:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 17:00 Chopped
 18:00 Siba's Table
 18:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
 19:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
 20:00 Chopped
 21:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 21:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 22:00 Man Finds Food
 22:30 Man Finds Food
 23:00 Food Court Wars



01:05 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
 02:00 Harry At 30
 02:55 Emmerdale
 03:20 Emmerdale
 03:40 Emmerdale
 04:00 Emmerdale

04:25 Emmerdale
 04:50 Emmerdale
 05:15 Coronation Street
 05:40 Coronation Street
 06:05 Coronation Street
 06:30 Coronation Street
 07:00 Coronation Street
 07:30 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
 08:50 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
 09:50 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover
 10:45 Eggheads
 11:15 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
 12:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
 13:05 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
 14:00 Agatha Christie's Partners In Crime
 15:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
 15:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
 16:50 Seven Days With...
 17:45 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
 18:30 Eggheads
 19:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
 19:55 Agatha Christie's Partners In Crime
 20:50 Seven Days With...
 21:45 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
 22:35 Eggheads
 23:00 Coronation Street
 23:25 Coronation Street
 23:50 Coronation Street



03:00 Manhattan Love Story
 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
 09:00 Manhattan Love Story
 09:30 About A Boy
 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 14:30 About A Boy
 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
 18:00 Manhattan Love Story
 19:00 Benched
 19:30 New Girl
 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 22:00 Saturday Night Live
 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:00 Salem
 01:00 Grey's Anatomy
 02:00 Survivor: Cambodia
 06:00 Parenthood
 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
 19:00 Grey's Anatomy
 20:00 The Whispers
 21:00 Heroes Reborn
 22:00 The Blacklist
 23:00 The Player



00:00 The Terminator
 02:00 388 Arletta Avenue
 04:00 Superfast
 06:00 Rush Hour
 08:00 Aeon Flux
 10:00 I, Frankenstein
 12:00 Double Take
 14:00 Rush Hour 2
 16:00 Aeon Flux
 18:00 I, Frankenstein
 19:45 Gone In Sixty Seconds
 22:00 Getaway



00:00 388 Arletta Avenue-PG15
 02:00 Superfast-PG15
 04:00 Rush Hour-PG15
 06:00 Aeon Flux-PG15
 08:00 I, Frankenstein-PG15
 10:00 Double Take-PG15
 12:00 Rush Hour 2-PG15
 14:00 Aeon Flux-PG15
 16:00 I, Frankenstein-PG15
 17:45 Gone In Sixty Seconds-PG15
 20:00 Getaway-PG15
 22:00 I Am Legend-PG15



00:00 I Give It A Year
 02:00 The Last Shot
 04:00 Titeuf, Le Film
 06:00 Until She Came Along
 08:00 Shanghai Calling
 10:00 Titeuf, Le Film



I, FRANKENSTEIN ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2015

- 12:00 Tooth Fairy
- 14:00 Mousehunt
- 16:00 Shanghai Calling
- 18:00 When In Rome
- 20:00 Dumb And Dumber To
- 22:00 Wedding Crashers

OSN MOVIES
DRAMA

- 01:15 Hours-PG15
- 03:00 Trespass-PG15
- 04:45 Upside Down-PG15
- 06:45 Testament Of Youth-PG15
- 09:00 Stand Off-PG15
- 11:00 Upside Down-PG15
- 13:00 Return To Nim's Island-PG
- 15:00 Breathe In-PG15
- 17:00 Stand Off-PG15
- 19:00 The Wicked Within-PG15
- 21:00 Not Fade Away-PG15
- 23:00 The Devil's Violinist-18

OSN MOVIES HD
FESTIVAL

- 01:00 I Am Ali
- 03:00 Ain't Them Bodies Saints
- 05:00 Seven Days In Utopia
- 07:00 Sleepless In Seattle
- 09:00 The Fold
- 11:00 Seven Days In Utopia
- 13:00 Rushmore
- 15:00 Serial (Bad) Weddings
- 17:00 The Fold
- 19:00 Frankie & Alice
- 21:00 Calvary
- 23:00 The Hidden Face

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:30 Baggage Claim-PG15
- 03:15 Million Dollar Arm-PG15
- 05:15 The Butler-PG15
- 07:30 Barefoot-PG15
- 09:00 Godzilla-PG15
- 11:15 Transcendence-PG15
- 13:15 X-Men: Days Of Future Past-PG15
- 15:30 Mr. Peabody & Sherman-FAM
- 17:15 Barefoot-PG15
- 19:00 Tammy-PG15
- 21:00 Laggies-PG15
- 23:00 The November Man-18

OSN MOVIES HD
KIDS

- 01:30 Krazy Planet
- 03:00 Marvel's Thor: Tales Of Asgaard
- 04:30 Blackie And Kanuto
- 06:00 The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie
- 07:45 Back To The Sea
- 09:45 Garfield's Fun Fest
- 11:15 Justin And The Knights Of The Valour
- 13:00 Dinosaur Island
- 14:30 Mostly Ghostly: Have You Met My Ghoulfriend
- 16:15 Pororo: The Racing Adventure
- 18:00 Garfield's Fun Fest
- 20:00 Ghatothkach - Master Of Magic
- 21:45 Mostly Ghostly: Have You Met My Ghoulfriend
- 23:30 Pororo: The Racing Adventure

OSN MOVIES HD
PREMIERE

- 00:00 Deep In The Darkness-18
- 02:00 The Package-PG15
- 04:00 Searching For Sugar Man-PG15
- 06:00 The Good Witch's Wedding-PG15
- 08:00 Stolen Child-PG15
- 09:45 Imogene-PG15
- 11:30 Captain America: The Winter Soldier-PG15
- 14:00 Tinker Bell And The Legend Of The NeverBeast-FAM
- 15:45 Stolen Child-PG15
- 17:30 Saving Mr. Banks-PG15
- 20:00 A Case Of You-PG15
- 22:00 Thanks For Sharing-18



- 03:14 Grojband
- 03:35 Johnny Test
- 05:05 Total Drama: Revenge Of The



X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST ON OSN MOVIES HD

- Island
- 05:27 Total Drama: Revenge Of The Island
- 05:50 Regular Show
- 06:00 The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 07:00 Dreamworks Dragons: Defenders Of Berk
- 07:25 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
- 07:50 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
- 08:10 Ben 10: Omniverse
- 08:35 Ben 10: Omniverse
- 09:00 Matt Hatter Chronicles
- 09:20 Teen Titans Go!
- 09:45 Uncle Grandpa
- 10:10 Johnny Test
- 10:30 New The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 10:55 The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 11:20 Adventure Time
- 12:05 Regular Show
- 12:30 Regular Show
- 12:41 Regular Show
- 12:50 Johnny Test
- 13:40 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
- 14:00 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
- 14:25 Teen Titans Go!
- 15:10 Matt Hatter Chronicles
- 15:35 Ben 10: Omniverse
- 16:00 Ben 10: Omniverse
- 16:20 New Steven Universe
- 16:45 Steven Universe
- 16:56 Steven Universe
- 17:10 Uncle Grandpa
- 17:30 Regular Show
- 17:55 Regular Show
- 18:06 Regular Show
- 18:20 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
- 18:40 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
- 19:05 Teen Titans Go!
- 19:16 Teen Titans Go!
- 19:27 Teen Titans Go!
- 19:38 Teen Titans Go!
- 19:50 Transformers: Robots In Disguise New
- 20:15 New The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 20:40 Clarence
- 21:00 Regular Show
- 21:11 Regular Show
- 21:22 Regular Show
- 21:33 Regular Show
- 21:50 Dreamworks Dragons: Riders Of Berk
- 22:15 Dreamworks Dragons: Riders Of Berk
- 22:40 Johnny Test
- 00:10 Adventure Time
- 01:40 Total Drama: All Stars
- 02:03 Total Drama: All Stars
- 02:26 Total Drama: All Stars
- 02:51 Grojband

- ID.**
INVESTIGATION
DISCOVERY
- 03:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 - 03:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 - 04:00 Blood Relatives
 - 04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 - 05:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 - 05:30 The Haunted
 - 06:20 Forensic Detectives
 - 07:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
 - 08:00 Fatal Encounters
 - 08:50 Disappeared
 - 09:40 Disappeared
 - 10:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn
 - 11:20 On The Case With Paula Zahn
 - 12:10 The Will
 - 13:00 The Will
 - 13:50 California Investigator
 - 14:15 California Investigator
 - 14:40 Nightmare Next Door
 - 15:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn
 - 16:20 On The Case With Paula Zahn
 - 17:10 Disappeared
 - 18:00 Disappeared
 - 18:50 California Investigator
 - 19:15 California Investigator
 - 19:40 Forensic Detectives
 - 20:30 Forensic Detectives
 - 21:20 Forensic Detectives
 - 22:10 Forensic Detectives
 - 23:00 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion
 - 23:50 Deadly Women
 - 00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 - 01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 - 01:30 Deadly Affairs
 - 02:20 Blood Relatives



- 03:05 Calimero
- 03:20 Zou
- 03:30 Loopedidoo
- 03:45 Art Attack
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:20 Calimero
- 04:35 Zou
- 04:45 Loopedidoo
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:35 Calimero
- 05:50 Zou
- 06:00 Loopedidoo
- 06:15 Art Attack
- 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:50 Calimero
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:20 Loopedidoo
- 08:00 Calimero
- 08:10 Zou
- 08:25 Limon And Oli
- 08:35 Captain Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 09:05 Sofia The First
- 09:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 10:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 10:30 Doc McStuffins
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Captain Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 11:55 Miles From Tomorrow
- 12:25 Miles From Tomorrow
- 12:55 Miles From Tomorrow
- 13:20 Miles From Tomorrow
- 13:45 Miles From Tomorrow
- 14:00 Sofia The First
- 14:30 Sofia The First
- 14:55 Sofia The First
- 15:20 Sofia The First
- 15:50 Sofia The First
- 16:15 Sofia The First
- 16:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 17:10 The Return Of Jafar
- 18:25 Limon And Oli
- 18:35 Captain Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 19:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 19:30 Sofia The First
- 19:55 Doc McStuffins
- 20:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 21:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 21:35 Sofia The First
- 22:00 Aladdin
- 22:30 Adventures Of The Gummi Bears
- 23:00 Chip n Dale Rescue Rangers
- 23:30 Lilo & Stitch
- 00:00 Nina Needs To Go
- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:20 Calimero
- 00:35 Zou
- 00:50 Loopedidoo
- 01:05 Art Attack
- 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:45 Calimero
- 02:00 Zou
- 02:15 Loopedidoo
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster

- Disney XD**
- 07:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
 - 07:25 Supa Strikas
 - 07:50 Supa Strikas
 - 08:15 K.C Undercover
 - 08:40 Lab Rats
 - 09:10 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 - 09:35 Kirby Buckets
 - 10:00 Annedroids
 - 10:30 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors
 - 10:55 Mighty Med
 - 11:20 K.C Undercover
 - 11:45 Lab Rats
 - 12:10 Kirby Buckets
 - 12:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 - 13:00 Brother Bear
 - 14:20 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
 - 14:45 Toy Story Toons
 - 14:50 Supa Strikas
 - 15:15 Supa Strikas
 - 15:40 Supa Strikas
 - 16:10 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors
 - 16:35 Star Wars Rebels
 - 17:00 Mighty Med
 - 17:25 Brother Bear
 - 18:45 Phineas And Ferb
 - 19:10 Annedroids
 - 19:40 Mighty Med
 - 20:05 K.C Undercover
 - 20:30 Supa Strikas
 - 20:55 Lab Rats
 - 21:25 Kirby Buckets
 - 21:50 Star Wars Rebels
 - 22:15 Mighty Med
 - 22:40 Phineas And Ferb
 - 23:05 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
 - 23:30 Phineas And Ferb
 - 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA



- 03:45 Wild Yellowstone
- 04:40 Life On The Barrier Reef
- 05:35 Shane Untamed
- 06:30 Monster Fish
- 07:25 Fishzilla: Snakehead Invasion
- 08:20 Yukon Vet
- 09:15 Predator Fails
- 10:10 Philly Undercover

- 11:05 The Incredible Dr. Pol
- 12:00 Shark Junction
- 12:55 Hunter Hunted
- 13:50 Tiger Queen
- 14:45 Wild Vietnam
- 15:40 Expedition Wild
- 16:35 Wild Mississippi
- 17:30 The Monster Project
- 18:25 The Croc Catchers
- 19:20 Wild Vietnam
- 20:10 Expedition Wild
- 21:00 Wild Mississippi
- 21:50 The Monster Project
- 22:40 The Croc Catchers
- 23:30 Shark Junction
- 00:20 Hunter Hunted
- 01:10 Tiger Queen
- 02:00 Monster Fish
- 02:50 Built For The Kill



- 03:15 My Baby Has Two Heads: Body Bizarre
- 04:05 The Undateables
- 05:00 Ultimate Shopper
- 06:00 Say Yes To The Dress
- 06:25 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 07:15 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 08:05 Bakery Boss
- 08:55 Bakery Boss
- 09:45 Cake Boss
- 10:10 Cake Boss
- 10:35 Nida'a
- 11:25 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 13:30 Say Yes To The Dress: Randy Knows Best
- 14:20 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 15:10 Cake Boss
- 15:35 Cake Boss
- 16:00 Cake Boss
- 16:25 Cake Boss
- 16:50 Cake Boss
- 17:15 Perfect Look
- 18:05 Oprah's Master Class
- 18:55 Say Yes To The Dress
- 21:00 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 21:50 Nida'a
- 22:40 Psychic Matchmaker
- 23:05 90 Days To Wed
- 23:55 90 Days To Wed
- 00:45 My 600lb Life
- 01:35 The Day I Almost Died
- 02:25 Psychic Matchmaker
- 02:50 Psychic Matchmaker

ASSE KUWAIT CHAPTER ORGANIZED 4TH CONTRACTOR SAFETY MONTH SESSION



American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) Kuwait Chapter is Kuwait's premier voluntary and non-profit organization providing professional guidance, training and consultancy; in the field of Health, Safety and Environment; to the industrial and social sectors in the region.

