

Education development plan to be set by 2019



Trump calls for return of waterboarding by US



Southeast Asia bangs the drum for single market



McIlroy reaps massive payday after Dubai double



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GOVT MULLING RAISING FEES ON SERVICES TO CUT DEFICIT

ASSEMBLY DEMANDS MECHANISM FOR HIKING CHARGES



Min 10°
Max 23°
High Tide 09:37 & 21:47
Low Tide 03:05 & 15:31

By B Izzak and Agencies

KUWAIT: The government is studying whether to raise fees for its services, Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh said in comments published by the local Al-Rai newspaper yesterday. Saleh said the study was part of a project to rationalize spending, review subsidies and diversify sources of revenue. "It is not intended only to plug the (budget) deficit resulting from low oil prices - it will be permanent whether oil prices continue to drop or increase," Saleh told the newspaper without specifying the fees that might be raised.

He also said that any increase in service fees or gasoline prices would be decided by the Cabinet rather than through parliamentary legislation, but that the Cabinet would consult lawmakers on issues that required legislation, according to Al-Rai. The minister said increasing service fees is a complex issue that needs careful economic and technical studies, adding that the goal is to secure stability, whether oil prices continue to fall or rise.

But the National Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee yesterday told the government that it wants a clear mechanism for the proposed increase in charges on public services and rejected that low income people be targeted by the increase. The committee however kept the door open for serious government proposals in this regard as it began debating a two-decade old law that requires the consent of the Assembly to raise service charges.

Rapporteur of the committee MP Mohammad Al-Jabri said the committee discussed with representatives of the finance ministry the issue of raising service charges and insisted that it rejects any raise without upgrading the level of the services. He said the ministry informed the committee that a specialized company is studying the issue of subsidies provided on around 5,000 commodities and the committee asked the ministry for a copy of the study.

Jabri said the committee is aware that the state is facing a huge budget deficit of around KD 25 billion over the next five years.



Anas Al-Saleh

Continued on Page 13

CHAOS CREATES OPPORTUNITIES

conspiracy theories



By Badrya Darwish

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It's a disgrace what happened in Paris. Killing innocent people anywhere in this world is a crime. It's a disgrace for humanity and these people should be chased to the end of the earth and destroyed. Terrorism, as everyone knows, has no color, no race, no religion, no morals, no ethics and no nothing. Unfortunately, the terrorists in Paris, in Mali and in Lebanon in recent weeks pinned themselves to Islam.

But we're used to this. Islam has been hijacked for years by terrorists and people who are not Muslims and don't know anything about Islam. They belong to terrorist and militant groups and just use the banner of Islam as a camouflage. Sadly, the media in Europe have turned all their forces - be it traditional or social media, TV or radio, and newspapers - to pinning what happened in Paris on refugees. Already, Europe is sick of the word refugee. Already, some governments and people are rejecting refugees.

But this is unacceptable. And it needs courageous people to speak up in their name. They are running from IS. Actually, the reason why they are refugees is because of IS, so how can you pin the acts of IS on them? Many of them die on the way, risk the lives of their children and drown in the sea in eternal hope of reaching a safe haven away from the bloodshed and terrorism in Syria.

They are not having a five-star journey. Who would risk their lives and the lives of their children and families in severe, life threatening conditions, except desperate people? Now, anti-refugee politicians and media are exploiting the situation to push their agenda. In the chaos, people are scared and can be vulnerable to believing that refugees pose a threat. Some politicians have even suggested recruiting the refugees, training them and giving them arms and sending them back home to fight IS. I'm sure there are amongst the refugees men who are willing, if given the chance, to go back and fight for their country. But is this really the solution to stopping IS?

I have a suggestion for you. Whoever is supplying IS with arms, technology, weapons and money: Stop it. IS will finish itself in no time. No need to send any troops from anywhere, neither Europe nor the refugees.

Have a peaceful day.



KUALA LUMPUR: US President Barack Obama holds a press conference yesterday, following his participation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit. — AFP

OBAMA: WORLD MUST NOT SUCCUMB TO TERROR FEARS

KUALA LUMPUR: US President Barack Obama called yesterday for resolve in the face of heightened jihadist threats, insisting panicked citizens must not succumb to fear and urging world leaders not to abandon a climate summit in Paris. With Brussels in lockdown, cities from Beirut to Bamako reeling from attacks, and Americans jittery that they too may come under assault, Obama said the world must show steel. That starts, he said, with leaders who are scheduled to attend climate talks later this month in Paris, where 130 people were killed in one night of blood-soaked

violence.

The perpetrators of the Paris attacks were not "masterminds" he said, but rather "a bunch of killers with good social media". "It's absolutely vital for every country, every leader, to send a signal that the viciousness of a handful of killers does not stop the world from doing vital business," he said. They must also show that "Paris, one of the most beautiful, enticing cities in the world, is not going to be covered by the violent demented actions of a few".

Continued on Page 13

SCORES DEAD IN MYANMAR JADE LANDSLIDE

YANGON: Around 100 people have died in a huge landslide in a remote jade mining area of northern Myanmar, officials said yesterday, as search teams continued to find bodies in one of the deadliest disasters to strike the country's shadowy jade industry. Those killed were thought to have been mainly itinerant miners, who scratch a living scavenging through mountains of waste rubble dumped by mechanical diggers used by mining firms at the centre of a secretive multi-billion dollar jade industry in war-torn Kachin state.

Saturday's massive landslide crushed dozens of flimsy shanty huts clustered on the barren landscape, home to an unknown number of people. The disaster happened at about 3.30am local time (2100GMT) and lasted just a couple of minutes, according to Zaw Moe Htet, a small

scale local gems trader whose village overlooks the devastated area in the Hpakant mining area. "Even people living in villages further away could hear the cries of those who rushed to the scene," he told AFP.

Video footage of the area shot on Saturday shows men carrying several bodies slung in blankets watched by a crowd of local people in a dusty plain near the village of Sai Tung. Nilar Myint an official from the local administrative authorities in Hpakant told AFP that rescue teams have so far found 97 people killed in the landslide.

Rescue operations continue with the Myanmar Red Cross, army, police and local community groups, but officials say they have little hope of pulling people alive from the rubble.



HPAKHANT, Myanmar: The bodies of miners killed in a landslide are placed on the ground in a jade mining area in Kachin state yesterday. — AFP

Continued on Page 13

CHEATING CHARGES MAR 'MISTER UGLY' CONTEST

HARARE: Pageant judges have crowned a new winner of Zimbabwe's 4th annual "Mister Ugly" contest, upsetting supporters of the crowd favorite and prompting rioting at the event. Judges on Saturday chose 42-year-old Mison Sere, citing his numerous missing front teeth and a wide range of grotesque facial expressions, over William Masvinu, who had held the title since 2012. Masvinu and his supporters mobbed the judges upon hearing their decision, claiming that Sere was "too handsome" to win and his ugliness wasn't natural since it was based on missing teeth.

"I am naturally ugly. He is not. He is ugly only when he opens his mouth," maintained Masvinu, gesturing at his rival. "Do we have to lose our teeth to win? This is cheating," shouted another contestant, Patrick Mupereki. While no one was injured, there was a great deal of pushing and shoving as the results were announced and insults were hurled at the judges.

Beauty pageants are popular in this southern African country and even though they are typically for women, scandal is not unusual. Earlier this year, Miss Zimbabwe winner Emily Kachote faced a backlash on social media, with Zimbabweans calling her ugly and undeserving of the crown.

She was later forced to step down when just two weeks into her reign, images surfaced of her posing nude

- which incidentally also brought down her predecessor. Sere dismissed the critics as just "sore losers" as he pocketed the \$500 in winnings. "They should just accept that I am uglier than them," he said. "I hope to get a TV contract. I already moved around schools performing and showcasing my ugliness so this is a chance to make it on TV."

The complaints of Masvinu and the other contestants may have a degree of validity. Organizers had previously announced that disabilities or enhancements would not be accepted in the competition which should focus on "natural ugliness". Pageant organizer David Machowa originally told AP that he began the contest to remove the stigma of ugliness. "Looks are God given. We should all be proud of who we are."

The pageant involved three rounds of modelling, with individual and group struts down a catwalk of a Harare nightclub. "Sere made tremendous effort to enhance his ugliness by pulling facial stunts," said judge Abigail Matanyika, a university student. "Masvinu thought he is so ugly that he didn't need to try hard. That cost him the crown." This year's competition attracted a record number of 36 entries, compared to just five in 2012 when Masvinu began his winning streak. The competition was suspended in 2014 due to a lack of sponsorship, but this year the owners of a string of Harare nightclubs donated \$1,000. — AP



Mison Sere



William Masvinu

News

in brief

KNPC to shut Shuaiba refinery by April 2017

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Petroleum Co will shut its Shuaiba refinery permanently by April 2017, before its clean fuels project starts operating by mid-2018, its spokesman said at a news conference yesterday. The clean fuels project is an upgrade and expansion of the country's two largest existing refineries, with a focus on producing higher-value products such as diesel and kerosene for export. Work on the clean fuels project is 36.7 percent complete, and it is expected to be finished by mid-2018, the spokesman said.

Products can be returned, refunded within 14 days

KUWAIT: According to consumer protection law no 39/2014, consumers have a right to exchange products or get a refund within 14 days of purchase, the ministry of commerce and industry emphasized yesterday. In a press statement, the ministry pointed out the law allows a consumer to replace or return a defected product within 14 days of purchase (provided that it is not a perishable product), and further states that vendors and suppliers are jointly liable. The law is in effect once a merchant provides a consumer with an invoice confirming the product, the date of sale and purchase, the price, the quantity, type etc. If a consumer and a vendor argue over conditions of a returned product, the National Committee for Consumer Protection (NCCP) should be contacted.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets the former president of Turkey Abdullah Gul. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Sultan Bin Salman Bin Hethlain.



Former president of Turkey Abdullah Gul is seen during his visit to the Tareq Rajab Museum in Jabriya yesterday.

CROWN PRINCE RECEIVES TURKEY'S EX-PRESIDENT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday the former president of Turkey, Abdullah Gul, and his accompanying official delegation, in presence of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The two sides held official talks that dealt with bilateral relations and ways to strengthen them in various fields, as well as expanding cooperation between Kuwait and Turkey. Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Amiri Diwan and Crown Prince Diwan officials also attended the meeting. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem also met with Gul, while His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak held a luncheon banquet in honor of Turkey's former president and his accompanying delegation.

Later, Gul visited the Tareq Rajab Museum in Jabriya, and was accompanied by the chief of mission of honor, advisor at the Amiri Diwan Khaled Yusuf Al-Fuleij.