Continuing its constant efforts towards social responsibility and commitment, American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), Kuwait Chapter, organized the fourth and final session of the Contractor Safety Month, where specialists from Ansell conducted a presentation on Hand Protection. The event was conducted at KOC Tent at Ahmadi Township.

The event started with a safety moment and welcome address by Jignesh Shah, Chapter Secretary. In his opening address Sampath Reddy Golamari, President ASSE Kuwait chapter, informed that the chapter is organizing the Contractor Safety month for the benefit of contractors in state of Kuwait who are exposed to various safety risks. He emphasized on hand and finger injury safety, by stating that hand injuries in the industry are highest among all the injuries which makes up to 40% of total injuries. He mentioned that these technical meet events are open to everyone, so that the contractors who have a major role in industrial sector are updated to the best HSE practices and latest technologies in the personal protective equipment.

Engineer Lafi Al Fehaid, chief guest and co-founder of ASSE Kuwait Chapter acclaimed the efforts of ASSE in organising these events for the benefit of contractors working in the industrial sector.

Sunil N Sadanandan, Head of Technical Event Committee introduced the speakers Mohammad Ahmad and Mohammad Jamad of Ansell, leaders in the manufacturing of Hands and Body protection Equipment. Sunil also explained to the participants on the benefits of joining ASSE.

Mohammad Ahmad and Mohammad Jamad explained about the latest technology in the hand protection equipment and explained on various products available in the market and the uses of the equipment.

Dinesh Kumar Dutta, Vice President of ASSE Kuwait Chapter, in his closing address acknowledged the support of Kuwait Oil Company to ASSE Kuwait chapter in conducting these events. He also thanked the Speakers Mohammad Ahmad and Mohammad Jamad from Ansell, and the sponsors Raja Company for the presentations. He thanked the all the participants who took their time in the evening to attend and enrich their knowledge. Around 200 persons from different sectors participated in this event. As a token of appreciation, speakers were presented with a memento. Certificate of participation was distributed to all the participants.

Later in a business session Ashok Garlapati Advisory Committee member of the ASSE Kuwait Chapter addressed the participants and highlighted the importance of joining as a member in ASSE. He also announced the Global Region, Vice President Special Election.

ACK ANNOUNCES 'SMART 2015' CONFERENCE

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) will be hosting its first international conference entitled 'Sustainable Mobility Applications, Renewables and Technology' (SMART2015) on November the 23rd -25th, 2015 at the Movenpick Hotel and Resort in Al Bida'a, Kuwait.

In collaboration with Virginia Tech and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and support from world-renowned organizations like the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Power and Energy Society, the IEEE Industry Applications and the American Institute of Chemical Engineers AIChE, the conference is set to be a rich and varied platform with 7 keynote speeches and around 90 technical papers split between 3 parallel oral sessions and 1 poster session each day.

Dr Mohamad Gaith, Head of the School of Engineering at ACK, stated: "Across the world, advancement in sustainable energy is evolving and each country has their own policies and action plans in improving sustainable energies for their society. Our conference plans to address state-of-the-art sustainable energies-related researches over multi-disciplinary engineering disciplines."

Interested parties are requested to visit the SMART 2015 website, www.smart2015-ack.com, to learn more about the event and view the exciting panel of speakers and guests taking part in the conference.



Dr Mohamed Gaith

NBK INVITES AL SHABAB VISA PREPAID CARDHOLDERS TO 'SECRET IN THEIR EYES' PREMIERE AT GRAND CINEMAS

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) invited its Al Shabab Visa Prepaid Cardholders to an exclusive Avant premier of 'Secret in Their Eyes' on Wednesday November 18, 2015 at Grand Cinemas Al Hamra Luxury Center.

NBK Al Shabab Visa Prepaid Card enjoyed the exclusive event upon showing their Shabab Prepaid Cards at Grand Cinemas Al Hamra Luxury Center.

"NBK is keen on rewarding youth with exclusive events, discounts and offers that fit their lifestyle in partnership with leading companies as Grand Cinemas" said Hanadi Khazal, NBK's Head Of Marketing.

"We are thrilled to be availing exclusive blockbusters premieres to NBK Shabab customers, which falls in the brand's strategy of offering the youth moviegoers the utmost facilities and conveniences" said Isaac Fahed, Marketing Manager Grand Cinemas ME.

NBK Al Shabab Visa Prepaid Card is the best of all cards available for the youth exclusively designed for Kuwaiti Al Shabab students who transfer their student allowance to NBK.

This exclusive Prepaid Card offers



Hanadi Khazal, NBK's Head of Marketing



Isaac Fahed, Marketing Manager, Grand Cinemas ME

Al Shabab customers a wide range of benefits and discounts that include ability to shop online, free travel insurance coverage up to USD 100,000 and rewards with the award-winning NBK Rewards program at 600 participating outlets. NBK Al Shabab VISA Prepaid Card is accepted locally and worldwide, easy to use and re-loadable. Al Shabab is a youth account that caters the various financial, social and lifestyle needs of college and

university students between the ages of 17-23 years. Students can open an Al Shabab account by visiting any NBK branch in Kuwait. For more information log onto nbk.com or contact NBK Call Center on 1 801 801, or follow NBK on Facebook official page, Twitter @NBKPage, and Instagram @NBKPage.

THE PALESTINIAN CULTURE EXHIBITION AT BAYT LOTHAN, NOVEMBER 23-26, 2015

OPEN INVITATION: FOR JERUSALEM

The Palestinian Culture Center holds the second of its two annual exhibitions for 2015 at Bayt Lothan. The show includes a large collection of textile-based traditional handmade cross-stitch as well as pottery from Hebron, posters and books about Palestine in English and Arabic. It aspires to reaffirm the Palestinian national identity by its handicrafts and support education and families.

The Palestinian Culture Center is a non-profit organization that was established in Jordan in 1993. It aims to (1) preserve the rich heritage and culture of Palestine, (2) help empower women and their families in the refugee camps become economically independent, and (3) sustain needy Palestinians in their homeland and in the Diaspora.

This year was an active year for the

Center due to the effects of the global financial crisis which placed a further strain on the poor. Furthermore, the violent and aggressive Israeli military onslaught on Gaza, Jerusalem and the rest of occupied Palestine, have made the situation in Palestine dire, and the need for aid more urgent. As a result, the Center has worked to increase the salaries of the 550 or so women who do the embroidery work as well as pay for their transportation (from the camps). We motivate the ladies by granting bonuses for excellent quality work. We also provide support to Palestinians in the homeland by providing financial aid to needy families, health care, and university scholarships.

Some of the Center's accomplishments included support of some of the vital institutes such as Almaqased hospital in

Jerusalem which was established in 1968 with substantial financial support from The State of Kuwait. The Center is also working on providing the necessary financing of the Water Desalination Project in Gaza for producing potable water and assisting Gaza area hospitals that were bombarded by Israel, such as Alshefa Hospital, to produce and store oxygen for medical purposes.

Exhibition Highlights

Traditional cross-stitch embroidery of dresses, linens, shawls, cushions, table runners, cards, frames, coasters, belts, purses, bookmarks and more:

- Handmade ceramics from Hebron.
- Books, posters, key chains, kafiya's and DVDs as well as posters from Palestine.
- Food sale of traditional Palestinian food

such as thyme, sumaq, baked goods and other traditional plates.

- Palestinian folklore "Dabkah" will be performed on and Thursday at 6:30 pm.

Palestinian embroidery using needle and silk thread is a manifestation of the Palestinian identity as it has evolved over the ages. An age old art, all Palestinian ladies, young and old, would spend hours embroidering their trousseau, dresses, shawls and cushions. Using geometric shapes at first, and then evolving to depicting images from nature surrounding them, the dresses are famous for their flowery designs and bold natural colors of indigo and red. Symbols of the ubiquitous cypress trees surrounding the orange groves, roses, jasmine and the famous olive tree are typical motifs in these dresses. The exhibition will be held at Bayt Lothan, Salmia, It will be held for 4 days starting Monday the November 23rd through Thursday 26th. It is open to the public from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm and 4:30 to 8:30 pm.



HOUSE BILL WOULD LIMIT SOME CALORIE LABELS

WASHINGTON: Supermarkets and pizza chains would get some relief from government calorie labeling rules under legislation approved by a House committee.

Many restaurants and other food retail outlets, such as grocery stores, will have to post the new calorie labels, starting a year from now. The bill by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., would leave the Food and Drug Administration rules requiring that labeling in place, but make it easier for some businesses to comply.

The FDA rules will require restaurants and other establishments that sell prepared foods and have 20 or more locations to post the

calorie content of food "clearly and conspicuously" on their menus, menu boards and displays. That includes prepared foods at grocery and convenience stores and in movie theaters, bakeries, coffee shops, pizza delivery stores and amusement parks.

The bill approved by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, 36-12, would narrow labeling requirements for supermarkets, which have complained that the rules are confusing and burdensome, by allowing stores to use a menu or menu board in a prepared-foods area instead of putting labels on individual items. It would also allow restaurants like pizza delivery chains that receive most of their

orders remotely to post calories online instead of at the retail location. Pizza restaurants would also have more flexibility in the way they post calories and restaurants and retailers could determine what constitutes a serving size, in some cases. McMorris Rodgers said the bill "is not about the merits of displaying calorie information. It's about how we can improve existing regulations to benefit people."

The supermarket industry praised the legislation. "If menu labeling is going to be required at grocery stores, then let's at least build some flexibility so it is worthwhile for consumers and workable in store environments," said Leslie Sarasin of the Food

Marketing Institute. Democrats said the bill would limit calorie transparency before the law has even gone into effect. Rep. Frank Pallone, D-N.J., said the bill would "undermine the public health goal of providing clear, consistent calorie information to consumers."

The menu labeling rules were first required by Congress in 2010 health overhaul, but FDA took several years to write them as the supermarkets, convenience stores and pizza delivery companies aggressively lobbied against them. Those businesses said the rules would be more burdensome for them than they would be for restaurants, which typically have more limited offerings. — AP

HEALTHY FOODS VARY BY INDIVIDUAL WHY DIETS DON'T WORK

MIAMI: A healthy food for one person may lead another to gain weight, according to a study out Thursday that suggests a one-size-fits-all approach to dieting is fundamentally wrong. For instance, one woman in the study repeatedly experienced a spike in blood sugar after eating tomatoes, which would generally be considered a low-fat, nutritious food.

The findings are based a study of 800 people in Israel, and are published in the journal Cell Press. "The first very big surprise and striking finding that we had was the very vast variability we saw in people's response to identical meals," said researcher Eran Segal of the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. Participants wore blood sugar monitors that took measurements every five minutes for an entire week. They also provided stool samples so that their gut microbiome could be analyzed, and kept a careful log of everything they consumed. None of the participants had diabetes, but some were obese and had a condition known as pre-diabetes. Researchers were stunned to see the difference in people's metabolic responses to the exact same foods. For instance, some people's blood sugar rose higher after eating sushi than it did after eating ice cream. And for one middle-aged woman, the act of eating tomatoes—which she thought were part of a healthy diet—actually caused her blood sugar to rise significantly.

"There are profound differences between individuals—in some cases, individuals have opposite responses to one another—and this is really a big hole in the literature," said Segal.

What we eat

High blood sugar is dangerous because it can lead to diabetes, obesity, heart problems and other complications, including eye, kidney and nerve disease. Many diets aim to keep blood sugar low by incorporating fruits, vegetables and complex carbohydrates like brown rice and whole grains, while avoiding refined sugars and goods made with white flour. But those recommendations don't work for everyone, and often, overweight people are blamed for eating too much or not sticking to a healthy lifestyle. Co-author Eran Elinav said the study "really enlightened us on how inaccurate we all were about one of the most basic concepts of our existence, which is what we eat and how we integrate nutrition into our daily life.

"Instead of urging people to eat low-fat diets, a more personalized approach — one that puts an individual at the center of the plan, rather than the diet — could be useful to help people control high blood sugar and improve their health, he said. The researchers also used their findings to forge an algorithm that could predict how different people would react to certain foods, based on a host of personal characteristics and their gut microbes. Segal said he and colleagues are now working on a system that could bring better nutritional analysis to the individual consumer. The process would involve mailing stool samples for analysis of the bacteria in the digestive system, because researchers found that specific microbes correlated with blood sugar levels after eating.

The microbiome is the community of trillions of bacteria living inside the human body, wielding a powerful but poorly understood effect on human health. Last month, a group of 48 scientists from 50 US institutions called for more ambitious research into these tiny microorganisms, as part of a 10-year effort known as the Unified Microbiome Initiative Consortium that would uncover the role of individual microbes—which include fungi, bacteria, viruses, algae and more—and how they communicate with each other, their hosts, and their environment. —AFP



KATHMANDU: In this photograph taken on November 19, 2015, a Nepalese pharmacist waits for customers in his pharmacy in Kathmandu. Protests at the border with India have already led to crippling fuel shortages in the landlocked Himalayan nation, and now medical supplies are also running short. — AFP

NEPAL FACING 'MEDICAL CRISIS'

KATHMANDU: Bindu Ghimire's chemotherapy appointment is approaching, but supplies of the drugs the 61-year-old desperately needs are in short supply as a political crisis in her native Nepal deepens.

Protests at the border with India have already led to crippling fuel shortages in the landlocked Himalayan nation, and now medical supplies are also running short. "So far, the medicine had been available, but the pharmacy is not sure if they can provide it next time," the 61-year-old's son Shashi Shekhar Ghimire told AFP.

"I don't know what I will do if we don't get it," said Ghimire, whose mother has stage two colon cancer and needs a chemotherapy session every 21 days.

"It is getting very difficult." Nepal is heavily dependent on its giant neighbour for fuel and other supplies, but little cargo has crossed the border since protests against a new constitution broke out in late September.

Demonstrators from the Madhesi ethnic minority have been blockading the main Birgunj crossing ever since, protesting a new constitution they say leaves them politically marginalised.

Movement across other border checkpoints has also slowed to a crawl, prompting fuel rationing and forcing the government to start selling firewood as residents

run out of cooking gas. Who is to blame for all this is a matter of dispute. Nepal's government accuses India, which has criticised the new constitution, of retaliating with an "unofficial blockade"—a charge New Delhi denies. "The issues facing Nepal are political in nature. They are internal to Nepal and the Nepalese leadership has to resolve them through dialogue with agitating parties," said Indian foreign ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup at a recent briefing.

Airlifting supplies

Yesterday, protestors in Birgunj threw a petrol bomb on a truck loaded with locally-produced medicines worth about \$20,000, despite an earlier promise that medical supplies would be allowed through. There were no casualties, but local police said most of the medicines had been destroyed.

Meanwhile, the Nepal Chemists and Druggists Association say around 350 cargo trucks carrying medicines are stranded at the border. "We are suffering from a shortage of imported life-saving injections and vaccines," said Mrigendra Shrestha, president of the association. "Medicines are crucial. We are now trying to airlift emergency supplies." The head of Bir hospital-Nepal's oldest-said both fuel and vital drugs were running short.

"Operations have become difficult without fuel. If this blockade continues, we will have a medical crisis on our hands," Swyam Prakash Pandit told AFP.

'People are suffering' -

Landlocked Nepal imports 60 percent of its medicines, and most of them come from India. Even those that are locally produced have been affected by the political crisis, which comes just months after a devastating earthquake that killed nearly 9,000 people. Most of the factories are located along the southern border with India, where protests against the new constitution have been fiercest, and many have been forced to close. Those that do remain open are struggling with a shortage of raw materials and packaging.

This week, the country's Shahid Gangalal National Heart Centre reduced its daily surgical procedures by 40 percent citing a shortage of supplies. "Our stocks are going down, we had to cut down our operations to continue providing service," said Dipendra Khadka, the administration chief at the hospital.

Nepal's Red Cross Society (NRCS) resorted to importing blood bags from China after its supplies were stuck at the border. "The situation is getting from bad to worse. Our supplies will last two weeks now... this problem needs to be resolved," said Dibya Raj Poudel, spokesman for NRCS. —AFP

LAB-GROWN VOCAL CORDS OFFER HOPE OF TREATING VOICE DISORDERS

WASHINGTON: From mom's comforting croon to a shout of warning, our voices are the main way we communicate and one we take for granted unless something goes wrong. Now researchers have grown human vocal cords in the laboratory that appear capable of producing sound - in hopes of one day helping people with voice-robbing diseases or injuries.

Millions of people suffer from voice impairments, usually the temporary kind such as laryngitis from a virus or a singer who overdoes the performing. But sometimes the vocal cords become too scarred and stiff to work properly, or even develop cancer and must be removed. There are few treatments for extensive damage.

Your voice depends on tiny but complex pieces of tissue that must be soft and flexible enough to vibrate as air moves over them - the way they make sound - but tough enough to survive banging together hundreds of times a second. Wednesday, researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison reported the first lab-grown replacement tissue that appears pretty close to the real thing - and that produced some sound when tested in voice boxes taken from animals.

"There is no other tissue in the human body that is subject to these types of biomechanical demands," said Dr. Nathan Welham of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who led the work published in Science Translational Medicine. "This lends promise or hope to one day treating some of the most severe voice problems that we face."

The vocal cords, what scientists call "vocal folds," sit inside the larynx or voice box, near



MADISON: This photo provided by John Maniaci/UW Health, taken Nov. 16, 2015, shows Dr. Nathan Welham, right, visiting scientist Kohei Nishimoto, left, and associate scientist Changying Ling working in the Welham Lab at the Wisconsin Institute for Medical Research in Madison, Wis. Welham and his team have bio-engineered vocal chords that can generate a voice in humans. — AP

the Adam's apple in the neck. Welham's team started with some rare donations of vocal cords from four patients who had had their larynx removed for non-cancerous reasons, and from one deceased donor. The researchers culled two types of cells that made up most of the tissue, and grew a large supply of them. Then they arranged the cells on 3-D collagen scaffolding, and the two cell types began mixing and growing. In 14 days,

the result was tissue with the shape and elasticity of human vocal cords, and with similar chemical properties.

TECHNIQUE SOUNDS WELL

But could it work? To tell, the researchers turned to a technique that sounds, well, strange but is a staple in voice research. They took a larynx that had been removed from a large dog after its death and attached it to a

plastic "windpipe" that blew in warm air to simulate breath.

A dog's voice box is pretty similar to a human's, Welham said. So the researchers cut out one of the native canine vocal folds and glued a piece of the new bioengineered tissue in its place. Sure enough, the human tissue vibrated correctly and made sound - a buzzing almost like a kazoo, the recordings show. It didn't sound like a voice because it takes all the resonating structures of the mouth, throat and nose to "give the human voice its richness and individuality, and make my voice sound recognizable to my loved ones and you to yours," Welham explained.

But that raw sound was essentially the same when the researchers tested the unaltered dog larynx and when they substituted the newly grown human tissue, suggesting the sound should be more normal if it were placed inside a body, Welham said.

Wouldn't the body reject tissue grown from someone else's cells? Further study using mice engineered to have human immune systems suggested this bioengineered tissue may be tolerated much like corneal transplants, less rejection-prone than other body parts.

This is a first-stage study, and it will take far more research before the approach could be tested in people, cautioned Dr. Norman Hogikyan, a voice specialist at the University of Michigan, who wasn't involved in the new research. But "I was impressed," Hogikyan said. Growing replacement tissue "is an important step that's potentially useful in treating scarring from a wide range of reasons." — AP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT NEWS IN THE GULF REGION

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Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC, FAAP, PEM

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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (19/11/2015 TO 25/11/2015)

SHARQIA-1 THE FORGOTTEN THE FORGOTTEN SPECTRE THE FORGOTTEN SPECTRE THE FORGOTTEN	12:45 PM 2:45 PM 4:45 PM 7:45 PM 9:45 PM 12:45 AM	ATOMIC EDEN ATOMIC EDEN ATOMIC EDEN	9:00 PM 11:15 PM 1:15 AM
SHARQIA-2 THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 GOOSEBUMPS THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2	1:15 PM 1:30 PM 4:00 PM 6:45 PM 9:30 PM 12:15 AM	AVENUES-3 THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 SAT+SUN+TUE+WED AMAR AKBAR ANTHONY-Malayalam THU+FRI+MON THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 FIELD OF LOST SHOES THE FORGOTTEN THE FORGOTTEN	1:00 PM 4:00 PM 7:00 PM 7:00 PM 7:00 PM 10:00 PM 1:00 AM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM
SHARQIA-3 THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 PREM RATAN DHAN PAYO PREM RATAN DHAN PAYO PREM RATAN DHAN PAYO SPECTRE	11:30 AM 2:15 PM 5:30 PM 8:45 PM 12:05 AM	360° 1 FIELD OF LOST SHOES SPECTRE SPECTRE SPECTRE SPECTRE	11:45 AM 2:00 PM 5:00 PM 8:00 PM 11:00 PM
MUHALAB-1 FIELD OF LOST SHOES THE FORGOTTEN FIELD OF LOST SHOES THE FORGOTTEN SPECTRE THE FORGOTTEN FIELD OF LOST SHOES	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:30 PM 7:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:30 AM	360°- 2 TIGER HOUSE TIGER HOUSE TIGER HOUSE TIGER HOUSE ARBA'A KOTCHINA TIGER HOUSE TIGER HOUSE	12:45 PM 2:45 PM 4:45 PM 6:45 PM 8:45 PM 10:45 PM 12:45 AM
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(Written and Spoken)
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SITUATION VACANT

Driver needed for Kuwaiti Family, full time. Call: 6062330 (C 5080) 21-11-2015

Wanted Indian female cook for a small Kuwaiti family. Contact: 99574355 (C 5077) 17-11-2015

MATRIMONIAL

Seeking suitable alliance for a B.S.E Nurse working in M.O.H Kuwait (RC girl/ 27 years/ 160 cm) from Trichur district, Kerala, proceeding for vacation coming March. Contact: rkalleli@gmail.com (C 5076) 19-11-2015

CHANGE OF NAME

Old name Murtaza, new name Murtaza Shabbir

Saifuddin, Address - Dhiya New Abadi, VPO Partapur, Banswara Raj, India, Passport No. G0081303. (C 5079) 18-11-2015

I, Varikkody Nazar, Varikkody House, P.O Vengalam, Kozhikode holder of Indian Passport No. H8465519 hereby change my name as Abdul Nazar Varikoly with immediate effect. (C 5078) 17-11-2015

Prayer timings

Fajr:	04:54
Shorook	06:16
Duhr:	11:34
Asr:	14:31
Maghrib:	16:51
Isha:	18:11

Word Search Puzzles

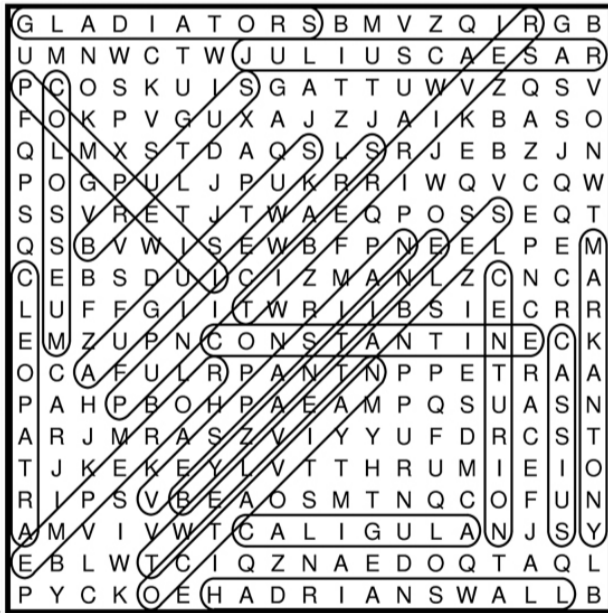
PHOTOGRAPHY WORD SEARCH PUZZLE



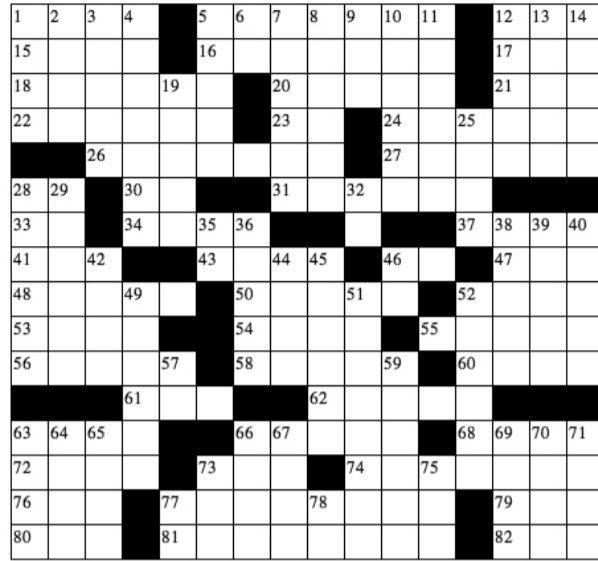
- APERTURE
- CAMERA
- COMPOSITION
- DARKROOM
- DIGITAL
- ENLARGER
- FISHEYE
- FLASH
- FOCUS
- LANDSCAPES
- LENS HOOD
- LIGHTING
- MODELS
- POINT OF VIEW
- STILL LIFE
- TELEPHOTO
- TRIPOD
- WHITE BALANCE
- WIDE ANGLE
- ZOOM LENS