Meanwhile, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received Sultan Bin Salman Bin Hethlain, head of the Ajman tribe. Earlier, His Highness received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Moreover, His Highness separately received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad

Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Pakistani Speaker

In other news, Ghanem held talks yesterday with the visiting National Assembly Speaker of Pakistan Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and his accompanying delegation. The talks reviewed bilateral relations between Kuwait and Pakistan as well as ways of enhancing them in all fields, especially parliamentary ones. They also exchanged views on the latest developments on regional and international levels, plus a number of issues of common concern. After the meeting, Ghanem hosted a luncheon banquet in honor of the visiting Pakistani parliament speaker. The luncheon was attended by a number of MPs and Secretary-General of Kuwait's National Assembly Allam Ali Al-Kandari. — KUNA



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets Pakistani Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.



CAIRO: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah speaks during a press conference with Egypt's Tourism Minister Hisham Zaazou in Cairo yesterday. — KUNA

NEW NON-STOP FLIGHTS TO SHARM EL-SHEIKH DEC 1

CAIRO: Kuwait plans to launch new non-stop flights to Sharm El-Sheikh starting next month, instead of seasonal ones at present, in an effort to enhance Kuwait's support to Egypt, a senior government official said yesterday.

The new plans comes as part of a host of initiatives for supporting the tourism sector in Egypt, said Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. He added that Kuwait offers Egypt perpetual support upon direct orders from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Salman, also head of the Higher Committee for Tourism, made the statement to a press conference with Egypt's Tourism Minister Hisham Zaazou in Cairo yesterday. He said that he was conveying a message from Kuwait's political leadership and people reiterating the country's permanent backing to Egypt, which had always supported the Arabs, and Kuwait in particular.

Cultural initiatives

Sheikh Salman referred to other under-way cultural initiatives and programs for the same purpose. The minister referred to Kuwait's effective participation in the Sharm El-Sheikh economic summit last March. In addition, His Highness the Amir attended the opening of the New Suez Canal. In addition, he stressed full confidence in the Egypt's economy, security and stability, expressing readiness to offer Egypt all types of technical and administrative support.

Meanwhile, Egyptian Tourism Minister Hisham Zaazou welcomed the Kuwaiti minister and his accompanying delegation, and reiterating that both sides have deep-rooted relations. Zaazou underscored the importance of the Kuwaiti tourism to Egypt.

The Kuwaiti and Saudi tourism is the main sources of Arab tourism to Egypt "even at the worst times," he said. Zaazou also appreciated Sheikh Salman's visit, lauding Kuwait's initiatives to support the Egyptian tourist sector. The coming period will see further efforts to enhance bilateral ties, especially in tourism, he said.

Arab festival

Sheikh Salman arrived in the Egyptian capital yesterday to take part in the Arab festival for youth culture, arts and heritage revival. The minister said before leaving to the Egyptian capital that Kuwait's participation in the festival stems from its belief in the absolute importance of joint Arab action, in line with guidelines of the political leadership.

The minister, also President of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Salman added that the State of Kuwait, through its chairmanship of the 38th session of the Council of Arab Ministers of youth affairs, works on fostering joint Arab action between youth sectors, indicating that its participation, with a large delegation of youth of various disciplines, reflects its keenness on cementing cooperation, communication and unity among the Arab youth, as well as to disseminating during this festival the leading Kuwaiti experience in all areas and activities especially those pertinent to culture, arts and heritage revival.

He pointed out that Kuwait's speech at the meeting, to be held at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, represents Kuwait's vision for "a road map" aimed to enable Arab youth and help them develop their skills and constructive abilities, amid the current delicate developments experienced by the Arab nation.

Kuwait's history

The minister stressed that Kuwait's participation in the Heritage Village in Sharm El-Sheikh, which opens today in presence of Egyptian and Arab ministers of youth, culture and tourism will be through a special pavilion within many Arab pavilions to tell the history of the State of Kuwait and its cultural and humanitarian heritage.

He stressed that the Arab cultural heritage at the Arab traditional village is considered a communication factor among the Arab cultures through informing Arab youth about the cultures and heritage of the rest of the Arab countries, a matter which increases and develops the Arab sense of the importance of communication between the leaders of the future. —KUNA

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO CONCLUDE 2019

MINISTER SIGNS UNIVERSITY CITY FACILITIES' CONTRACT

KUWAIT: The plan to develop education in Kuwait will continue until 2019, executed by specialized national staff from the Ministry of Education, the ministry's Undersecretary Haitham Al-Athari announced yesterday.

The level of education in Kuwait did not live up to the ministry's views, nor the big amounts of money spent on it, Athari said during a workshop organized in cooperation with the World Bank and heads of the program on developing education.

Meanwhile, the workshop was followed by a visual presentation on the steps of the plan, including developing the skills of principals and teachers of elementary schools, designed to create more qualified school books.

University City

In other news, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Hamad Al-Essa yesterday signed the contract of the academic supporting buildings of the Sabah Al-Salem University City. The contract will see cooperation between the Kuwait University Construction Program (KUCP) and a Chinese company, with costs of KD 139 million.

It includes 13 buildings and will be completed in three years' time, the minister said after the signing ceremony. The University City will be opened by 2019. Referring to a fire that erupted in a basement inside the project two days earlier, the minister said it was just a small one that would not affect the schedule of the project.

Support buildings

Engineer Asrar Al-Najjar, general supervisor of the project, said that the part offered is the first of the support buildings that constitute the backbone of the colleges inside the campus. She added that the total area of the project is 213,000 square meters, with total costs of 139.7 million. The project will be implemented by the China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd China Construction, in cooperation with Al-Kharafi National as a local agent, she pointed out.

The ceremony was attended by the Chinese ambassador in Kuwait Wang Di, director of the Sabal Al-Salem University City Construction Program Dr Quteiba Al-Marzouqi, and the Chinese company regional director in the Middle East Yu Tao.

Liberation Day

The Ministry of Education's Sector for Educational Development and Activities, in coordination with the US Embassy, concluded a series of celebrations marking Kuwait's 25 Liberation Day at Subaya bin Harith School. The school's principle



One of the planned academic supporting buildings at the Sabah Al-Salem University City.



An artist's rendition of the project.

Layla Akbar expressed her pride in Kuwaitis who had sacrificed their lives to free their country.

She also lauded coalition forces' which helped, under the UN umbrella and international community, in bringing the legitimacy and freedom of this

country back to its rightful people. Meanwhile, the US Ambassador's wife Catherine Silliman expressed her appreciation to be part of this celebration, stressing the strong ties between Kuwait and the US. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials including Education Minister Dr Bader Al-Essa (second from left), Kuwait University's Rector Dr Hussein Al-Ansari, (fourth from left), Chinese ambassador in Kuwait Wang Di (fifth from left) are pictured during the contract signing ceremony. — KUNA

MP VOICES RESERVATIONS ON OMAIR'S RESHUFFLE PLANS

PARLIAMENT REFUSES LIFTING IMMUNITY FROM TWO MPs

By A Saleh and KUNA

KUWAIT: MP Ahmad Al-Qudhaibi yesterday reasserted the 'absolute right' of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah to conduct cabinet reshuffles and appoint ministers to his cabinet. The lawmaker was commenting on the situation regarding Oil Minister Ali Al-Omair, who has been the subject of major criticism in the parliament regarding his policies in hiring senior officials at the state's main oil companies. On that regard, Qudhaibi, also the rapporteur of the parliament's legal and legislative affairs committee, urged the premier and the government to take into consideration that a grilling motion had been also filed against the resigning Minister of Public Works, Minister of Electricity and Water Ahmad Al-Jassar, noting that this issue had to be settled before reshuffling Omair. "We will not allow avoiding the grilling motion by reshuffling" he said.

Reassignment

Qudhaibi was commenting on newspaper reports which suggested that Omair is most likely to be assigned with the Ministry of Public Works' portfolio, while Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas

Al-Saleh would take over the oil ministry's portfolio on interim basis. State Minister of Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah had been assigned as the Acting Minister of Electricity and Water after Jassar submitted his resignation last September after a court sentenced him and 14 former and current officials from the ministry to a two-year jail term and dismissal from service, with an option to pay KD 1,000 to suspend the imprisonment. They were also fined KD 20,000 each. The sentence was passed over the so-called electricity emergency deal that cost the country hundreds of millions of dollars in a major corruption scandal in 2007. Jassar was a senior ministry official when the graft scandal took place as he was a member of a committee that sanctioned importing a number of power generators that were found to be faulty and secondhand. Last week, MP Saadoun Hammad filed a request to grill Jassar over alleged financial and administrative violations in the airport expansion project.

MPs' immunity

Separately, the parliament's legal and legislative affairs committee refused in its meeting yesterday lifting parliamentary immunity from MPs Saleh Ashour and



MP Ahmad Al-Qudhaibi

Abduallah Al-Maayouf. The committee also forwarded a proposed law on fundraising to Health, Social Affairs and Labor Committee, Qudhaibi, said in statement after the meeting. Meanwhile, the committee has delayed taking a decision on a bill reforming the law of national fund for the development of small and medium enterprises to the next meeting for further study.

Banned books

In another development, MP Faisal Al-Duwaisan said yesterday that liberties are being violated at the Kuwait International



Oil minister Ali Al-Omair

Book Fair as five books from Oman had so far been confiscated. "The information ministry must work on returning those books," he demanded, pointing out that the ministry had brought accountability upon itself and that it is ought to explain why those books were banned. Commenting on the parliamentary educational affairs committee's meeting yesterday, Duwaisan said that the committee did not discuss swine flu cases in some schools because only isolated cases were so far discovered, adding that a Ministry of Education official must be summoned to discuss this issue.

SIRENS TO BE TESTED TOMORROW

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Civil Defense Department will sound warning sirens at 10:00 am tomorrow, Tuesday, November 24, 2015 as a trial in all areas of Kuwait to make sure about the performance of the sirens and their need for maintenance or repair. The trial also aims at educating citizens and expats on the sirens tones and indications.

The interior ministry's relations and security information department said the instructions that go along with operating the sirens require compliance with the following:

First: The first tone (intermittent), which means the near occurrence of danger or catastrophe.

When you hear this tone, you should do the following:

1. Do not be confused, be calm and have self-control.
2. Shut down sources of gas and electricity and place combustible material in a safe place.
3. Do not use electric elevators.
4. Go down to the ground floor.
5. Go to basements or shelters if possible.
6. Listen to the media to get correct instructions about civil defense.

Second: Second tone (wavy), which means the occurrence of the danger or catastrophe.

When you hear this tone, you should take the following measures:

1. Put out all outside lights, then put out all lights after all those present have gone to the first floor or basement.
2. Get away from entrances and windows.
3. Use torches while moving around the place you are in.
4. Listen to official media.
5. Remain in place and do not leave until you hear the safe siren.