Yesterday's Solution

SOLUTION TO ANCIENT ROME PUZZLE



CROSSWORD 1086



ACROSS

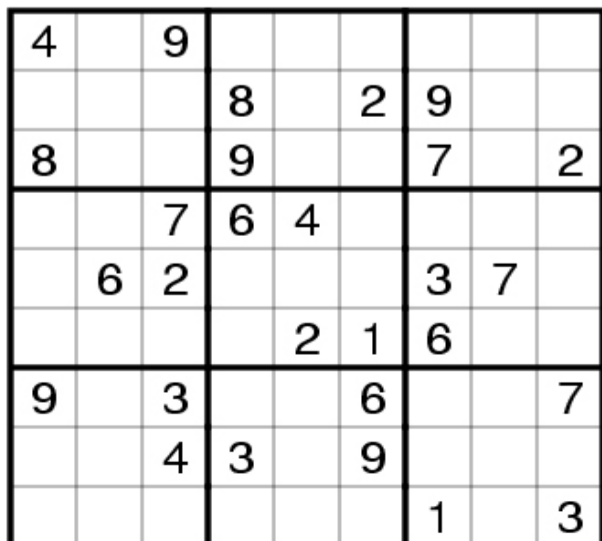
- The clock time given by a clock carried on board a spacecraft.
- An impudent or insolent rejoinder.
- Injured by bites or stings.
- The provision of money temporarily (usually at interest).
- A state in which the level of carbon dioxide in the blood is lower than normal.
- Black tropical American cuckoo.
- Break the seal of.
- An extreme bellicose nationalist.
- Not in good physical or mental health.
- Any plant of the genus Reseda.
- A state in northwestern North America.
- Used of eyes lacking liveliness.
- The academic world.
- A member of a legation.
- A state in midwestern United States.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- Be compatible or in accordance with.
- An artificial language for international use that rejects rejects all existing words and is based instead on an abstract analysis of ideas.
- Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A sheet of metal or wood or glass or plastic.
- A primeval personification of air and breath.
- (prefix) Indicating difference or variation.
- A populous province in northeastern China.
- Not yet payable.
- A woody climbing usually tropical plant.
- (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
- A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
- An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
- The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
- The inner and longer of the two bones of the human forearm.

- The act of scanning.
- A ship with a reinforced bow to break up ice and keep channels open for navigation.
- The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.
- A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
- The seat within a bishop's diocese where his cathedral is located adv.
- An act of deliberate betrayal.
- Any of various dark heavy viscid substances obtained as a residue.

DOWN

- (music) A curved line spanning notes that are to be played legato.
- Any cone-shaped artifact.
- The sacred city of Lamaism.
- A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
- Food mixtures either arranged on a plate or tossed and served with a moist dressing.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A mountain peak in the Andes in Bolivia (21,391 feet high).
- Equipped with long sharp-pointed projections especially along the top of a wall or fence.
- A hotel providing overnight lodging for travelers.
- Worry unnecessarily of excessively.
- Someone who guards prisoners.
- 1,000 baiza equal 1 riyal-omani.
- An arm off of a larger body of water (often between rocky headlands).
- A diacritical mark (~) placed over the letter n in Spanish to indicate a palatal nasal sound or over a vowel in Portuguese to indicate nasalization.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Advanced in years.
- Dignified and somber in manner or character and committed to keeping promises.
- A gray tetravalent metallic element that resembles zirconium chemically and is found in zirconium minerals.
- A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
- Strike with disgust or revulsion.
- Jordan's port.
- (Greek mythology) The beautiful daughter of Zeus and Leda who was abducted by Paris.
- (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
- In bed.
- (Norse mythology) Goddess of old age who defeated Thor in a wrestling match.
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
- (zoology) Relating to frogs and toads.
- Any of 24 major or minor diatonic scales that provide the tonal framework for a piece of music.
- Spread or daub over.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus Acacia.
- A unit of area (4840 square yards) used in English-speaking countries.
- Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
- A member of a European people who occupied Britain and Spain and Gaul in pre-Roman times.
- A European river.
- Floor consisting of a large unpartitioned space over a factory or warehouse or other commercial space.
- A quantity of no importance.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- Mature female of mammals of which the male is called 'buck'.
- An inflammatory complication of leprosy that results in painful skin lesions on the arms and legs and face.
- A metallic element of the rare earth group.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.

Daily SuDoku



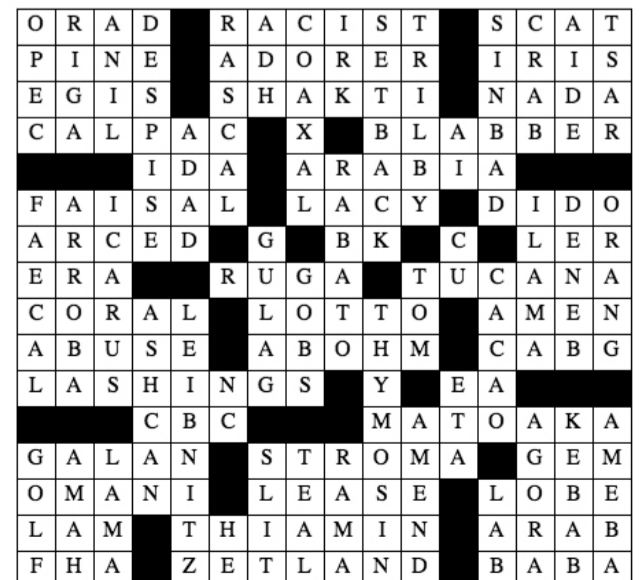
very hard

Yesterday's Solution



medium

Yesterday's Solution



RugbyU

CHEIKA LOOKING FOR EDGY FUN WITH BAA BAAS

LONDON: Michael Cheika admits he has been "having fun" since the World Cup but the Aussie insists it will be "back to the serious business" with the Barbarians against Argentina today. Cheika dearly wants his mix of youth and ultra experienced players from around the globe "to take another famous international scalp". The Wallabies head coach is still on a high from his side's World Cup campaign where they reached the final before finding New Zealand just too good in that memorable Twickenham shoot-out.

Cheika returns to the home of English rugby keen to walk away a winner and predicting that a large crowd can expect plenty of thrills, spills and entertainment-but just as importantly a full-on, physical and passionate contest where his Baa Baas will have a "real edge". He insisted: "It's not just about being rugby's version of the Harlem Globetrotters. It is about playing attacking rugby with good skills and a little edge as well. We are here to win games and play some very good rugby."

"The Barbarians have a long list of famous international scalps they have claimed and the players have it in their minds that they want to collect another scalp today. "It's all about wanting to win while being prepared to do something daring. To do something different which is the hallmark of the Barbarians." He has the likes of South African forward legends Victor Matfield and Bakkies Botha in his pack, and a backline glittering with World Cup stars such as New Zealand's Nehe Milner-Skudder, Australia's Tevita Kuridran and Fijian powerhouse Nemani Nadolo. All three sparkled in England 2015, and will be anxious to continue their outstanding form.

'Serious business'

Cheika insists: "The World Cup was such a great tourna-



LONDON: Members of the Australian rugby union team including Stephen Moore (centre) and Australia's head coach Michael Cheika watch Roger Federer of Switzerland play during their singles tennis match at the ATP World Tour Finals at the O2 Arena in London on Thursday, Nov 19, 2015. — AP

ment and so well organized and run. It was very enjoyable and a lot of fun but now it is back to the serious business of winning games. "It is wonderful having such talent from different countries at our disposal. Guys who would be our enemies are now on our side, so it's been a fantastic experience coaching these players. "The rugby calendar makes it very difficult for the Barbarians to get games but when they do get the chance to play one of the top countries it is always special. "You just have to look at some of the names of the guys who agreed to come back to England after the World Cup to see how much the Barbarians brand still means in the world of rugby. "It is still a concept the players really enjoy

and all the coaches do as well. It's a challenge to get everyone to play a certain style of rugby in a bit more relaxed atmosphere." Cheika's Barbarians certainly warmed up nicely for the clash with the Pumas having put ten tries on a young Gloucester team at Kingsholm. The outstanding Milner-Skudder and Joe Tomane were among the try scorers but the Barbarians face a far tougher task against the Pumas, who performed heroics to get to the World Cup semi-finals.

Jonah Lomu's sad and sudden death has cast a shadow over the world of rugby this week and a minute's silence will be held before the game in memory of the former All Blacks great who also represented the Barbarians. — AFP

AUSTRALIAN JONES NAMED ENGLAND'S FIRST FOREIGN COACH; INKS 4-YEAR DEAL

LONDON: Australian Eddie Jones has been appointed as the first foreign coach of the England rugby team on a contract taking him through the 2019 World Cup, the Rugby Football Union said yesterday. The 55-year-old former Australia and Japan coach replaces Stuart Lancaster, who stepped down in the wake of the hosts' pool-stage exit from the World Cup. South Africa's Western Province had earlier paved the way for the announcement by releasing Jones from a three-year contract he had just signed to take over as coach of the Cape Town-based Stormers Super Rugby side.

"The opportunity to take the reins in possibly the world's most high-profile international rugby job doesn't come along every day... and I feel fortunate to be given the opportunity," Jones said in a news release. "I'm now looking forward to working with the RFU and the players to move beyond the disappointment England suffered at the World Cup and hope to build a new team that will reflect the level of talent that exists within the English game."

"I believe the future is bright for England." Jones's stock rose to unprecedented levels after he led traditional lightweights Japan to a stunning upset of former world champions South Africa at the recent Rugby World Cup. He had previously coached Australia to the final of the 2003 World Cup and been an advisor to the South Africa team that won the 2007 edition. "We are confident Eddie can build on the strong foundations already laid,



LONDON: The new England rugby union head coach Eddie Jones poses for photographers on the pitch at Twickenham Stadium in west London yesterday. — AFP

with this talented group of players largely remaining together through to the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan and beyond," RFU chief executive Ian Ritche said.

Jones told reporters last week he was committed to the Stormers

despite media speculation linking him with the England job, but admitted he found the lure of London too great after only three weeks in his new role. "When I was appointed at Western Province there was no vacancy within the RFU and I never envisaged this opportunity to come forward," he said. "So while I am excited about the opportunity to coach England I'm very disappointed to be leaving the Stormers." Jones will hold a news conference at Twickenham later on Friday when he will be questioned about the future of Lancaster's three remaining assistants-Graham Rowntree, Andy Farrell and Mike Catt. It is expected that all three will follow Lancaster out of the door as Jones brings in his own team.

Former England captain Steve Borthwick, who was Jones's forwards coach for Japan, has just started a new assistant coach role with English club Bristol but will probably be approached. On the pitch there are likely to be changes too, with captain Chris Robshaw highly likely to be axed. Writing a column ahead of England's World Cup defeat by Australia, Jones described Robshaw as "an outstanding club player but at international level he just doesn't have that point of difference. He carries OK, he tackles OK, but he's not outstandingly good in any area." Jones' first game in charge will be against Scotland in Edinburgh on Feb. 6, as England seek to end a run of four successive second-place finishes in the Six Nations championship. — Reuters

HARPER, DONALDSON WIN BASEBALL 'MOST VALUABLE PLAYER AWARDS'

NEW YORK: Washington Nationals outfielder Bryce Harper and Toronto Blue Jays third baseman Josh Donaldson were named Thursday as winners of Major League Baseball's 2015 Most Valuable Player awards. Harper captured the prize for the National League unanimously, garnering all 30 first-place votes and a perfect 420 points from a media panel, while Donaldson took the honor in the American League with 23 first-place ballots and 385 total points. Harper, 23, became the youngest unanimous Most Valuable Player, the youngest NL Most Valuable Player since Cincinnati Reds catcher Johnny Bench in 1970 and third-youngest NL MVP overall after Bench and St Louis Cardinals legend Stan Musial in 1943.

Harper led the NL with 42 home runs, sharing the top spot with Colorado's Nolan Arenado, and 118 runs scored and was second in batting average (.330) and walks (124). The only other player in National League history to finish in the top two in all four of those areas in the same season was the late 1920s star Rogers Hornsby, who did it twice. He becomes the first Most Valuable Player in the history of the Nationals franchise, which began in 1969 as the Montreal Expos and moved to Washington before the start of the 2005 season. Arizona Diamondbacks first baseman Paul Goldschmidt was second in the NL voting on 234 points with Cincinnati Reds first baseman Joey Votto third on 175.