Third: Third tone (continuous), which means the danger of catastrophe has gone.

When you hear this tone, do the following:

1. Check on family members and those present in the shelter.
2. Do not gather near affected areas to avoid any danger and obstructing civil defense from carrying out their duties.
3. Do not pick any objects you may find on the ground even if they are familiar (pens, lighters, bright containers, etc) because they may be enemy traps, and inform authorities about them.
4. Do not believe in rumors and do not repeat them because they are a weapon used by the enemy to suppress morale.
5. Listen to official media to follow instructions.

ing false news about His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Capital punishment

The criminal court yesterday adjourned a hearing pending passing a final judgment in a case filed against a blogger who had used a fake account to slander His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, express support of IS, slander a religious doctrine and slander Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The public prosecution demanded capital punishment for the suspect.

IT crimes

The public prosecution yesterday issued decision number 17/2015, pertaining authorizing the media, information and publications prosecution to investigate the crimes stipulated in the new information technology crimes' law due to be in effect on January 12, 2016.

School closed

A private school in Mangaf yesterday strangely closed its doors, preventing students from entering without any justification. It claimed a 'technical problem' on the premises, and gave all students a 'free' day off.

Former MP's case

The criminal court yesterday deferred its ruling in a state security case filed against former MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei accusing him of promot-



KUWAIT: Governor of Virginia Terry McAuliffe arrived in Kuwait yesterday on a two day official visit at the invitation of Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Malik Al-Sabah. The two sides met and discussed strengthening relations between the two countries in all fields, as well as exchanging expertise in local administrative systems, security, health and education.

HAWALLY'S MURDER: COURT DENIES MAIN SUSPECT'S RELEASE APPEAL

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A court yesterday refused releasing a citizen accused of murdering an Egyptian man by deliberately running him over several times in Hawally, and ordered the continuation of his detention. Notably, the citizen kept denying that he ran the victim over on purpose, saying he killed him by accident.

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AL-YASRA CO-SPONSORS HORECA KUWAIT 2016

KUWAIT: Following its successful participation in the past four events, Al-Yasra Food Company announced plans to participate as a golden sponsor in the Horeca Kuwait 2016 exhibition, to be organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Company. The event takes place at Badriya Ballroom in Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, during the period of January 18-20, 2016.

Mustafa Al-Masri, Al-Yasra's Regional Operations Development Manager, stressed on that regard that Horeca Kuwait has been steadily moving forward towards developing the hospitality in the region with the help of a group of experts and specialized personalities. Furthermore, Masri noted that Al-Yasra has created its own outstanding status in the food business not only in Kuwait, but also in most regional countries, adding that it thus



Mustafa Al-Masri

managed to win customers' trust by dealing with exclusive regional and international brands such as Sadia, Al-Safi Danone, Kellogg's Pringles and Lamb Weston, which all cover the local market's needs in various restaurant and major hotels.

Masri said that Horeca Kuwait is a golden opportunity to develop Al-Yasra's status in organic food markets. He also noted that Al-Yasra is always keen on taking part in major exhibitions to communicate with parties working in the hospitality business in order to boost awareness about the significance of healthy food. "Al-Yasra Company provides complete lists of delicious healthy foods that suits all needs of calorie intake," he said, noting that Al-Yasra foods were also great in value because they were carefully selected from fresh healthy items.

FM RECEIVES CREDENTIALS OF MALAWI'S NEW ENVOY

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received the credentials of Malawi's new ambassador to Kuwait Wilfred Ali. During the audience, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled wished Malawi's new ambassador best of luck, hoping that bilateral relations would be further promoted and developed. Several senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were present in the audience.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met the visiting African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security Ismail Chergui and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by several senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Also yesterday, Sheikh Sabah Al-

Khaled met with Director General of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) Dr Adnan Shihab Al-Deen, where they discussed "Abdulrahman Al-Sumait Award." Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Sumait Award was announced during the third African Arab Summit that was hosted in Kuwait in 2013. The award aims at encouraging scientific research in the African continent in the fields of health, education and food safety.

The meeting tackled preparations to host the first meeting of the Award's Board of Trustees on December 7, which will be chaired by the Foreign Minister. The first meeting will see nominations of the Award's Board of Trustees; many Arab and international figures are eager to fill those positions, the KISR's chief said. —KUNA

LEGALESE

VISAS AND SALARY QUESTIONS

By Fajer Ahmed

As I explained in last week's column, I receive a lot of legal queries. The most common issues are inevitably labor related. There's a large expat community in Kuwait, because a lot of people move to Kuwait to work. The Kuwaiti market has a wide variety of sectors and a large number of job openings, yet Kuwait still ranks high as one of the worst places to live and work. Why? It is simple; some big companies take advantage of their employees and this is why I have decided to answer questions in a way that can help readers avoid such situations with a few adjustments here and there.

Question 1: I just recently got a job in Kuwait and even though I have an official signed contract with my employer, my employer has brought me into Kuwait on a tourist visa. My employer states that this is the regular procedure in Kuwait and that it will take up to three months for me to get my proper working visa. Is this acceptable?

Answer: Always always always make sure you have a valid working visa. Do not work in Kuwait with a tourist visa, even if it is just temporary. Some companies will prolong the requirements from the government to finalize your work visa. Some companies try to avoid the process because they cannot legally hire any more expats, they have reached their cap and need to hire a certain percentage of Kuwaiti employees, or they are avoiding registering you for now, so when they come to terminate you the process becomes easier and you lose your rights as an employee.

Question 2: How do I protect myself and what should I be aware of when I first start a job in Kuwait?

Answer: Always get someone you trust to translate your work permit. This is a paper issued from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. If any dispute happens between your employer and you, this paper will be used to prove your job position and your salary. (Although in court you can prove your job position and your salary in other ways, your work permit is the official paper.)

A lot of companies will purposely register their employees with lower wages than they actually make, so that when the work relationship ends they will give them their benefits according to the wages registered and not to what they really earn. Let me give you an example, let's say you make KD 300 a month, and let's say you were terminated, here the company needs to pay you KD 900, instead if you are registered under the work permit to be making KD 150, the company will pay you KD 450. As lawyers we know ways around this, to obtain the remaining money, but you don't always want to hire a lawyer.

It might seem obvious but do not sign anything in a language you cannot understand, unless the translation is alongside/on the same page that you are signing as well, and the English clearly says that there is an Arabic version.

Bank accounts and not signing anything

A very common mistake I see as well is employees allowing their companies to open bank accounts in their names, and keep the ATM/KNet card with the company. The company does this, so they can transfer salaries and benefits to the accounts then withdraw the money back, while paying the employee in cash. When something happens and the client wants to prove that they were never paid their benefits, they can't prove it, in fact the company can prove otherwise, because they would have deposited the amounts in your account and will have proof.

Try to get as much as you can in writing, your salary, your contract, your resignation letter and so on.

I hope the above was helpful, if you have any further questions about the topic or any other legal topics, please feel free to email me at ask@fajerthelawyer.com.

SEASONAL FLU CASES STABLE: MINISTRY

KUWAIT: Registered cases of seasonal flu have stabilized at 10 to 20 cases out of 100,000 persons, less than international records of 35 to 55 cases for the same benchmark, the Ministry of Health announced yesterday. The Ministry's Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs Dr Majedah Al-Qattan told a press conference that the Ministry has provided 130,000 vaccines for seasonal flu. She noted that prescribing persons of sensitive categories to take the vaccine is still under study, pointing out that this option is not compulsory in other countries for this segment. She added that the efficacy of the vaccine varies from 50 to 70 percent. The effectiveness of the vaccine depends on many factors such as: Smoking, personal hygiene and healthy eating habits.

The number of flu cases in schools has not reached 5 in one school, adding the students form 25 percent of the society and the number of recorded flu cases among students is less than that recorded in the entire society; hence, there is no need to panic or worry about this seasonal flu.

The statistics on diseases and epidemics are calculated as a percentage for each 100 thousand persons. She advised persons of sensitive categories: pregnant women, seniors, or patients who have HIV to take vaccine against flu since they are most vulnerable to seasonal influenza viruses.

Meanwhile, chief of epidemics at the Ministry Dr Musab Al-Saleh said at the same conference that pregnant women can take the vaccine at any stage of their pregnancy, saying that "the vaccine is safe for everyone." He denied rumors on the lack of safety of the vaccine, noting that the Health Ministry provides 100,000 vaccines against seasonal flu every year; this year it requested an additional 40,000. —KUNA

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In Brief

BEACH CLEANUP

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Environmental Protection Society (EPA) and the Japanese Society in Kuwait have jointly launched the 9th annual beach cleanup campaign. The EPA, public schools, environment police, medical emergency, Kuwait municipality, the ministry of electricity and water and young volunteers are involved in this year's event. The campaign titled 'Operation Marine Turtles' has attracted stakeholders and sharing the same goal of protecting environment and marine life, Kuwait Environmental Protection Society Chairman Wajdan Al-Eqab said. — KUNA



IRAQ'S CHRISTIANS

IRBIL: Kuwait's Consulate in Irbil yesterday delivered humanitarian aid to Christian families that fled from Nineveh. The assistance supplies included food and other essential items, Kuwait's Consul General Omar Al-Kandari said. There are 14,000 Christian families who fled to Irbil with 150,000 children suffering from lack of food and basic life needs. Kuwait donated \$200 million last June to support Iraqis living in severe conditions due to the terrorist attacks in the country. — KUNA



REFUGEES IN LEBANON

BEIRUT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) continued yesterday distribution of humanitarian aid on the displaced Syrian families that have taken up refuge in Lebanon. KRCS' team head Ahmad Al-Faqan said that some 250 food parcels and 250 cleaner boxes have been distributed to the Syrian families in Marj Al-Khaukh village in souther Lebanon. He added that the KRCS strives to meet the demands of all refugees as possible to alleviate their suffering. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: The photo shows a fisherman at a beach near Shuwaikh port. — KUNA

KUWAIT'S ARABIAN HORSE FESTIVAL TRUE START OF SPORT: MINISTER



KUWAIT: Minister of Information Sheikh Salam Al-Sabah said Kuwait's National Arabian Horse Festival was a genuine start for the beauty of the Arabian horse, one of the historic Arab heritage. Sheikh Salman, also Minister of State for Youth Affairs, said Saturday evening that the festival, which was held at Bait Al-Arab (Arabian horse Center), witnessed enthusiastic interaction by the audience who loved the Arabian horse.

Sheikh Salman, representing His

Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the conclusion of the festival, thanked the Arabian Horse Center, the organizing committee and sponsors for the success of the festival.

Sheikha Sarah Al-Sabah, the Arabian Horse Center's President, said His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince were keen on seeing horse sport flourish in Kuwait. Sheikha Sarah, also Assistant Undersecretary at the Amiri Diwan, said this festival was

just the beginning of sport events to be organized by the center this season.