All three National League vote leaders for the MVP award were from teams that failed to make the playoffs, something that hasn't happened since 1959. Donaldson joined George Bell from 1987 as the only MVPs in Blue Jays history as Toronto reached the playoffs for the first time since winning the World Series in 1993. Donaldson led the major leagues in runs scored with 122, led the American League with 123 runs batted in and shared third in the AL with 41 homers while batting .297. Trailing Donaldson for the AL award were Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout, with seven first-place votes and 304 points overall, and Kansas City Royals outfielder Lorenzo Cain, who had 225 points but helped his club capture the World Series for the first time in 30 years. — AFP

NO 16 UTAH BEAT TEXAS TECH 73-63 IN PUERTO RICO TIPOFF

SAN JUAN: Utah coach Larry Krystkowiak pushed his team to play tougher after a first half in which they squandered much of a 12-point lead and couldn't keep Texas Tech off the boards. The second half was more what the fifth-year coach expects from the No 16 Utes. Lorenzo Bonam scored a season-high 20 points and Utah held off Texas Tech 73-63 on Thursday night in the opening round of the Puerto Rico Tipoff.

Jordan Loveridge added 18 points for the Utes (3-0), who dominated the boards and scored 16 second-chance points after halftime to stay in control - especially as the Red Raiders (1-1) kept trying to push their way back into the game. "I actually challenged the guys (at halftime)," Krystkowiak said. "I think there's a perception out there maybe that the Big 12 is a real physical league and maybe the Pac-12's not and it looked like that in the first half.

"We ended up on our backs a lot of times laying on the ground pointing fingers at each other telling each other to block out. ... We had to play more physical to have a chance to win that game." After Texas Tech outrebounded Utah 25-18 in the first half, the Utes sure reversed those struggles after the break. They more than doubled up the Red Raiders after halftime at 27-13, including 10-5 on the offensive glass. That was critical on a night when neither team shot particularly well. Utah shot 38 percent while Texas Tech shot 39 percent. "Our intensity just picked up and we got down into it defensively," Utah senior Brandon Taylor said. "We tried to slow down a little bit on offense and really just capitalize and hold onto the basketball as much as we could. We dialed in defensively and offensively." Devauntah Williams scored 13 points to lead the Red Raiders, who got within 42-40 before Bonam responded with six straight points to give Utah some breathing room.

Utah pushed that lead back out to 13, then got a key 3-pointer from Loveridge near the 2-minute mark after Texas Tech had fought back to make it a two-posses-



SAN JUAN: Utah guard Lorenzo Bonam (right) goes to the basket against Texas Tech guard Jordan Jackson during a NCAA college basketball game in San Juan, Puerto Rico on Thursday, Nov 19, 2015. — AP

sion game again. Texas Tech coach Tubby Smith didn't have to look far for reasons why his Red Raiders couldn't quite dig out from the early hole. Aside from rebounding, Texas Tech made 3 of 19 3-pointers for the game and made 6 of 14 free throws in the final 20 minutes. "They dominated the boards ... and that gave them some second opportunities and third opportunities," Smith said. "Another thing is our free-throw shooting. We have to put more pressure on them, by making shots and we struggled to make our free throws."

No 17 Vanderbilt, Stony Brook

Wade Baldwin IV came off the bench to score 21 and lead No 17 Vanderbilt to a 79-72 overtime win over Stony Brook on

Thursday night. Stony Brook's Carson Puriefoy's layup with one second left in regulation sent the game into overtime tied at 66. Free throws helped Vanderbilt pull out the win in overtime. Vanderbilt's Riley LaChance and Damian Jones both scored 13 points. Matthew Fisher-Davis added 11 points. Forward Luke Kornet, who missed the last 22 minutes of Monday's win over Gardner-Webb with a sprained ankle, scored nine points. Stony Brook's Jameel Warney, a two-time America East player of the year, led the Seawolves (1-1) with 22 points and 11 rebounds. He led the nation in double-doubles (24) and total rebounds (409) last season. Puriefoy scored 16 points and Stony Brook's Ahmad Walker added 13.

No 5 Baylor beat No 19 USF

Niya Johnson had 10 points, 13 assists and eight rebounds and No 5 Baylor held on for a 66-63 victory over No. 19 South Florida on Thursday night to advance to the preseason WNIT championship game. Courtney Williams had 23 points for the Bulls (2-1), but missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer that would have tied it after grabbing an offensive rebound. Nina Davis had 15 points and Kalani Brown scored 11 points in 10 minutes for Lady Bears (3 0). Baylor never trailed after an 11-0 run early in the game, but South Florida got within a point twice in the fourth quarter and had the potential tying shot. Laura Ferriera had 14 points for South Florida. Baylor hosts DePaul tomorrow for the preseason WNIT championship. — Agencies

BULGARIA WEIGHTLIFTERS GET RIO BAN OVER WIDESPREAD DOPING ROMANIA ALSO STRIPPED OF ONE SPOT

BERLIN: Bulgaria's weightlifters will be absent from next year's Olympics after the sport's governing body banned the country's athletes following a high number of doping cases, it said yesterday. "Due to the special anti-doping policy for Rio 2016, the EB (Executive Board) confirmed that Bulgaria is not eligible to participate in the upcoming Olympic Games," the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) said.

In March, eight male lifters, including three European champions, and three female athletes, tested positive for the banned anabolic steroid stanozolol at a training camp for the European championships in Tbilisi, Georgia. Former European champion Demir Demirev, 2014 European champion Ivan Markov and

Ivaylo Filev and female weightlifter Milka Maneva have also been banned for similar offences. Bulgarian weightlifting has suffered repeated embarrassment due to doping cases and the national body was temporarily stripped of its licence in 2009.

A year earlier, Bulgarian weightlifters first missed the biggest event on their sporting calendar after the Balkan nation withdrew its team prior to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing when 11 members failed doping tests. Bulgaria's reputation was also tarnished at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, where the team were stripped of three gold medals and sent home in shame following positive drugs tests. The IWF also decided to withdraw one of Romania's quota of lifters for

the Games due to multiple positive tests for the country's athletes during the qualification period, it said.

The bans come amid a high-profile doping scandal involving Russian track and field athletes with the country's federation suspended along with its anti-doping agency and drugs-testing lab. The sanctions are part of a crackdown on drugs cheats in Russia following a report by a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) special commission which exposed widespread state-sponsored doping. The report detailed cover-ups, bribes to conceal positive tests, destruction of samples and evidence of state security services colluding with the athletics federation to facilitate cheating. — Reuters

BOXING

A WIN WILL BE ENOUGH AGAINST ALVAREZ: COTTO

LOS ANGELES: Puerto Rican middleweight great Miguel Cotto says he doesn't need a world title to lend importance to his today showdown with Mexico's Saul "Canelo" Alvarez. "I don't need a belt to fight Canelo," said Cotto, who was stripped of his World Boxing Council crown on Tuesday over failure to pay the \$300,000 sanctioning fee they demanded for a world title bout. Alvarez and his camp stumped up their \$300,000, and the former WBC and World Boxing Association super welterweight world champion can claim the vacant WBC title with a victory.

Cotto said Wednesday he had offered the WBC \$125,000, but the sanctioning body rejected it. He was unrepentant over failing to pay the \$300,000 - or a further \$800,000 step-aside fee to mandatory challenger Gennady Golovkin. The 34-year-old Puerto Rican, winner of world titles in four weight divisions, takes a record of 40-4 with 33 knockouts into the bout. Trainer Freddie Roach said Cotto is in as good a shape as he has ever seen him. "We are going to box a lot in this fight," Roach

said. "We're not just going out there looking for a knockout. I want him using his foot speed and his angles. He's a more complete fighter now than ever."

But Roach admits he'd love to see Cotto knock out Alvarez-then call out Floyd Mayweather to put his 49-0 record on the line. "Miguel always tells me that if he had me in his corner when he fought Mayweather he would have knocked him out," Roach said. "I think Miguel could pull off the strategy I have to beat Mayweather. I think that would be a good fight for him." But first there's the 25-year-old Alvarez, 45-1-1 with 32 knockouts. The bout is being fought at a 155-pound catchweight, and the Mexican's power-amply demonstrated in a spectacular knockout of James Kirkland in May could trouble Cotto.

"At this particular point, I feel very solid," Alvarez said. "I'm ready and I'm going to show it today." On the undercard at Mandalay Bay, Japan's WBC super featherweight champion Takashi Miura defends his title against unbeaten Francisco Vargas. — AFP

BADMINTON

IS 'BURDEN OF FAME' BECOMING TOO MUCH FOR LIN DAN?

HONG KONG: Chinese badminton legend Lin Dan has dominated badminton for over a decade but after another early exit in Hong Kong, the five-time world champion hinted that the "burden of fame" may be becoming too much. Nicknamed "Super Dan" in 2004 by now-retired Danish star Peter Gade, the Chinese shuttler remains the only singles player to have scooped all nine major titles and has two Olympic golds to his name. Lin is firmly established as one of the true greats of the sport, but he has had a choppy year taking just one Super Series title, in Japan in September.

Now the 32-year-old veteran will face questions about his Olympic title defense in Rio de Janeiro next year as a host of challengers line up to take him down. Lin exited the Hong Kong Open in the second round on Thursday at the hands of little-known hometown player Angus Ng the third time in as many months that he has fallen in the first two rounds of a big tournament. The former long-time world number one, who is now ranked third, also made unexpectedly heavy work of his first round match in Hong Kong against Ihsan Maulana Mustofa of Indonesia, taking over an hour to dismiss the qualifier 21-17, 15-21, 21-14.

After that match, Lin, who is the centre of attention wherever he plays, hinted he was feeling the pressure of continuously performing at the top of the game. "The younger players don't have any burden of fame. They can just play more free," he said. Lin took five months off until May last year—his second long absence from the circuit since winning Olympic gold in 2012. But he dismissed retirement rumors as he returned to action, saying he is aiming for next year's Olympics where he will attempt to top the podium for the third consecutive time.

Lin's waning star would be good news for arch-rival Lee Chong Wei of

Malaysia, the former world number one who has never taken the world title or an Olympic gold-losing to Lin in the last two Olympic finals. Lee has made a strong return to the badminton circuit after an eight-month doping ban this year, winning back-to-back titles in China and France as he hits form nine months out from Rio. Lin's compatriot and current world number one Chen Long will also be eyeing his first Olympic title as badminton begins its build-up to Brazil. "There is a battle between me and Lin Dan and Lee Chong Wei. We always do our best," Chen said in Hong Kong this week. — AFP

BADMINTON

WORLD CHAMP
MARIN CRUISES
INTO HONG
KONG SEMI-FINAL

HONG KONG: World champion Carolina Marin brushed off Thailand's Porntip Buranaprasertsuk to book her place in the Hong Kong Open semi-finals yesterday. The Spanish player had her sights firmly set on her sixth big title of the year as she dismissed Porntip 21-12, 21-13 in 42 minutes. Marin has had a strong year, winning the world title in August and shooting up the rankings to number one after starting the year ranked eighth. "I am very happy with my performance because last week I lost against Wang Shixian, it wasn't a good game for me," said Marin, referring to the Chinese world number six. "But I changed my (mindset) because I want to get the title here." In the men's competition, former world number one Lee Chong Wei will meet rival and top seed Chen Long of China later in the quarter-finals.

The meet is being billed as a grudge match after Lee beat Chen in Sunday's China Open final. The Malaysian is on a winning streak after taking back-to-back titles in China and France as he made a strong return following an eight-month doping ban earlier this year. Overnight hometown hero Angus Ng, who downed Chinese legend Lin Dan in the second round, will meet Chou Tien-chen of Taiwan later Friday to fight for his place in the semi-finals. Hong Kong's Ng lost to Chou in the quarter-finals of the French Open last month—the first time he had reached the last eight at a Super Series tournament. — AFP



FLORIDA: Tennessee Titans cornerback Perrish Cox (29) stops Jacksonville Jaguars wide receiver Allen Robinson (15) after a reception during the second half of an NFL football game in Jacksonville, Fla on Thursday, Nov 19, 2015. — AP

JAGUARS EDGE TITANS

WASHINGTON: The Jacksonville Jaguars scored 10 points in the last four minutes of a 19-13 NFL win over Tennessee on Thursday, making slight headway in the weak AFC South division. Rashad Greene's 63-yard punt return for Jacksonville was followed by a short touchdown pass from Blake Bortles to Julius Thomas and Jason Myers added the extra point to give the Jaguars a 16-13 lead with 3:30 to play. On

Tennessee's next play, Phillip Supernaw fumbled after making a catch and Davon House recovered for the Jaguars at the 29-yard line. The Jaguars couldn't move the ball and Myers added his fourth field goal to complete the scoring.