The festival was capped with the Egyptian Horses Tournament. Kadi Al-Danat won the most beautiful horse for the below one-year-old category. Fetnat Al-Baidaa' won the most beautiful female horse for the 2-3 years old category, while the best male horse went to De Manaf. The most beautiful female horse went to Al-Bahiya Al-Zain, while the male trophy went to Mutber Al-Baidaa'. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah and Sheikha Sarah Al-Sabah, the Arabian Horse Center's President, are pictured with one of the winners. — KUNA

KUWAITI MISSION SPONSORS ANNUAL MOSCOW WINTER BALL

RAISING DONATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH CANCER

MOSCOW: The Kuwaiti diplomatic mission in Russia has sponsored the annual philanthropic and celebratory gathering, Moscow Winter Ball, to raise donations for funding scientific research and supporting children suffering from cancer.

Abdulaziz Al-Adwani, the State of Kuwait Ambassador to the Russian Federation, addressed the gala ball, sponsored by the Kuwaiti Embassy. He expressed gratitude to the steering committee for choosing the Kuwaiti mission to sponsor the festive gathering, proceeds of which would be allotted for

the local medical centers for cancer treatment. The State of Kuwait offers aid to peoples in need regardless of their religion or race, noted the ambassador, affirming Kuwait's advocacy of helping others on strictly humanitarian bases.

Kamel Ghribi, Chairman of the GK Investment and Development company, the main financier of the gala, noted in remarks to KUNA necessity of presenting the Arab world abroad, through "positive contributions to counter the negative image some quarters have been trying to draw about the Arabs,

particularly in Europe." Moscow Winter Ball has been regularly held since 18 years ago, with aim of raising funds for treating children's serious illnesses. The gala ball was attended by Arab, foreign ambassadors and diplomats, representatives of major banks and industrial conglomerates, as well as delegations from jewelry, insurance and fur companies. Also attending were the Second Secretary of the Kuwaiti Embassy, Jamal Al-Rifaae, the Third Secretary Nasser Al-Ramzi and the famous Kuwaiti fashion designer, Reem Al-Mislem. — KUNA



MOSCOW: Members of the Kuwaiti diplomatic mission in Russia. — KUNA

INTELLIGENTSIA URGE PROTECTING YOUTH AGAINST VIOLENT IDEOLOGY

KUWAIT: Speakers at a seminar on 'the impact of media on phenomenon of violence among the youth' highlighted the need to correct the media discourse in a way to protect the youth against violent ideology. The seminar was organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) on Saturday night on the fringe of the 40th Kuwait International Book Fair being held between November 19 and 28.

Addressing the event, Dr Amthal Al-Huwaila, professor of psychology at Kuwait University, identified violence as any act that could result in physical or psychological harm to other. "The tendency of some people to harm others results mainly from certain shortcomings in the process of consciousness raising; it is an acquired taste that can be traced back to childhood. Therefore, the focus should be placed on the way individuals acquire knowledge in the first five years of their age, and the roles of family, school, community, social clubs and the media," she argued.

"Violence has turned to be a global phenomenon that requires protective and preventive programs, and a more focused media discourse taking into account the age categories of the audience," Dr Huwaila added.

Meanwhile, Dr Barakat Al-Wuqayyan, a

media figure, said some mass media play a negative role in marketing violence as they do in marketing commercial products. He underscored the role of media gatekeeping, a process through which information is filtered for dissemination, publication or broadcasting, in order to verify that the media discourse suits the moral values of the society, and prevent any irresponsible practices or misinformation. Dr Wuqayyan stressed the need media realizing their responsibility in bringing up the young generation and developing their consciousness and awareness through credible information and news.

In the meantime, Director of the Public Relations and Information Dept. of the State Ministry for Youth Affairs Nasser Al-Arfaj said his ministry is keen on working with other state departments to correct the behavior of youth and improve their awareness. He noted that the interactive awareness campaigns of the ministry drew large number of youth participants.

Colonel Nasser Abu Sulaib, Director of the Security Media Department of the Interior Ministry, said that the unconventional media have a big influence on children and youth, so parents have to keep watch on the content of the social networking websites, particularly the messages of anonymous sites or accounts. — KUNA



THE PROMENADE MALL WELCOMES 'MARKAZ 21' FOR ICE SKATING



KUWAIT: Guests from Markaz 21 enjoy activities at Promenade Ice, Kuwait's only in-mall ice rink at the Promenade mall. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: The Promenade Mall welcomed guests from Markaz 21 for an exciting day of ice skating and gifts in Kuwait's only in-mall ice rink Promenade Ice, located on the 1st floor of the Promenade mall. The guests were treated to special one-on-one training sessions and games with the expert coaches at Promenade Ice. Tim Horton's and the Sultan Center, both located at The Promenade, were proud supporters of the event. Tim Horton's provided the guests and their chaperones with complimentary sweet treats and Sultan Center generously donated a range of supplies to Markaz 21, helping them to

continue their admirable work with adults with learning difficulties.

The Promenade is a goodwill project, and is owned and operated by the The Al Othman Charity Trust Fund. Both The Promenade and the Trust are dedicated to giving back to the community wherever possible. Being a venture of one of its kind in Kuwait, The Promenade takes pride in hosting charitable events that promote education, inclusion and goodwill, all while helping the public through the Trusts' ongoing humanitarian projects and donations. At The Promenade, the community always comes first.

Located in Salam, Markaz 21 is the only center in Kuwait dedicated to individuals with special needs who are over the age of 21. The center works to develop the capabilities of people with learning disabilities, and to enhance their lives through learning life skills, daily social interaction and field trips. It is their mission to spread awareness about the daily struggles that special needs adults face in Kuwait, and they aim to help them grow and to experience a fulfilling life. The event was attended by CEO Thomas Hammer, Al-Othman Portfolio, The Promenade Mall and Al-Othman Portfolio Marketing Alyah Al-Jasser.

SUPPORT NEEDED FOR DEVELOPING CHILDREN LITERATURE: WRITERS

KUWAIT: Though a considerable portion of Arab population are under the age of 18, the literature written to entertain and instruct this important category is regrettably lagging behind, several writers and academics concurred. "Writing for children needs caution due to its peculiarity," Syrian drama critic Haitham Khoja said in a seminar about future of children literature in the Arab world held on the sidelines of the Kuwait Book Fair Saturday night. "Children literature writers should feel that they are shouldering a huge national and social responsibility." He stressed on the need to support and set a plan for development of different aspects of children literature.

Wafaa Al-Mazghani, a children literature writer and researcher, said that writing for children is a very complicated work because they write to different age category with particular linguistic and psychological needs.

She warned against the grave impacts of printing children books that are written by people who are not well-versed in this kind of literature. Their work is disas-

trous and in many cases even convey undesirable messages, she said. Mazghani underlined the need for children literature which foresee future, boost children knowledge, and offering them role models to be their sources of inspiration.

Meanwhile, Professor of Teaching Methods at Faculty of Education in Kuwait University Kafia Ramadan regretted the deteriorating low-quality children literature. She called for institutional work to ameliorate this important category of literature. Children literature is crucial for building future generations personalities, Ramadan said, noting that superficial content of many works available on the market.

In the meantime, Egyptian writer Amal Farah said creating a brighter future for the nation is the main objective of the literary works written for children either for educational or entertaining purposes. Due to the importance of this literature, Farah recommended the establishment of a pan-Arab organization to foster and nurture it. — KUNA

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Al-Qabas

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

Kuwait is considered the most trash producing country around the world, and there are nearly 100,000 workers who pick it up and haul it in trucks to landfills, while Kuwaitis' role here is limited to signing the contract. The Kuwaiti is also considered the most lazy, and least practitioner of sports, so it is rarely that we find a person in government departments who is ready to move out of his chair and take a paper from one desk to another - rather he prefers to rely on an army of office boys to carry out this process. Those office boys also have the burden of cleaning corridors, tea service, cleaning bathrooms and other services, and the role of the Kuwaiti is no more than providing the farrash (peon) at the cheapest price, in exchange of what he gets from the state, and a percentage of the salaries of those workers.

Although oil is almost the only source of state income, this vital industry is carried out by another army of engineers, technicians and laborers, and they are almost all non-Kuwaitis, and this is the evidence of our failure through 70 years to make the oil company a Kuwaiti one.

Kuwaiti homes are also considered the largest around the world compared to the number of those who live in them, because it is impossible to live in the majority of them without the presence of another army of domestic helpers, in which the Kuwaiti trades in their livelihood due to his status.

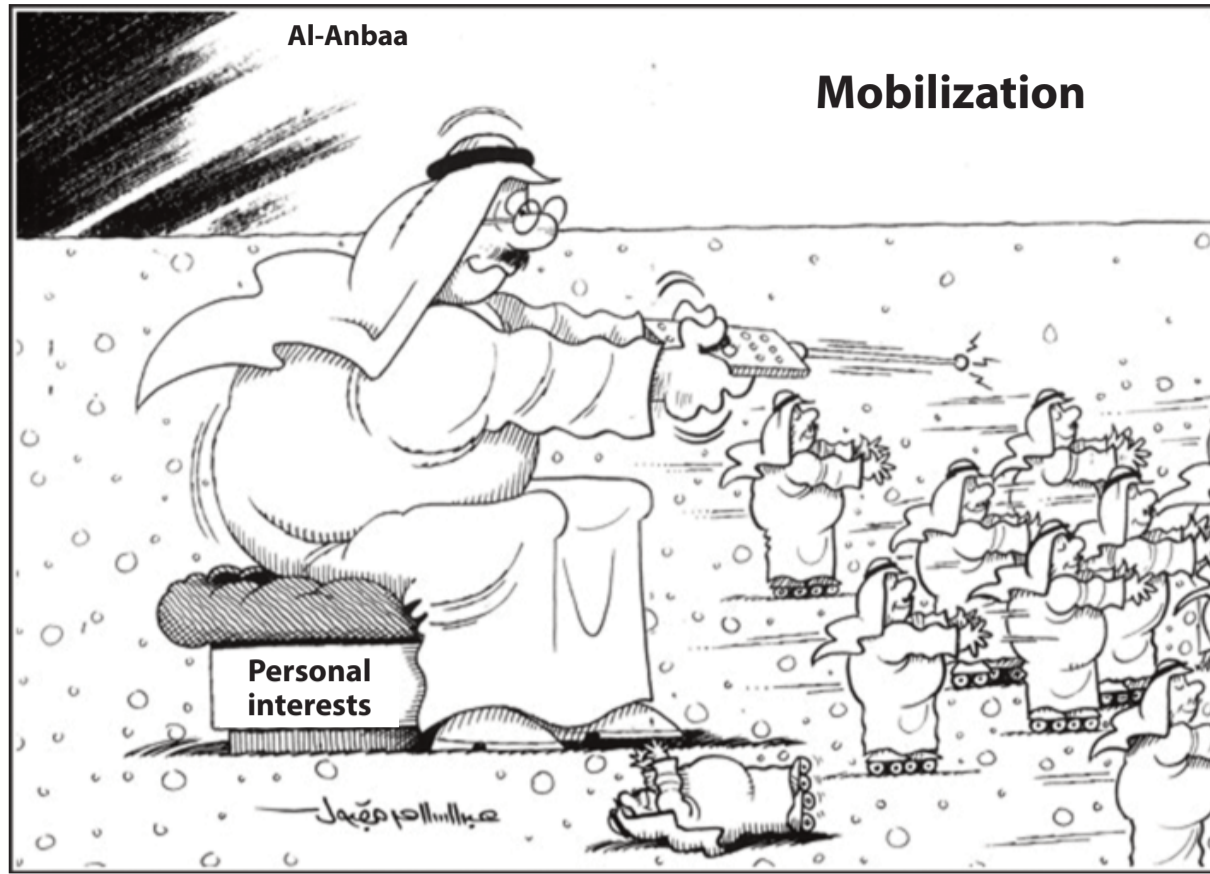
The Kuwaiti people are the most religious among the earth's people, but many do not know that their mosques were historically built by non-Kuwaitis and mostly non-Muslims. Mosques are also cleaned, and the call to prayers (azan) and even the job of the imam are done by non-Kuwaitis, while the role of the citizen is limited to praying in them, and pray against those who built them, invented their microphones, made its building material, its carpets, water faucets and other things, then add the prayer "may Allah not change things for us."

The Kuwaiti, civil and uniformed, is considered the most handsomely dressed in the world, but his role is limited to going to the non-Kuwaiti tailor to get his measurements and stitch his clothes, and if the tailor leaves, no one would know what will happen then. Despite the relative old age of the nursing institute, it is rare to find a Kuwaiti male or female nurse in any medical establishment, and the Kuwaiti's role in the nursing profession is limited to providing the health ministry with tens of thousands of nurses and receive thousands for each "head".

Kuwait will need more than 30,000 of these in the few coming years, so do those worried about the population structure know from where are we going to get those? The list is too long, and we will stop here, and say that it is not strange to have more than three expats for each citizen, as the assistant interior ministry undersecretary accompanied. The reason, my "dear general," is my cousin and your cousin who are not only satisfied by rejecting 90 percent of the jobs, but add to it by trading in human beings, instead of worrying about the population structure.

I know why you are worried, and I share your concern, but our problem is one of civilized, ethical and educational nature before being administrative.

—Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Anbaa

CENSORS AND CONSTITUTION

By Saleh Al-Shaeyji

People interested in arts and literature are nowadays roaring with complaints about very strict control over books displayed at this year's book fair. What I read about this includes things that call for bitter regrets about how strict the so-called censorship's control is getting over ideas and authors' creations, and what people are allowed to read.

This kind of custody is more like embodied dictatorship and unjustified tyranny because people are free to write and read whatever they wish. The state and all its apparatuses have no right in controlling people's minds, impeding the development of their talents, deciding what they should read or put barriers or limits to their culture.

I wonder if this was really what the state is after. Does the state really wish to limit people's culture and stop it from expanding? The most important question is: Is this really the state's policy and wish or is it the mere judgment of minor or even senior public servants? My worst fear is that the state, or let us say the government, is completely free about what is going on, which is already dangerous enough and involves violating people's dignity, rights as well as detestable control of their cognitive achievement limits.

Such 'book massacre' is not new to us. It happens every year with the advent of the book fair, but it seems that this

year, things have too far, driving people to roar with anger and hold seminars in protest for putting so many cultural and cognitive barriers as well as trying to derail the Kuwait International Book Fair, which was one of the first that I know of in the Arab countries. It used to be the most open and diverse one.

I recall back in the 1980s, over 30 years back, when friends from neighboring countries used to come to the Kuwait Book Fair to procure books they could not have access to in their own countries. At that time, almost all publishing houses used to take part in the fair because Kuwait was open to all literature and culture and was not selective in choosing certain ideas.

This is the direct responsibility of the information minister who ought to be up to his vocational as well as patriotic duties. He must interfere to protect Kuwait's cultural reputation as well as people's right of access to knowledge, because the spread of ignorance kills off nations. Such an obvious fact is not new to the minister and all official related bodies. On the other hand, if things remain the way they are, we had better cancel the fair to protect the reputation of liberties in Kuwait, which was guaranteed by the constitution and annulled by censors. —Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Anbaa

WHERE WAS THE BOMB PLANTED?

By Sami Al-Nisf

Aviation is the safest means of transport simply because its glossary does not include terminology such as 'closing or shelving cases with unknown culprits'. Culprits are identified to be held accountable each time, and most importantly, to learn lessons, bridge gaps and prevent similar future incidents. Therefore, there is what is known as the 'primary cause report,' that is usually filed within a few days of the crash as long as enough evidence, examining the wreckage and the bodies of the dead are present to prove whether an explosion took place and determine where it happened.

This procedure is usually followed by years of investigations until the 'final official report' about the crash is made by technical and criminal investigators as well as lawyers. The best example of this professionalism is that of the German Wings crash in March when the investigating authorities and the German airline announced within a few days that the assistant pilot had committed suicide and did not keep denying and asking to wait for the final report.

The Russian flight accident in Sinai is one of the easiest to investigate and reach a preliminary report about its causes because the FDR, the bodies and the debris were immediately found because it did not crash into the sea or on top of high mountains. Therefore, the Egyptian authorities' demand to wait for the final report was unprofessional because it might be concluded in years. In view of the already found facts, it would have been better to issue an agreed upon initial or primary report admitting the presence of a bomb onboard, because denying it seems like blaming the manufacturing company by claiming that the plane disintegrated in the air, blaming the airline by unproved accusations of maintenance problems or human error or dreaming of shelving and closing the case by filing it against unknown culprits, which is impossible to happen.

The main point the Egyptian authorities should have focused on instead of constant denial that only damages its credibility and professional reputation, was to investigate where and how the bomb was planted including considering Sharm el-Sheikh airport as one of the possible places, not the only one, to have planted the bomb. The size of the bomb IS talked about does not cause a crash if planted in the luggage compartment or even behind the passenger cabin as some international flight experts claimed, because this part of the plane is technically known as the 'bomb least risk-location'.

Therefore, the more logical option would be that the bomb was technically planted near the tail, which is hard and almost impossible to be done within the few minutes of transit at Sharm el-Sheikh airport in broad daylight and the presence of security men, luggage handling staff, engineers and technicians, etc. Well, it would be easier to plant the bomb during an overnight unguarded stopover in any airport or during long maintenance before flying to Sharm el-Sheikh.

IS falsely claimed that they shot the plane down. So, who says that they would not lie again by claiming to have planted a bomb at Sharm el-Sheikh airport to cover up for the real place where they planted it and to strike the Egyptian economy? Why would IS reveal where the bomb was planted while it can still use the same technique again? Why did countries with mighty intelligence and tapping powers instantly send planes to fly their subjects out of Sharm el-Sheikh if they really believe it had been breached by IS? Why did they not send those subjects by land to Cairo or even ask the Egyptian authorities to replace the entire security and technical staff members at Sharm el-Sheikh airport?!

Finally, Airbus uses the 'Fly By Cable' technique where computers translate the pilot's orders into orders to wires to move the tail rudder. Therefore, it takes highly experienced and specialized aviation and explosives experts to determine the most perfect and dangerous location that would make a small blast lead to such a massive explosion that cut off the entire tail and made it fall far away from the plane wreckage!

—Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

SHARQ MAN ARRESTED WITH SORCERY TOOLS

KUWAIT: A man was taken to Sharq police station for questioning after he was caught with sorcery material. The tools were found after the Asian man was stopped at a checkpoint in Sharq. Police found a picture of a citizen with him too.

Drug smuggling foiled

A man was arrested on arrival from Egypt for attempting to smuggle hashish. He was sent to the Drug Control General Directorate (DCGD) for further action.

Policemen's rewards

A security source said that the reward paid to police officers for supervising and protecting husseiniyas (Shiite mosques) was as follows: KD 143,000 to Ahmadi security department, KD 160,000 to Hawally, KD 228,000 to Asima (Capital), KD 115,000 to Mubarak Al-Kabeer, KD 150,000 to Farwaniya and KD 78,000 to Jahra security department.

VIVA'S CEO RECOGNIZES AMBASSADOR AL-DOUWEISAN

DURING THE 51ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF NUKS UK AND IRELAND

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced the launch of the 51st annual national conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) - United Kingdom and Ireland branch, held at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre in London, under the patronage of the Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, represented by the Ambassador of Kuwait in UK, Khaled Al-Douweisan.

Engineer Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran, VIVA's Chief Executive Officer received award from Douweisan, and Ibrahim Waleed Al-Sabra, Head of Administrative Authority of NUKS UK and Ireland, in recognition of VIVA's continued support to the Kuwaiti youth living inside the country and abroad, and sponsoring this conference. In his turn, Badran recognizes the Ambassador Douweisan.

Badran commented: "VIVA is always keen to support all youth's interests and aspirations, especially those who are studying abroad", he further added: "Sponsoring this conference is part of our CSR strategy to

support youth's activities in education field since VIVA's inception, to help them develop and evolve their capabilities. We believe that it's vital to foster close communication with the youth who represent the future of the

State of Kuwait."

Kuwaiti celebrities and public figures attended the annual conference working in culture, sport and art domains that gathers more than five thousand students in UK and Ireland.



VIVA honors Ambassador of Kuwait in UK Khaled Al-Douweisan.

AHLI UNITED BANK HOLDS ANNUAL STAFF GATHERING

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank held its annual staff gathering at the Al Raya Ballroom, Marriott Courtyard Hotel. The gathering was arranged by the Human Resources Department in conjunction with a team of staff representatives from across the Bank. The event was attended by a large number of management and staff.

The event was marked by a strong Kuwaiti theme with cultural activities. A number of the Bank's younger staff who had recently been successful in their banking-related academic achievements were also recognized. The celebration ended

with a dinner banquet which was enjoyed under delightful social atmosphere.

Richard Groves, the Bank's CEO, took the opportunity to make a speech which emphasizing Ahli United Bank's success as a leading Islamic bank in Kuwait. He mentioned the fine history of the Bank over the past 74 years of operations, since the bank's inception in 1941. Groves said "Having a fine history is important, but it is even more important that we look to the future and the challenges that we encounter".