Tennessee had one last chance. Quarterback Marcus Mariota moved his team from their own 20 yard line to the Jaguars' 23 yard line with five second left to

play, but on the last play of the game, Jacksonville defensive end Andre Branch sacked Mariota. With the win the Jaguars improved to 4-6 — not out of the hunt in a division in which Indianapolis and Houston are both 4-5 and Tennessee bring up the rear at 2-8. The Titans and Jaguars will meet again in a rematch in 17 days in Nashville. Indianapolis visit Atlanta on Sunday when Houston host the New York Jets. — AFP

IRELAND'S LOWRY SUFFERS MORE DUBAI FRUSTRATION

DUBAI: Shane Lowry suffered yet more frustration as the Irishman's attempt to top the European Tour money list for a first time floundered after another difficult round in the desert yesterday. Going into the season-ending \$8 million DP World Tour Championship, the world number 18 was one of seven players still in contention to win the Race to Dubai—the continent's revamped Order of Merit. However, Thursday's error-strewn opening round of 75 all but ended his chances and although he improved to card a second-round 70 yesterday, Lowry has now set himself more modest goals for the remaining two days.

"It feels like it's playing pretty easy out there. I made a few mistakes, another frustrating day," Lowry told reporters after sinking three bogeys and five birdies for a one-over aggregate total of 145. "My goal was to shoot 68, get back under par, I'm just not playing well enough to be shooting really low. I feel comfortable on the greens, if I can drive a ball a little bit better tomorrow I could shoot mid-60s," he added. "I still reckon a good weekend and I can backdoor a top 10-15 finish. That's the goal."

The 28-year-old's form has slumped since winning the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational in August. In six subsequent events, he has failed to make the top-50 three times and only troubled the leaderboard at two of them. "The game has been driving me mad the last three weeks. I'm looking forward to having a decent weekend and nice week off next week, it's badly needed," said Lowry, who began the Dubai event ranked fourth on the money list. The top 15 players will share an additional \$5 million in prize money. "I have to look at the guys around me," added Lowry. "It's up to me to try and finish as high up the Race to Dubai as I can, maybe fourth or fifth position."

The Australian Masters

In another development, Adam Scott blew a big lead at the Australian Masters yesterday after a torrid back nine allowed Peter Wilson to catch him at the top of the leaderboard. The Australian world number 12 extended his one-shot overnight lead to as many as five strokes midway through day two at par-71 Huntingdale in Melbourne.

But a double bogey on the 10th, a bogey on the 13th and another dropped shot on the 18th changed the complexion for Scott, the 2012 and 2013 Australian Masters champion. He eventually signed for a one-under 70 to be at eight-under 134, level with fellow Australian Wilson, who has shot two successive rounds of 67. One stroke back in outright third was Matt Guyatt (69), who has twice finished in the top 11 in the past three years of this tournament. Scott only found one of five fairways with his wayward driver. "I had a lovely start, playing really solid and then a couple of loose shots on the back nine and I was just grinding to get it into the clubhouse," he said.

"That's the way it goes. "It was a shame because I felt like I didn't do too much too bad but the driver cost me three or four shots. "I just couldn't get it on the fairway to take advantage of the par fives."

There are 18 players within five shots of Scott and Wilson on a crowded leaderboard. Brett Rumford shot the day's low round of 64 to be tied for fourth with American George McNeill. Among those to miss the halfway cut were Belgian Nicolas Colsaerts and Australian Presidents Cup team member Steven Bowditch, the second-highest ranked player in the field.— Agencies



PHILADELPHIA: San Jose Sharks' Patrick Marleau (12) collides with Philadelphia Flyers' Steve Mason (35) and Luke Schenn (22) during the third period of an NHL hockey game on Thursday, Nov 19, 2015. — AP

STARS OVERCOME CAPITALS 3-2

WASHINGTON: Alex Ovechkin scored his 484th NHL goal, breaking Sergei Fedorov's record for most by a Russian-born player, but the Dallas Stars bounced back to beat the Washington Capitals 3-2 Thursday night. Ovechkin's goal came at 7:01 of the third period, knotting the score at 2. He converted a backhand pass from Nicklas Backstrom, shoving the puck into the left side of the net. Just more than 4 minutes later, Jason Spezza converted a turnover by Washington's Jason Chimera into the go-ahead score. Ovechkin scored No 484 in his 777th game; Fedorov had 483 goals in 1,248 games. Dallas has won eight straight against the Capitals, including five in a row in Washington. Kari Lehtonen stopped 33 shots for the Stars, improving to 9-1 this season. The victory boosted the Stars' point total to 32, best in the Western Conference. Tyler Seguin and Cody Eakin also scored for Dallas. Backstrom had a goal for the Capitals.

LIGHTNING 2, RANGERS 1

Valtteri Filppula scored a short-handed goal to snap a tie late in the third period as Tampa Bay ended New York's nine-game winning streak. In their first meeting since the Lightning beat the Rangers in Game 7 of last season's Eastern Conference final, Filppula scored with 1:05 to play off a 2-on-1 pass from JT Brown. Tampa Bay also got a goal from Alex Killorn. Ben Bishop stopped Chris Kreider's penalty shot in the third and finished with 20 saves, improving to 9-0 against the Rangers in the regular season. Dominic Moore scored for the Rangers, who fell one short of matching the franchise record of 10 straight wins accomplished in 1939-40 and 1972-73.

BLUES 3, SABRES 2, SO

Alexander Steen scored the only goal in a shootout and Jake Allen made 32 saves to lift St Louis over Buffalo. The Blues have won seven straight and 17 of 19 against Buffalo since 1999. Kevin Shattenkirk and Vladimir Tarasenko scored power-play goals in regulation for the

Blues (13-6-1), who had lost three of four. Allen stopped four shots in the 3-on-3 overtime period. Sam Reinhart and Ryan O'Reilly scored in regulation for the Sabres (8-9-2), who have lost three straight after a stretch of five wins in six games. Linus Ullmark stopped 27 shots.

COYOTES 3, CANADIENS 2

Martin Hanzal and Shane Doan scored in the first period as Arizona held on to beat Montreal. Oliver Ekman-Larsson also scored for the Coyotes, who lost their previous two games. Max Pacioretty and Dale Weise had the goals for the Canadiens (14-4-2), who have gone four games without winning in regulation. They have allowed 16 goals while going 1-2-1 during that stretch. Weise scored with 51 seconds left. Montreal outshot the Coyotes 33-20. Arizona scored three times on its first six shots against Mike Condon as Montreal fell behind 3-0 for the third game in a row.

SHARKS 1, FLYERS 0, OT

Melker Karlsson scored 3:45 into overtime and Martin Jones made 34 saves in his third shutout of the season, giving San Jose a victory over Philadelphia. Joonas Donskoi set up the game-winner on a 2-on-1 with Karlsson, who beat goalie Steve Mason. It was the fifth straight road win for the Sharks, who improved to 4-0 on their six-game road trip and 8-3 away from home this season. It also was the 13th win in 14 games for San Jose against the Flyers, and the Sharks' eighth straight victory in Philadelphia. The Flyers last defeated the Sharks at home on Dec 21, 2000. Philadelphia dropped its sixth in a row at home, matching its longest skid since April 2011.

BRUINS 4, WILD 2

Loui Eriksson scored three goals as Boston beat Minnesota. Eriksson wrapped up his hat trick when he converted a perfect give-and-go from David Krejci early in the third period. Minnesota is 1-4-3 in its last eight road games and has led for just 1:12 during that stretch.

Jason Zucker scored for the Wild in the second period, but sustained a lower body injury as time expired and had to be helped off the ice.

PENGUINS 4, AVALANCHE 3

Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin scored to help Pittsburgh beat Colorado. Malkin got his seventh goal of the season on a power play, and Crosby netted his third of the season, first in seven games and first at even strength this season. David Perron and Chris Kunitz also scored, and the Penguins won their second straight after dropping three of four. Tyson Barrie got his first score this season, briefly pulling Colorado within a goal in the third period before Crosby helped the Penguins regain a two-goal cushion. Matt Duchene scored twice and Colorado dropped its second straight after winning the first three games of a season-high, seven-game trip. Marc-Andre Fleury made 28 saves for Pittsburgh.

DUCKS 3, PANTHERS 1

Andrew Cogliano and Cam Fowler scored to lift Anaheim over Florida. Jakob Silfverberg also had a goal for the Ducks, and Frederik Andersen stopped 23 shots. Anaheim won for the second time in six games. Aleksander Barkov scored for the Panthers, and Roberto Luongo made 38 saves. Cogliano's short-handed goal gave the Ducks a 2-0 lead with 5:19 left in the third.

SENATORS 3, BLUE JACKETS 0

Erik Karlsson scored twice and had an assist, and Craig Anderson made 25 saves as Ottawa beat Columbus. Anderson got his seventh win of the season and 30th career shutout. Kyle Turris scored an empty-net goal. The Senators lost Bobby Ryan late in the third period after a hit by David Savard. Patrick Wiercioch also left early, exiting after a hit by Nick Foligno early in the second. It was Ottawa's second regulation win at home this season. Curtis McElhinney made 26 saves. He briefly played for the Senators in 2010-11. The loss snapped the Blue Jackets' three-game winning streak. — AP

SECURITY CONCERNS OVERSHADOW MESSI'S CLASICO RETURN

MADRID: An unprecedented level of security will be put in place for Real Madrid's huge clash with Barcelona today in response to the deadly attacks on Paris a week ago. The security threat to what is widely regarded as the biggest game in world football, with an estimated global television audience of 500 million, has even overshadowed the return of Lionel Messi for Barcelona after a two-month injury layoff.

Spanish government officials have promised a security presence of 2,400 police, stewards and emergency services at the Santiago Bernabeu to form a triple ring of security around the stadium. The Stade de France, where France were hosting Germany, was one of a number of targets struck during the attacks on Friday that left 129 dead and over 350 injured.

Meanwhile, Spain's friendly against Belgium in Brussels was postponed due to the elevated terror threat and Germany's

meeting with the Netherlands called off by a bomb threat on Tuesday. However, the Spanish authorities insist that there is no reason to believe another late postponement will be required. "It is a shame that people aren't talking about sport, football or the spectacle, but it is the reality we live in and we can't ignore it," said Barca captain Andres Iniesta on Thursday. "We have to try to return to normality."

On the field, Barca lead Madrid by three points at the top of the table despite being without Messi for the last two months. The Argentine seems certain to feature after taking a full part in training this week, but it is still unknown whether coach Luis Enrique will risk his star from the start or allow him to ease back into action from the bench. "If we can count on Leo from the start our chances are much greater," added Iniesta. In Messi's absence, Luis Suarez and Neymar have propelled Barca

to five wins in their last six league games and scored all of the European champions' last 17 league goals.

Benzema back

Madrid will be hoping their own much-hyped front three can perform likewise after a slow start to the season provoked by poor form, injuries and off-field problems. Today will be just the third time this season that all of Cristiano Ronaldo, Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema start together. Benzema will play for the first time since being charged with complicity to blackmail and conspiring to commit a criminal act in his native France in a case involving a sex tape featuring international teammate Mathieu Valbuena.

Meanwhile, Bale needs a big performance to alleviate the mounting critics of the Welshman's inability to perform for Madrid in the biggest games. "I feel strong, in

shape for this game and ready for the battle," Bale told Madrid's website. "I want to keep trying to give my best, to work hard and to help the team win." Madrid boss Rafael Benitez is hoping to count on a fully-fit squad for the first time this season as goalkeeper Keylor Navas, Sergio Ramos and Marcelo look set to shrug off injuries picked up before the international break.

Dani Carvajal is also expected to replace Danilo at right-back, while Benitez has a big decision over whether to start James Rodriguez after he proved his match fitness by playing 180 minutes for Colombia over the past week. Other than Messi, Barca's other injury concern is over Ivan Rakitic, who is doubtful with a calf injury. The clash between the top two will favour third-placed Atletico Madrid should they manage to win at Real Betis tomorrow. Diego Simeone's men sit just one point adrift of Real Madrid. — AFP

CHINESE CHAMPIONS LOOK TO SCORE ON PITCH AND MARKETS

SHANGHAI: China's most successful football team Guangzhou Evergrande Taobao are hot favorites to win the AFC Champions League today, but the club's business is far from a surefire bet. Universally known as Evergrande, the side's full name is made up of its home city in southern China and the main businesses of its two owners, a property firm and Internet giant Alibaba, whose Taobao platform is China's main consumer-to-consumer e-commerce market.

They are managed by World Cup-winning coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, who has several of his Brazilian compatriots on the backroom staff, and another quartet on the pitch in the form of Robinho, Paulinho, Ricardo Goulart and Elkeson. Spending millions has brought Evergrande unparalleled success—they won their fifth consecutive domestic title last month, and in 2013 became the first Chinese winners of the ACL.

A win by any margin in today's final second leg will see them lift the trophy again after they held opponents Al Ahli to a 0-0 draw in the first leg in the United Arab Emirates. But they have not seen similar success in the boardroom, despite the backing of Evergrande's Xu Jiayin and Alibaba founder Jack Ma, currently worth more than \$29 billion according to the Bloomberg Billionaires index, making him China's second-richest person. Evergrande lost \$75 million in 2014, a club statement showed. It had operating income of \$53 million, 65 percent from advertising, 16 percent in ticket sales and seven percent from merchandise, but paid out \$90 million on player and coach salaries alone.

'Scoring and ranking'

Evergrande listed on the little-known National Equities Exchange and Quotations (NEEQ) earlier this month, pricing its shares at 40 yuan (\$6.25) apiece, a statement showed. With 375 million shares in issue, that gives it a notional market capitalisation of a jaw-dropping \$2.35 billion—putting it in a similar league to New York Stock Exchange-listed Premier League club Manchester United, which is worth \$3 billion. But the Beijing-based NEEQ market—commonly called China's "third board" and aimed at small companies unable to meet stricter requirements—offers a platform for sellers to trade shares directly with buyers.

According to the NEEQ system there have not been any transactions in the shares yet—the club did not sell any or raise any money in the listing, and nor did either of its owners. The Evergrande conglomerate has 60 percent of the club, while Alibaba has the rest. The exercise was probably a step towards promotion to the Shenzhen stock exchange, analysts said. "The company won't be satisfied with a listing only on the third board," Phillip Securities analyst Chen Xingyu said. "Investors won't necessarily want to buy the stocks of a football club," he added. "Whether or not they will buy depends on the position it has in the industry and its scoring and ranking." —AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: Corinthians players and coach Tite pose for a picture after winning the Brazilian championship at Sao Januario stadium in Rio de Janeiro on November 19, 2015. — AFP

LOVE SEALS 6TH BRAZILIAN TITLE FOR CORINTHIANS

SAO PAULO: Corinthians sealed a sixth Brazilian league title after a late 1-1 draw at Vasco de Gama late Thursday gave them an unassailable 12-point lead with three games remaining. Having slumped out of the Libertadores Cup early, the Sao Paulo outfit famous for their black and white shirts and former players such as 1970 World Cup hero Rivellino, went top in Brazil after match-day 18 and have been there since.

The title clinching round saw their nearest rivals Atletico

Mineiro beaten 4-2 at Sao Paulo, while striker Wagner Love's goal for Corinthians at Vasco earned them a 1-1 draw. A great deal of Corinthians' success is being put down to coach Adenor Leonardo Bachi, who came back this season from a sabbatical year where he observed Italian coach Carlo Ancelotti at Real Madrid. Back in 2012 under Bachi, Corinthians won South America's premier club competition the Libertadores Cup before going on to win the World Club Cup in Japan the same year. — AFP

CLOCK TICKING; PLATINI LODGES THE CAS APPEAL

PARIS: In a last ditch bid to overturn a 90-day ban and thereby run for the FIFA presidency Michel Platini lodged an appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), his lawyers said yesterday. The move comes after a FIFA appeal committee on Wednesday rejected the French UEFA supremo's joint bid with Sepp Blatter to overturn

their suspensions which run until January 5 while Swiss police pursue a criminal investigation.

"Michel Platini's appeal to the CAS has been lodged," the former Juventus star's lawyers confirmed yesterday. One of the lawyers, Thibaud d'Ales, said he expected a CAS decision by the end of November. Part of the FIFA

ethics committee inquiry is into a two million dollar payment made by FIFA to Platini in 2011 for work he had carried out a decade earlier. The suspension has been a severe blow to Platini's hopes of winning a FIFA presidential election in Zurich on February 26 when Blatter stands down after 17 years in the post. —AFP

COMEBACKS WITHER; ENGLISH COUNTER-PUNCHERS THRIVE

LONDON: From Manchester United's 'Fergie Time' triumphs to Sergio Aguero's 94th-minute title-clinching goal for Manchester City, England's Premier League has long been synonymous with dramatic comebacks. But that may be changing. As teams become more robust defensively due to more sophisticated tactical preparation and higher levels of physical fitness, so they are becoming better equipped at protecting leads. The result is that the team that scores first stands an increasingly strong chance of winning, with statistics revealing that comeback victories are at a 10-year low in the English top flight.

"The first 30 minutes is becoming the decisive period in Premier League matches," former Manchester United defender Danny Higginbotham wrote in an article for The Independent earlier this season. "Premier

League football this season is all about pace on the counter-attack. Everyone wants to sit deep and play on the break, so they can nullify the opposition's counter-attackers, frustrate them, and then pick them off." Figures sent to AFP by Premier League statisticians Opta reveal that the ratio of teams going on to win after falling behind has dropped below 10 percent for the first time in a decade.

Since a spike of 14.18 percent in 2012-13, the percentage of teams coming from behind to win per season has successively dropped, from 10.81 percent in 2013-14 to 10.10 in 2014-15 to 9.84 in the current campaign. The average over the nine seasons prior to 2015-16 was 11.07. With teams now more adept at defending leads, playing on the counter-attack has become the preferred modus operandi for many Premier

League sides. The knock-on effect is that away victories are on the rise, borne out by the fact that there have been 42 away wins to 43 home wins in England's top division so far this season.

'Fast transitions'

Conventional wisdom dictates that home sides are more likely to win due to familiarity with their surroundings, support from home fans and the onus traditionally being on the hosts to attack. But several teams are subverting the theory, with Arsenal, West Ham United, Crystal Palace, Everton, Liverpool, Stoke City, West Bromwich Albion and Aston Villa having all picked up more points on the road than at home. West Ham and Palace have proved particularly adept at playing on the break, the former relying on the directness of play-

ers such as Dimitri Payet and Manuel Lanzini, the latter utilising the pace and trickery of Wilfried Zaha, Bakary Sako and Yannick Bolasie.

It develops a trend witnessed at last year's World Cup, most notably when defending champions Spain, pioneers of 'tiki-taka', fell to successive defeats against the Netherlands and Chile despite bossing possession in both matches. FIFA's official technical report on the World Cup highlighted "outstanding fast transitions and counter-attacking tactics" as the tournament's most effective attacking strategies.

"Counter-attacking tactics were once a tool in a team's armoury, but now some teams base their entire play around such tactics," it added, citing 21 games in which teams who saw less of the ball emerged victorious. — AFP



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Watford v Man United	15:45
beIN SPORTS	
Chelsea v Norwich	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Southampton v Stoke	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Newcastle v Leicester	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Swansea v Bournemouth	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Albion v Arsenal	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Everton v Aston	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Man City v Liverpool	20:30
beIN SPORTS	

SPANISH LEAGUE

Sociedad v Sevilla	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Madrid v Barcelona	20:15
beIN SPORTS	
Espanyol v Malaga	22:30
beIN SPORTS	
Valencia v Las Palmas	0:00
beIN SPORTS	
Coruna v Vigo	0:05
beIN SPORTS	

ITALIAN LEAGUE

Bologna v Roma	20:00
beIN SPORTS	
Juventus v Milan	22:45
beIN SPORTS	

GERMAN LEAGUE

Koln v Mainz	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Frankfurt v Leverkusen	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Stuttgart v Augsburg	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Borussia v Hannover	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Wolfsburg v Werder Bremen	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Schalke v Bayern Munich	20:30
beIN SPORTS	

FRENCH LEAGUE

Lorient v Paris Saint	19:00
beIN SPORTS	
Montpellier v Reims	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Troyes v Lille	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Bastia v Ajaccio	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Guingamp v Toulouse	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Monaco v Nantes	22:00
beIN SPORTS	

MOURINHO HOPES THAT BREAK REFRESHES CHELSEA, HAZARD

LONDON: Jose Mourinho will hope the latest international break proves to be a turning point in Chelsea's disastrous Premier League season and refreshes struggling Belgian star Eden Hazard. Mourinho and his players signed off from domestic duty with a defeat at Stoke City—their third successive league loss—that left the club in 16th place, a point behind Norwich City, today's visitors to Stamford Bridge, and just three points clear of the relegation zone.

That loss increased the pressure on the manager and the two-week break has undoubtedly given Mourinho the chance to take stock on

his side's lack of progress. The problem has been clear—too many players have been operating way below the standards they set last season when they dominated the title race. But while a succession of senior stars have stepped forward to say it is the players who must shoulder responsibility, the team has failed to pull itself out of its current nosedive.

Mourinho claimed with some justification that his side's performances had improved and that they were unfortunate to lose at Stoke. But such is the club's plight, the only thing that matters now is results. And if they are to turn things around, Mourinho

must find a way of returning Hazard back to the form that won him last season's Footballer of the Year award and made the Belgian one of the world's most coveted players.

Hazard has yet to score in the league but Gianfranco Zola, a former Chelsea favorite, believes the player's current problems will benefit him in the long run. Zola told the London Evening Standard: "Hazard is in a similar situation to I was at Chelsea in my second year. "The first year was very good, as it was for Hazard. He did so much, received so much recognition and now the spotlight is on him all the time and this is making everything he does a little more difficult. "Every player goes through this but in a way I think it will be good for him as it will make him think more about his game. "So it's an opportunity for him to become a better player. He is young and has the potential to be one of the best." Last season the visit of a newly-promoted side would have guaranteed three points but after suffering three home league defeats already this season, nothing can be taken for granted. Mourinho did at least receive some good news

this week when keeper Thibaut Courtois returned to training after a knee injury although Asmir Begovic will face Norwich. Alex Neil's side provided themselves with a timely lift when they signed off for the break with a home victory over Swansea City, ending a run of four straight league defeats.

The opening months have confirmed the Canaries face a testing battle if they are to avoid an immediate return to the Championship particularly with Arsenal due to visit Carrow Road next weekend. And midfielder Jonny Howson insists the victory over Swansea has done nothing to ease the pressure on Neil's players. "I think the pressure comes from within yourself of wanting to do well. You go into every game wanting to put in a certain performance, work hard and do the best of your ability," said Howson. "With regards to the pressure and easing it I don't think that changes too much. "Sometimes when you come up against the big teams it is difficult but we're still wanting to go up against those teams and put in a good performance and hopefully come away with something." — AFP

BEWARE 'NEW MANAGER SYNDROME' AT LIVERPOOL, CITY'S TOURE WARNS

MANCHESTER: Manchester City midfielder Yaya Toure has warned his team mates not to fall victim to the "new manager syndrome" for a second Premier League game in a row when Juergen Klopp's Liverpool visit the Etihad Stadium today. Bottom side Aston Villa, with freshly appointed Frenchman Remi Garde at the helm, held league leaders City to a 0-0 draw at Villa Park before the international break, and Toure is wary of history repeating itself at the weekend. "To be honest with you, I don't like it when a new manager comes to a club because all the players want to impress him," the Ivorian told the club's website (www.mfc.co.uk).

"We had the perfect example of the new manager syndrome against Aston Villa which made it a tougher game - we had a lot of chances to score and if we had taken just one of them it would have been a different situation. Klopp replaced Brendan Rodgers at Anfield last month and Toure expects Liverpool to be fired up,

especially after losing their last league match 2-1 at home to Crystal Palace. They are languishing in 10th on 17 points, nine points adrift of City. "When, new managers come in, all the players want to give 100 percent and fight for everything possible. Liverpool are a top club, a top side and it will be a massive game today."

The 32-year-old Toure decided not to join his national team during the international break, missing the African champions' World Cup qualifiers, and said he was well rested. "It's tough sometimes when you are involved in a lot of games through the season. I often spend the international breaks with the national team on top of my club commitments so it has been good to have a more restful fortnight. "Now I'm ready to get back to work and all my focus is today. We have a fantastic game to play against Liverpool and we need to get back to winning games, though we are expecting a hard match." — Reuters

English Premier League table

English Premier League table ahead of the weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Man City	12	8	2	2	26	9	26
Arsenal	12	8	2	2	22	9	26
Leicester	12	7	4	1	25	20	25
Man Utd	12	7	3	2	17	8	24
Tottenham	12	5	6	1	20	10	21
West Ham	12	6	3	3	23	16	21
Southampton	12	5	5	2	19	13	20
Crystal Palace	12	6	1	5	14	12	19
Everton	12	4	5	3	20	16	17
Liverpool	12	4	5	3	13	14	17
Watford	12	4	4	4	11	12	16
Stoke	12	4	4	4	10	12	16
West Brom	12	4	2	6	10	16	14
Swansea	12	3	4	5	12	16	13
Norwich	12	3	3	6	16	23	12
Chelsea	12	3	2	7	16	23	11
Newcastle	12	2	4	6	13	22	10
Bournemouth	12	2	2	8	12	25	8
Sunderland	12	1	3	8	13	26	6
Aston Villa	12	1	2	9	10	20	5

Spanish La Liga table

Spanish La Liga table before this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Barcelona	11	9	0	2	25	12	27
Real Madrid	11	7	3	1	26	7	24
Atletico Madrid	11	7	2	2	16	6	23
Celta Vigo	11	6	3	2	22	18	21
Villarreal	11	6	2	3	15	11	20
Eibar	11	5	4	2	16	11	19
Valencia	11	5	3	3	16	8	18
Athletic Bilbao	11	5	2	4	18	14	17
Deportivo La Coruna	11	3	6	2	16	13	15
Sevilla	11	4	3	4	17	16	15
Real Betis	11	4	3	4	11	16	15
Rayo Vallecano	11	4	1	6	13	19	13
Espanyol	11	4	1	6	12	23	13
Sporting Gijon	11	3	3	5	11	15	12
Getafe	11	3	1	7	11	18	10
Real Sociedad	11	2	3	6	12	14	9
Malaga	11	2	3	6	5	9	9
Las Palmas	11	2	3	6	9	16	9
Granada	11	1	4	6	11	20	7
Levante	11	1	4	6	7	23	7

FIVE KEY CLASICO DUELS

MADRID: Real Madrid host Barcelona in the 231st meeting between the Spanish giants at the Santiago Bernabeu today (1715GMT). Here, AFP Sports looks at five key duels that could decide the outcome in the Spanish capital:

Marcelo v Lionel Messi

Four-time World Player of the Year Messi looks set to return from a two-month injury layoff on the biggest stage where he has so often made the difference. Messi is the top scorer in the history of the fixture and Marcelo will have the unenviable task of marshalling the Argentine defensively, whilst also playing a major role in Madrid's attacks down the left-hand side. The Brazilian was in the form of his life prior to a thigh injury picked up two weeks ago. He will be fit to start, but whether he is capable of stopping even a rusty Messi will have a huge bearing in deciding if Madrid can draw level with Barca at the top of the table.