Groves reviewed briefly the Bank's successes

in 2015 especially the financial results and international awards and recognition which underscore the Bank's leading position in the local and regional markets. He reaffirmed that the Bank's customers should and always do come first and that the Bank works to fulfil their ambitions, expectations and needs in accordance with the latest global banking practices and innovative banking products. This represents the cornerstone of the Bank's accomplishments. Groves commended the Bank staff's dedication, efforts and team spirit which made

all this success possible. Groves concluded his speech by thanking and appreciating the efforts of members of the Executive Management for their invaluable efforts and support in achieving the Bank's aspirations and goals.

Naqeb Hamed Amin, Head of Human Resources, added: "Ahli United Bank extends all possible support to its staff and is very proud of their performance. The Bank supports and seeks to develop constantly its staff as staff are key to the long term sustainable success of the

organization. Senior Management is fully committed to the development of staff".

Naqeb added: "In our pursuit for distinction and excellence, we comply with a work environment characterized by professionalism, transparency and team spirit. Likewise, we seek to secure a distinguished environment for sustainable work, meeting requirements, and the long term aspirations of our staff because we truly believe that the drive for our success lies in their performance and the accomplishments of the whole team making the Bank what it is today."



KUWAIT: A group photo of management and staff during the Ahli United Bank's gathering.



Iran sentences US reporter to prison

BANGLADESH EXECUTES TWO OPPN LEADERS FOR WAR CRIMES



BRUSSELS: Belgian army soldiers and policemen patrol near Christmas stalls in the center of the capital yesterday. —AP

BELGIUM HUNTS 'SEVERAL' SUSPECTS

TENSE BRUSSELS REVIEWS SECURITY ALERT

BRUSSELS: A tense Belgian capital was locked down for a second day yesterday with police and troops patrolling deserted streets as authorities reviewed whether to extend a security alert meant to prevent a repeat of the bloody Paris attacks. With the world on edge over the jihadist threat, US President Barack Obama said the most powerful tool to fight the Islamic State (IS) extremist group was to say "that we're not afraid."

In Paris, Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said a chemical or biological attack "was among the risks" faced but that all possible precautions had been taken. Belgian officials were to meet late afternoon to review the security alert, imposed over fears jihadists planned similar attacks to those in Paris which left 130 people dead on Nov 13. The city's metro system and public buildings were closed, along with shops and restaurants after the terror alert was raised to the highest level of four because of what officials said Saturday was an "imminent threat."

The historic Grand Place in central Brussels, usually bustling, was virtually empty, with business badly hit in the run-up to Christmas as troops and armed police patrolled. "A group of 140 called yesterday to cancel a booking. If it continues like this, the Christmas market will be called off with all the impact that could have," said Patrick, a waiter at one of the many restaurants on the square.

'Exceptional Measures'

Interior Minister Jan Jambon said the authorities were looking not just for Paris suspect Salah Abdeslam who managed to slip past French security forces after the carnage in the City of Light. "It involves several suspects and that is why we have put in place such exceptional measures," the Belga news agency cited Jambon as telling Flemish television. Justice Minister Koen Geens said in a separate Belga report he expected the metro to reopen today "if all passes off normally ... We are not

going to paralyze Brussels economically."

Belgium and the capital, home to the European Union and NATO, are no strangers to Islamist violence. Four people were shot dead at the Brussels Jewish museum last year, and in January security forces killed two suspects linked to the Charlie Hebdo killings in Paris. The UN Security Council on Friday authorised nations to "take all necessary measures" to fight jihadist violence after a wave of attacks, including the downing of a Russian aircraft in Egypt with the loss of 224 lives and the storming of a luxury hotel in Mali which left 19 dead.

'Terrorism Knows No Borders'

Obama said yesterday he would press ahead with a visit to Paris for UN climate talks in December, calling on world leaders to show similar resolve. "The most powerful tool we have to fight ISIL is to say that we're not afraid," he said. Russian President Vladimir Putin said the Mali attack, in which six Russians died,

showed "terrorism knows no borders" and was a global threat which must be confronted "with the broadest international cooperation."

Moscow announced separately it had killed 11 IS-linked fighters in its volatile North Caucasus region. French President Francois Hollande next week meets world leaders, including Obama and Putin, as well as Germany's Angela Merkel and Britain's David Cameron to discuss what can be done to counter the IS threat. Defence Minister Le Drian said French jets would be able to launch air strikes on IS targets from the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier in the eastern Mediterranean starting Monday.

In Turkey, police arrested a Belgian of Moroccan origin, Ahmet Dahmani, 26, who reportedly scouted targets for the Paris attacks which saw gunmen and suicide bombers hit bars, restaurants, a rock concert and the national football stadium. The suspected ringleader, Abdelhamid Abbaoud, died in a massive police raid in Paris on Wednesday along with his

cousin Hasna Aitboulahcen, reportedly a one-time party girl who turned to radical Islam about six months ago.

Abbaoud was a notorious Belgian jihadist thought to be fighting in Syria and his presence in Europe has raised troubling questions about a Europe-wide breakdown in intelligence and border security. Questions remain too over what role Salah Abdeslam - who used to run a bar with his brother Brahim in Brussels - played. Brahim died when he blew himself up outside a bar in Paris. A third brother, Mohamed Abdeslam told RTBF television yesterday he believed Salah had changed his mind at the last moment and had not gone through with his attack.

Mohamed Abdeslam said the family wanted Salah to give himself up. "That way he can give us the answers we seek, our family and the families of the victims," he said. "We would rather see Salah in prison than in the cemetery." —AFP

TROOPS ADVANCING THANKS TO RUSSIA STRIKES: ASSAD

DAMASCUS: Syrian government troops are advancing on "nearly every front" thanks to Russian air strikes that began in September, President Bashar Al-Assad said in an interview released yesterday. The embattled president also said he favored new peace talks to be hosted in Moscow, but stressed that the Syrian conflict could not be resolved without "defeating terrorism". In the interview with Hong Kong-based Phoenix television, Assad said the situation in Syria had "improved in a very good way" since Russia began air strikes on Sept 30. "Now I can say that the army is making advancement in nearly every front... in many different directions and areas on the Syrian ground," he said, speaking in English.

Russia is coordinating its air strikes with Damascus, unlike the US-led coalition fighting the Islamic State group, which Assad and his government criticize as ineffectual. The army has made minimal progress on the ground, according to groups monitoring the war, though the Russian strikes have reportedly boosted morale among government troops and supporters. Moscow has also sought a leading role in a political resolution to the conflict, participating recently in high-level talks in Vienna with other world powers in a bid to create a framework for peace.

Talks there earlier this month produced a framework for the creation of a transitional government, a new constitution and elections within 18 months. But there was no agreement on the fate of Assad, whom the opposition and their backers want gone, but allies such as Iran and Russia say should be allowed to run in new elections if he wants. Assad said it was "my right" to run in new elections but it was "too early" to say if he intended to. "(It) depends on how my feeling is regarding the Syrian people. I mean, do they want me or not? You cannot talk about something that's going to happen maybe in the next few years," he said. Assad said he backed Moscow's efforts to organize new dialogue between the regime and opposition in a "Moscow 3" conference, but insisted a political solution could only be achieved with the defeat of "terrorism". "We need to make the dialogue, but the concrete steps should follow at least a major defeat of the terrorists and the government takes control of a major area that has been captured by the terrorists," he said.

The Syrian leader said it would take "maximum of two years" to produce a new constitution and hold a referendum on it. Assad's government considers all those who oppose his regime "terrorists," and has framed the conflict that began with anti-government demonstrations in March 2011 as a "war on terror". —AFP

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SYRIAN CHRISTIAN TOWN BECOMES FRONTLINE WITH IS

SADAD, Syria: On the outskirts of the Syrian Christian town of Sadad, children play in front of a cannon fired just hours ago in an ongoing battle against the Islamic State group. Soldiers and pro-regime militiamen nearby look on with amusement at the children, who appear oblivious to the fact that their ancient town is now in the sights of the jihadist group. Sadad is majority Syriac Orthodox Christian, and it is believed to be the same town referred to as Zedad in the Old Testament's "Book of Kings".

Its ancient churches have been caught in the crossfire before, with regime and rebel forces battling for control of the town in Oct 2013. Regime forces eventually secured the town, but IS is not far away and many residents have fled. "Around 60 percent of the 12,000 residents, particularly the women and children, have fled to other Christian villages in the province, like Fayruza and Yazdal," said Suleiman Khalil, Sadad's mayor. "The men are staying behind to defend the town," added Khalil, in his 30s, working a rosary through his fingers as he walked.

IS already controls several towns and villages in Homs province, including the famed city of Palmyra, home to ancient ruins that the

group has systematically destroyed. It also holds the town of Al-Qaryatayn, where its fighters kidnapped hundreds of civilians including Christians, and blew up an ancient monastery.

Just 10 Kilometres Away

On Nov 1, the jihadist group reached Maheen, just 10 km east of Sadad. They have since fired dozens of mortar shells at Sadad, killing both civilians and local fighters. The advance has left much of the town empty and residents afraid of what may come next. "We are afraid of massacres but we are also afraid for our churches because the Islamic State group has already blown up religious monuments in areas it has captured," one local resident told AFP. IS has launched a campaign of destruction against buildings and monuments that fall outside its harsh interpretation of Islam, ranging from Christian churches to Muslim graves, as well as ancient treasures like the temples of Palmyra.

"We are threatened by Daesh because of our religion," said 22-year-old Hassan, a shopkeeper who has taken up arms to defend Sadad, using the Arabic acronym for the group. "They threaten the whole world. We are staying

here to defend the town and prevent the tragedies and massacres that happened in other Christian villages from occurring here."

Preparing for battle alongside residents are two militias, including a contingent from the so-called Sotoro force (Syriac for protection). The Sotoro is a Syriac Christian militia based in the northeastern province of Hasakeh, which has dispatched some 250 fighters to help defend Sadad.

Photos with Russian Advisors

"We came here to be by the side of the regular army and support them in their fight against Daesh," said 26-year-old Sotoro fighter Badie. "We're here to defend all Syrians in general, and our Christian brothers in particular," he added. He said IS would "commit massacres" if it was able to enter the town. "We are ready to repel any offensive," he said confidently. The Sotoro forces fight alongside villagers as well as gunmen from the "Eagles of the Storm," an armed wing of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, a pro-regime political group. Six of the "Eagles" were killed recently when an IS suicide bomber in a car blew himself up at a checkpoint manned by the force just outside the town. — AFP



SADAD, Syria: Syrian children play with a tyre near old ammunition on Nov 14, 2015 in this Christian town near Mahin, where Syrian pro-government forces are fighting the Islamic State group in Homs province. — AFP



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi casts his ballot at a polling station in the Heliopolis neighborhood yesterday. — AFP

EGYPTIANS VOTE AGAIN TO ELECT NEW PARLIAMENT

ELECTIONS DOGGED BY APATHY

CAIRO: Egyptians voted yesterday in the second phase of elections that are meant to restore parliament after a more than three-year gap but which critics say have been undermined by widespread repression. The elections have been hailed by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as a milestone on the army's roadmap to democracy but voter turnout has been low, with only a quarter of the electorate casting ballots in the first phase on Oct 18-19.