Sergio Ramos v Luis Suarez

Suarez recently described Ramos as the toughest defender he has faced, but it was the Uruguayan who got the upper hand when the sides last met with the winner in a 2-1 Barca win. Ramos will play with a painkilling injection to numb the discomfort from a dislocated left shoulder and Madrid need a captain's display to prevent Suarez adding to his 13 goals in 17 games this season.

Cristiano Ronaldo v Daniel Alves

Ronaldo also has a formidable record in this fixture with 15 Clasico goals to his name.

Yet, his form has come under the microscope in recent weeks as he has failed to score in seven of Madrid's 11 league games this season. Alves has also had a dip in form since his exceptional displays at the end of last season earned him a new two-year contract, but throughout his career has at least marshalled Ronaldo better than the vast majority of right-backs.

Luka Modric v Sergio Busquets

Often overshadowed by the star strikers on show, Modric and Busquets are the brains of both sides in midfield. Busquets has been lauded by Barca coach Luis Enrique as the "best midfielder in the world" in recent weeks and has taken on the mantle from Xavi Hernandez in setting the rhythm for Barca's passing game. Modric's influence on Madrid has grown with every season at the Bernabeu and, after a slow start to his Real career, is now considered undroppable.

Rafael Benitez v Luis Enrique

Of the two coaches it is Benitez who has most to prove. Just one defeat, his first in 15 games as Madrid boss, against Sevilla last time out was enough to intensify doubts in the Madrid dressing room and media about the former Liverpool manager's meticulous methods. Enrique is a more emotional character, but allows his side more freedom to express themselves as was demonstrated by the stunning success of a treble in his debut season in charge. He is even more despised by the Madrid fans than your average Barca coach after controversially leaving Real to join Barca as a player 19 years ago. However, he is yet to win at the Bernabeu as a coach.— AFP

ITALIAN LEAGUE PREVIEW

BUFFON TO MEET 'SUCCESSOR' WHEN JUVENTUS HOST MILAN

MILAN: Champions Juventus host AC Milan in a potentially high-risk fixture today that could pit Gianluigi Buffon against the teenage sensation widely expected to succeed him as goalkeeper of Italy. Juventus appear to have put their disastrous start to the campaign behind them but a stubborn nine-point deficit to leaders Fiorentina means they have plenty of ground to make up in the race for the 'scudetto'. Yet in a match that will see security tightened significantly in the wake of the Paris terror attacks, all eyes could be on the goalkeepers who, between them, represent the past, present and future of the game in Italy. Buffon, 37, was feted by his peers on Thursday when he celebrated the 20th anniversary of his Serie A debut with Parma.

It came on November 19, 1995 and on that occasion the 17-year-old produced a performance worthy of 'keepers twice his age to defy Roberto Baggio, Marco Simone and George Weah as Parma held AC Milan to a scoreless draw. Whether by design or accident, 20 years later, almost to the day, Buffon will again face Milan. Only this time, when he shakes hands with Gianluigi Donnarumma, fans could be witnessing a virtual passing of the torch. Donnarumma, 16, made his league debut in a 2-1 win over Sassuolo last month and kept Spanish veteran Diego Lopez on the bench ever since. Milan have claimed 10 points from their past four outings to move to within seven points behind La Viola and much of it is down to teenage sensation Donnarumma. Juventus have doubts over Croatian striker Mario Mandzukic after he hobbled off with an injured ankle against Russia, and strike partner Paulo Dybala was scheduled to return only Thursday from international duty with Argentina. But Juve's Spanish striker Alvaro Morata told Juventus's in-house television channel Jtv: "We're still hungry for wins and we want to be back at the top of the table where we belong."

Although still missing striker Mario Balotelli

through injury, Milan coach Sinisa Mihajlovic can count on Carlos Bacca and M'Baye Niang, and also welcomes Giacomo Bonaventura back from suspension to bolster his midfield. Milan defender Alessio Romagnoli, who has recently been described as the 'new Andrea Nesta', refuses to rule Juve out of the title race but said the Rossoneri have to continue their recent purple patch. "Juve are strong and will give 100% today. They're still one of the favorites for the title," he said. "If we're going to reach our objective of a top three finish, we have to win as many games as possible, and that means continuing our good run of results by looking for a win today."

Due to midweek Champions League commitments, Roma, one point off the pace in third, are also in action today with an away trip to Bologna that looks anything but straightforward. Since former Parma handler Roberto Donadoni took over, Bologna have won their past two league games—a fact that hasn't escaped Roma midfielder Alessandro Florenzi. "Donadoni hasn't changed much but he seems to have touched all the right buttons because they've taken six points from their last two games," said Florenzi. "We'll be up against a side that feels galvanized. It will be hard, but we have to win at all costs."

Roma's task has been compounded by the absence of Ivorian striker Gervinho, who on Thursday joined Mohamed Salah in the casualty room after being sidelined for three weeks with a thigh injury. Elsewhere, title chasers Napoli, two points off the pace in fourth, travel to Verona without injured forwards Manolo Gabbiadini and Dries Mertens, both of whom suffered injury while on international duty with Belgium and Italy respectively. Fiorentina will be expected to tighten their grip on top spot when they host Empoli while Inter Milan could welcome Stevan Jovetic back to the front line for Sunday's visit of Frosinone.— AFP

Italian Serie A table

Italian Serie A table ahead of weekend matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Fiorentina	12	9	0	3	24	9	27
Inter Milan	12	8	3	1	12	7	27
Roma	12	8	2	2	27	13	26
Napoli	12	7	4	1	22	8	25
Sassuolo	12	6	4	2	14	10	22
AC Milan	12	6	2	4	15	16	20
Juventus	12	5	3	4	16	11	18
Atalanta	12	5	3	4	13	14	18
Lazio	12	6	0	6	16	20	18
Sampdoria	12	4	4	4	19	17	16
Torino	12	4	3	5	17	18	15
Palermo	12	4	2	6	12	16	14
Empoli	12	4	2	6	13	18	14
Chievo	12	3	4	5	14	12	13
Genoa	12	3	4	5	12	16	13
Bologna	12	4	0	8	11	15	12
Udinese	12	3	3	6	10	15	12
Frosinone	12	3	2	7	11	18	11
Verona	12	0	6	6	8	19	6
Carpi	12	1	3	8	10	24	6

MADRID PATIENCE RUNNING THIN WITH BALE, RONALDO

MADRID: Real Madrid head into today's blockbuster clash with Barcelona on the verge of crisis and in need of the world's two most expensive players, Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale, to prove their worth. Madrid trail Barcelona by three points at the top of La Liga as their "Galacticos" have failed to fire, while Barca have hardly skipped a beat despite losing four-time World Player of the Year Lionel Messi to injury for the past two

months. When Madrid president Florentino Perez added Bale to a star-studded squad over two years ago, the Welshman and Ronaldo were supposed to form an unstoppable partnership.

Yet, since scoring in the Copa del Rey and Champions League finals in his debut season, Bale has endured a frustrating 18 months due to injuries, a lack of form and even Madrid's own demanding support turning on him.

When Rafael Benitez was appointed to replace the sacked Carlo Ancelotti amid much uproar from Madrid's players and fans in June, he was given one specific task—to get the best out of Bale. Yet, despite a promising start to the campaign in a new central role, a persistent calf injury has restricted Bale to just seven appearances in Madrid's 15 games this season.

Moreover, Benitez's men have tended to

be better off without Bale, winning six and drawing twice in the games he didn't feature compared to four wins, two draws and a defeat when he has. Bale still has credit in the bank with Perez and, by proxy, Benitez. However, he was consistently booed by Madrid's fans towards the end of last season and is likely to endure similar treatment today if he doesn't produce his best display in quite some time.— AFP

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Kuwait Times

Sports



Security concerns overshadow Messi's Clasico return **45**



LOS ANGELES: Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green (left) shoots as Los Angeles Clippers center DeAndre Jordan defends during the second half of an NBA basketball game on Thursday, Nov 19, 2015, in Los Angeles. — AP

WARRIORS RALLY TO GRAB 13TH VICTORY

CAVALIERS OVERPOWER BUCKS 115-100

CLEVELAND: LeBron James scored 27 points, and Kevin Love added 22 points and 15 rebounds as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Milwaukee Bucks 115-100 on Thursday night. Cleveland ended a two-game losing streak and avenged a double-overtime loss in Milwaukee on Saturday night. The Cavaliers lead the Eastern Conference at 9-3. Giannis Antetokounmpo scored a career-high 33 points for Milwaukee, and the Bucks rallied from a 21-point deficit in the second quarter to cut the lead to 84-79 late in the third. Anderson Varejao, who came off the bench to score nine points, helped Cleveland build the lead to 97-84. James scored six points and Love had a three-point play in that stretch. JR Smith added 18 points for Cleveland. Antetokounmpo was 12 of 15 from the field and made all eight of his free throws. Greg Monroe scored 17 points, and Khris Middleton added 15 for Milwaukee.

WARRIORS 124, CLIPPERS 117

The Golden State Warriors erased a 23-point first-

half deficit to stretch their NBA season-opening win streak to 13 games on Thursday with a 124-117 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers. The reigning NBA champions became just the fifth team in NBA history to open a season 13-0 and continued to close in on the record for the best start to a season of 15-0 — achieved by Washington in 1948-49 and the Houston Rockets in 1993-94.

But it was a close-run win, as the pumped-up Clippers raced to a big lead over their Pacific Division rivals, led by point guard Chris Paul. Paul, back in action after two games sidelined by a groin strain, made his first seven shots, including three from three-point range. He finished the game with 35 points and eight assists in 32 minutes on the floor. But Golden State, who trailed 55-32 early in the second quarter, battled back, with reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Stephen Curry scoring 13 of his 40 points in the fourth quarter.

"No matter how bad we're playing, we always feel like we have a shot," said Curry, who also pulled

down 11 rebounds. "It was a hard-fought, gut-wrenching game that everybody stepped up and played well." Guard Klay Thompson scored 25 points for the Warriors. Harrison Barnes added 21 and forward Draymond Green contributed 19 points and nine assists. Trailing 91-85 going into the fourth quarter, the Warriors shot 73.3 percent from the field in the final period. A three-pointer by Thompson gave the Warriors their first lead since the beginning of the first quarter — 113-112 with 2:43 to play.

The Clippers responded with a three-pointer by Jamal Crawford before Curry drained a three-pointer with 1:47 remaining that gave the Warriors a 116-115 lead that they wouldn't relinquish. The Warriors outscored the Clippers 22-5 in the final stretch, but Los Angeles coach Doc Rivers said his team's problems began long before that. "I don't think it started in the fourth quarter, I really don't," Rivers said. "I thought right at the end of the second quarter was when we stopped playing with the same force that we played with the first quarter and a half." It was the Warriors'

second win of the season over the Clippers, after a 112-108 triumph on November 4. "Like I said before the game, we know we're close, but close isn't good enough," Rivers said. "You've got to finish the games."

HEAT 116, KINGS 109

Chris Bosh had 23 points and 11 rebounds as Miami beat Sacramento, taking advantage of Kings star DeMarcus Cousins' one-game suspension. Cousins, averaging 30.8 points in his last five games, was suspended for hitting Atlanta's Al Horford in the head with a forearm Wednesday night in the Kings' loss to the Hawks. The Kings are 0-5 without Cousins this season and 11-38 since he joined the team in 2010. Dwyane Wade led Miami with 24 points, and Tyler Johnson had 19. Sacramento's Rajon Rondo had a season-high 18 assists, 14 points and nine rebounds after having three triple-doubles in his previous four games. Marco Belinelli led the Kings with 23 points. — Agencies