Sisi supporters won a landslide in the first leg and are expected to repeat their performance on Sunday and Monday when voting takes place in the capital Cairo and 12 other provinces. Sisi cast his ballot at a girls' school in Cairo soon after voting opened at 9 am (0700 GMT). State television once again showed footage of largely empty polling stations. The government announced it was giving public sector workers half a day off today to encourage them to cast their ballots.

Many who abstained said they felt the polls offered little genuine choice in the absence of the main opposition Muslim Brotherhood and other critics and that parliament would change little in lives dominated by the

struggle to earn a living. "There is no reason to vote, these elections don't mean anything. All these candidates are running so they can get MP perks," said Hassan, a 21-year-old student who declined to give his full name.

Egypt's top Muslim cleric Sheikh Ahmed al Tayeb, head of Al-Azhar, the centre of Islamic learning in the country, likened boycotting to disobeying one's parents, a grave sin in Islam. "I urge everyone, especially the youth, to participate and cast their ballots," Tayeb told journalists outside the polling station where he cast his vote. "We tell boycotters to stop this immediately; Egypt is like your mother, boycotting is like disobeying your parents." Egypt's last parliament was elected in 2011-12, in the first election after the popular uprising that ended Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule. Voting then was marked by long queues and youthful excitement. The Muslim Brotherhood, long the country's main opposition movement, won about half the seats. A court dissolved that parliament in mid-2012. A year later, Sisi, then military chief, removed President Mohamed Morsi of the

Brotherhood from power after mass protests against his rule. Egypt's oldest Islamist organisation was banned, declared a terrorist organization and thousands of its members were jailed. When it ousted Sisi, the army won the backing of other political groups by promising prompt parliamentary elections. Instead, Sisi went on to win a presidential vote in 2014. Parliament polls will finally be completed this month.

Voter Fatigue

The new parliament will contain 568 elected members - 448 elected on an individual basis and 120 through winner-takes-all lists. Sisi may appoint up to a further 28 lawmakers. Yesterday and today, candidates will be vying for 222 individual seats and 60 list seats. "For the Love of Egypt," a loyalist electoral alliance led by former intelligence officer Sameh Seif Elyazal, won all 60 list-based seats contested in the first round, which covered Egypt's second city of Alexandria, the province of Giza, which includes parts of Cairo west of the Nile, and 12 other provinces. — Reuters

MALI ATTACK PROBE DEEPENS AS SIEGE HOTEL YIELDS CLUES

BAMAKO: Malian investigators were yesterday intensifying the hunt for suspects wanted over the jihadist siege at a luxury hotel that left 19 people dead in the capital Bamako, where residents were seeking to return to normal life. Two days after the attack on the Radisson Blu hotel, claimed by the Al-Murabitoun group, an Al-Qaeda affiliate led by notorious one-eyed Algerian militant Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the authorities were tight-lipped about the direction of the enquiry. "We are following several lines, but we won't be making a statement," a police source told AFP.

Pope Francis yesterday offered his condolences to the Malian people, in the form of a telegram from the

Vatican's Secretary of State Pietro Parolin to the Archbishop of Bamako Jean Zerbo. The pope said he was "appalled by this senseless violence" and hoped for "the conversion of hearts and the gift of peace" in the troubled country. Bamako's streets resounded once again with the normal concert of car horns and noisy wedding processions, despite the state of emergency in force which was imposed late Friday, which bans all rallies and street protests likely to disturb public order. Security remained high at the major hotels. It was more discreet, though tighter than usual, at public buildings and banks. Investigators were combing through the Radisson Blu hotel and have recovered several items

inside which could help the enquiry, the police source said. On Saturday a security source told AFP that the authorities were "actively pursuing" at least three people over the attack in the former French colony.

Three Days of Mourning

Gunmen went on the rampage in the hotel from the early morning on Friday, shooting in the corridors and taking 170 guests and staff hostage. The assault, which ended when Malian and international troops stormed the hotel, left 19 people dead as well as two attackers, Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has said. The victims included six Russians, three Chinese, two Belgians, an American, an Israeli, a Senegalese and a member of the Malian special forces. Other sources put the death toll at 27, not counting the assailants.

Senegal's President Macky Sall was expected in Bamako later yesterday "to show the sympathy of the Senegalese people" towards their west African neighbours, the Mali president's office said. Sall will also represent the regional ECOWAS bloc as its current president. Mali will begin three days of mourning from today. The attack appears to have had an immediate effect in the country's tourism industry with one major hotel saying that it had received numerous cancellations since the events of Friday, and that restaurant and business centre reservations were down. Many Malians were yesterday determined to resume their normal lives, but some cautioned against too quick of a return to the routine. "People are not being vigilant. We forget. I don't know whether it's because of the problems of daily life, but people just aren't being careful here," said hotel worker Daouda Sissoko. Others are concerned that Friday's attack will have more economic repercussions for a country which endured a civil war in 2012-2013. — AFP

MINES SLOW ADVANCE BY YEMEN LOYALISTS

ADEN: Pro-government forces in Yemen pressed their advance yesterday to recapture the southwestern province of Taez but were slowed by landmines planted by Shiite rebels, military officials said. Government forces backed by air and ground support from a Saudi-led coalition launched an all-out offensive last week to push the Iran-backed rebels out of Taez and break the siege of loyalists in its provincial capital. "We have advanced after having cleared and destroyed a large quantity of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines planted by the Houthis rebels and their allies" amongst renegade troops loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, a military official said.

Troops and allied Popular Resistance fighters had advanced towards Rahida, the province's second-largest city, on the road linking main southern city Aden with Taez, the official said. Four Houthis were killed and two others captured in an ambush by loyalists that targeted two rebel patrols south of Rahida, he said. A Yemeni commander confirmed that mines were hampering the progress of government forces and had caused casualties among fighters, without providing any figures.

Loyalist forces were backed by significant reinforcements from the Saudi-led coalition which intervened in March in support of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. Breaking the siege of Taez is seen as crucial for the recapture of other central provinces and for opening the way to the rebel-held capital Sanaa farther north. It is also important for securing the south, where loyalists have retaken five provinces from the rebels since July, including Aden, where Hadi has set up base.

PM Arrives on Eastern Front

Prime Minister Khaled Bahah had meanwhile arrived in the city of Marib, 140 km east of Sanaa, a government source said

yesterday. He was to meet with commanders of loyalist troops there who have been trying to retake the province since mid-September. Loyalists control Marib city but have so far failed to secure the rest of the province, the source of much of Yemen's oil output. Bahah arrived from the United Arab Emirates, a key coalition member, and was accompanied by several senior officials including the interior and oil ministers, the source said.

Hadi returned from exile in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday as the offensive against the Houthis and their allies got under way. Diplomatically, efforts were continuing to prepare for UN-sponsored peace talks expected to take place this month in Geneva. The rebel-controlled sabaneews.net reported that a rebel delegation travelled to neutral Oman late on Saturday to meet with the UN envoy to Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who visited key Houthi-backer Iran in recent days.

The talks in Muscat between the rebels and the UN envoy should focus on the "agenda of the dialogue" in Geneva, said Abulmalek Al-Mikhlafi, who will head the government's delegation to Switzerland. He accused the Houthis of "military escalation" in Taez and of "buying time" ahead of the talks. "They have not yet submitted the names of their negotiators," Mikhlafi told AFP. The Geneva talks should focus on "finding a mechanism to apply UN Security Council Resolution 2216" which calls for a negotiated withdrawal by the rebels from key cities and a surrender of all heavy weapons to the state, Mikhlafi said. The United Nations says more than 5,700 people have been killed since the Saudi-led intervention began in March, nearly half of them civilians. UN efforts have repeatedly failed to resolve the conflict and no date has yet been set for this month's awaited talks. — AFP



KFAR ADUMIM: Israeli police stand next to the body of a Palestinian near this settlement in the West Bank yesterday. — AP

THREE PALESTINIANS KILLED IN WEST BANK

JERUSALEM: An Israeli woman was stabbed to death and three Palestinians were killed in a series of incidents in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday, police said, as an eight-week-old wave of bloodshed showed no signs of dying down. A surge in street violence since Oct 1 has challenged Israel's security system and alarmed its main ally the United States, whose Secretary of State John Kerry is due to visit the region this week.

Eighty-three Palestinians in all have been killed, some while carrying out attacks and others in clashes with Israeli forces, while 19 Israelis and an American student have been killed in Palestinian stabbings, shootings and car ramming. In the Etzion bloc of Jewish settlements, a Palestinian stabbed and killed a 20-year-old Israeli woman, an Israeli police spokesman said. A military spokesman said the assailant was shot and killed.

Earlier, a Palestinian teenager was killed while she was trying to stab two Israeli women at a junction popular with Jewish settlers, police said. She was run down by a Jewish settler and shot by security forces. In a further incident, a Palestinian tried to ram a taxi into Israelis at a West Bank junction near

Jericho and then got out with a knife in his hand to stab them, before an armed Israeli at the scene shot him dead, police said.

The Palestinian government said in a statement that Israel was carrying out unlawful killings and "accusing every victim of holding a knife" or ensuring a knife was dropped at the side of alleged attackers. The bloodshed has been driven in part by Muslim agitation over stepped-up Jewish visits to a contested Jerusalem shrine, and by long-deadlocked talks on a US-sponsored peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking earlier in public remarks to his cabinet, said Israel was facing "terrorism by individuals" that was largely unorganized and stoked mainly by social media. The US State Department said Kerry would begin his Nov 22-24 Middle East visit in Abu Dhabi, after which he would come to Israel and the Palestinian territories. A senior US official said Kerry would discuss ways of trying to stem the violence but would not try to renew negotiations on a state that Palestinians seek in territories Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war. — Reuters



BAMAKO: Hospital workers walk outside the morgue of the Gabriel Toure hospital in the Malian capital yesterday. — AP

BRAZIL MIDDLE CLASS FACES PLUNGE BACK TO POVERTY

CAIEIRAS, Brasil: Brazilian Monica de Oliveira thought she'd forever left behind those days of worrying about getting her daughter new clothes. As part of a wave of poor Brazilians to enter a basic sort of middle class in recent years, de Oliveira was a Latin American success story. But for how much longer? Biting recession in the world's seventh biggest economy is starting to undermine the country's widely lauded progress in dragging some 40 million people out of poverty, starting in 2003.

De Oliveira knows what it's like to be one of them and now she's afraid her family is sliding back. She and her husband had a combined monthly salary of about \$500 working as security guards in Caieiras, near Sao Paulo, and both have been laid off. One by one their little luxuries have disappeared. Family outings on the weekend are over, the

dream of a new car and bigger house is on hold. Even interest payments on debts are no longer feasible. "Soon there will be no new clothes for my daughters. We won't go to the circus, we won't go out to McDonalds," de Oliveira, 36, said. "I wanted to pay for them to study, to give them a better life."

She's far from alone. Of the masses lifted from poverty under the leftist presidencies of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva between 2003-2010 and his current successor Dilma Rousseff, some three million families will reenter poverty in the next two years, economist Adriano Pitoli, from Tendencias consultants, predicts.

Boom to Bust

At the economic peak in 2010, when GDP grew at 7.5 percent, Brazil seemed to

have it made. Demand, especially from China, for Brazilian commodities such as iron ore and beef, created a boom reaching the lowest rungs of society, with many getting first time access to previously inaccessible goods like air conditioning and consumer products. "Before we felt that things could only get better," de Oliveira said. "Now, jobless, we have nothing."

The macroeconomic outlook gives no reason for people like de Oliveira to feel optimistic. Recession has been officially underway since the second quarter of this year, with GDP forecast to drop three percent, and is forecast to last two years, the first time that has happened since 1931. Inflation is on course to hit double digits. Unemployment has been rising for eight months, reaching the highest rate since 2009 at 7.6 percent.

Making matters worse, Rousseff's battle with a hostile Congress has created gridlock and could still lead to an often threatened impeachment trial. Meanwhile, economic reforms demanded by markets sit idling and investors, already dealing with a vast corruption network uncovered at Petrobras national oil corporation, are spooked.

On the micro level, rising interest rates make debt payments ever harder for ordinary Brazilians, removing them from their role in the last decade as the drivers of a powerful domestic economic expansion. "If we consider the population which came up from poverty to the middle class, we see people with low education, without savings, and taking jobs which require few qualifications," Mauricio de Almeida Prado, director of the Plano CDE think tank, said. "Now all these people are very vulnerable," he said.

Cliff Edge

One of those vulnerable people is Ana Paula Rodrigues, 35, who worked at a supermarket checkout. She finally made enough money to buy her children a computer, some video games and a few pairs of better shoes than usual - all things that she'd never enjoyed herself in her life. Enthusiastic about the future, she took a risk a year ago, leaving her job and entering a course on security guard work so that she could try for jobs paying double her \$260 salary at the supermarket. The result? She can't find that job and now finds herself risking the loss of everything, with a low-qualification and low-paid job with the municipal government her last hope. "I took a risk, I lost and I'm paying dearly for this," she said. "I am sad about this, but I'll accept any work there is. Now I've lost the luxury of choosing or taking risks." — AFP



RIO GALLEGOS, Argentina: Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez votes in a runoff election in southern Argentina yesterday. — AP

ARGENTINEANS VOTE ON BIG ECONOMIC, POLITICAL CHANGE

ELECTION REFERENDUM ON PERONISM

BUENOS AIRES: Argentines voted yesterday in a presidential runoff that could end 12 years of leftist government and see the pro-business opposition seize command of Latin America's third-biggest economy. Polls show that the mayor of Buenos Aires, former Boca Juniors football executive Mauricio Macri, 56, could beat his leftwing rival Daniel Scioli, 58, an ex-power boating champion. If Macri breaks the grip of Peronism, the broad populist movement that has dominated Argentine politics for a century, he could become Argentina's most economically liberal leader since the 1990s.

Queues formed at polling stations which opened at 8:00 am (1100 GMT) under sunny blue skies in the capital Buenos Aires, a key electoral territory. Voting was due to close at 2100 GMT with first results expected in the following hours. Macri has cast himself as a force for change, as many voters are fed up after 12 years of government by Kirchner and her predecessor and late husband, Nestor Kirchner. "We deserve to live better than this," Macri said at his closing campaign rally.

Scioli said Macri's proposed economic reforms threatened Argentines' welfare payments, salaries and industry. "Macri means the devaluation that destroys salaries. He is the demon of savage capitalism," Scioli

said. Macri rejected such characterizations, saying he would lead with "21st century development" as opposed to "21st century socialism" - a term used by supporters of the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and his successor, Nicolas Maduro. Macri also promised to shake things up regionally. If elected, he said, he would push to expel Venezuela from the South American trade bloc known as Mercosur because of the jailing of opposition leaders under Maduro.

That would be a huge change for a continent where many countries, including neighbors Chile and Brazil, have left-leaning democratic governments that have maintained close ties with Venezuela. The latest opinion poll by consultancy Management and Fit showed Macri with 55.3 percent support and Scioli with 44.7 percent. Polls in Argentina have proved unreliable in forecasting results in the past however. They also indicated there were millions of undecided voters.

Macri has proposed to lift restrictions on imports and on US dollars - though analysts say he may struggle to push reforms through a hostile Congress. He surprised pollsters in the first round vote by finishing just three points behind his rival, with 34.1 percent of the vote to Scioli's 37 percent. The narrow result forced a run-off vote.

Argentine Politics Changing

The election has been unlike any other in Argentina's history, with the first ever national runoff vote, and the first televised candidates' debate. 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 fairly elected who is neither a Peronist nor from the radical liberal movement. His ascent 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.

Whichever man wins now 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. Scioli and Kirchner call the hedge funds "vultures". The Kirchners 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. — Agencies

DEMS CELEBRATE VICTORY IN LOUISIANA GOVERNOR RACE

NEW ORLEANS: Democrats in Louisiana rejoiced as they reclaimed the governor's mansion for the first time in eight years, while the state's GOP leader insisted "our Republican brand is strong" even amid the defeat of a one-time political powerhouse, Republican US Sen David Vitter. John Bel Edwards' victory in Saturday's runoff election was once-unthinkable in the conservative state and a stunning turn of events for Vitter, who started his campaign nearly two years ago as the race's frontrunner. With his 12-percentage point loss, Vitter announced he wouldn't seek re-election to the Senate in 2016.

Edwards' win offered a rare pick-up of a governor's seat for Democrats in the conservative Deep South, but Republican leaders insisted it was a one-time fluke that didn't suggest the GOP was on the ropes in Louisiana. Republican Party of Louisiana Chairman Roger Villere pointed to victories for lieutenant governor and attorney general and gains in the state Legislature. "Make no mistake, Louisiana is a deep red state and our Republican brand is strong," Villere said in a statement lamenting a "disappointing result in the gubernatorial race."

The Democratic victory was as much about Vitter's

flaws as a candidate as it was about Edwards' strengths. Edwards painted the race as a referendum on Vitter's character and suggested the US senator didn't measure up in such a competition. Edwards, who started the campaign as a little-known lawmaker from a rural parish, focused on his West Point degree and military resume, and he pledged a bipartisan leadership style. "The people have chosen hope over scorn, over negativity and over distrust of others," Edwards said in his victory speech, before leading a second-line parade with a jazz band through the French Quarter hotel ballroom.

In the final days, Vitter sought to rally Republican voters by drawing policy distinctions with Edwards and making Syrian refugee resettlement an issue in the state campaign. But it didn't work. "I've lost one political campaign in my life, tonight and ironically it's the campaign and the political effort I am most proud of," Vitter told supporters.

Rebuke

The rebuke from Louisiana voters will create an open Senate seat for the 2016 election, as Vitter announced he wouldn't seek re-election to Congress. Several Republicans already have said they're interested in running for the position, including US Reps Charles Boustany and John Fleming, among others. Democrats were ecstatic as Edwards defied expectations that only a Republican could win statewide in Louisiana. He thanked supporters who "believed we could confound the conventional wisdom that this victory just couldn't happen." "It did happen," he said. Rather than a race about the state's deep financial troubles, the contest for governor largely became about Vitter, who has been in elected office, first as a state lawmaker and then in Congress, for more than 20 years. Vitter began the election cycle nearly two years ago as the clear favorite. He stockpiled cash for the campaign, dwarfing all competitors. — AP



NEW ORLEANS: Louisiana gov-elect John Bel Edwards holds up an umbrella as he reacts with supporters at his election night watch party on Saturday. — AP

IRAN SENTENCES US REPORTER TO PRISON

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday confirmed that it had sentenced Iranian-American Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian to an unspecified prison term following his conviction last month on charges including espionage. "The verdict includes a prison term," judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejeie was quoted as saying by the official IRNA news agency. He did not specify the length of the sentence. Rezaian has been in jail in Iran for more than a year and had stood trial on charges of espionage along with other crimes against national security - charges thought to carry a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

"The verdict for Jason Rezaian has been issued but not officially communicated" to his lawyer, said Mohseni Ejeie. "I cannot announce the details," Rezaian's employer said it had no more information about the report. "We're aware of the reports in the Iranian media, but have no further information at this time," the Post's foreign editor Douglas Jehl said in a statement. "Every day that Jason is in prison is an injustice. He has done nothing wrong," said Jehl. "Even after keeping Jason in prison 488 days so far, Iran has produced no evidence of wrongdoing. His trial and sentence are a sham, and he should be released immediately," he added.

Rezaian, 39, was arrested in July 2014 at his home in Tehran where he had been working as a correspondent for the American newspaper for two years. He has appeared four times since May behind closed doors before Tehran's Revolutionary Court, a special tribunal that presides over politically charged cases or those relating to national security. Mohseni Ejeie announced on Oct 11 that a verdict had been "issued" and that it could

be appealed after being delivered. The Iranian authorities have since refrained from formally announcing the verdict. Washington Post executive editor Martin Baron said in October that the "vague and puzzling" statement from the Iranian judiciary "only adds to the injustice" surrounding the Rezaian case. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on October 17 that Iran was trying to resolve the case against the Iranian-American reporter "from a humanitarian point of view". But he stressed that the "charges are serious".



Jason Rezaian

The treatment and trial of the journalist has drawn condemnation from his family, employer, the US government and press freedom groups. The United States has repeatedly called for Rezaian to be freed. Earlier this year, Iran urged the United States to release 19 Iranians detained on sanctions-related offences but ruled out any prisoner swap with Rezaian. The journalist was arrested along with his wife Yeganeh Salehi, and a photographer. Salehi and the photographer were later released on bail. — AFP

MIDWEST GETS DEEP FREEZE AFTER SNOW

INDIANAPOLIS: A deep freeze set in across the Midwest yesterday with low temperatures forecast in the single digits and a few below zero, turning the season's first major snow into ice that made some roads treacherous to travel. After snow on Friday and Saturday across much of the region, temperatures plunged behind the front. The National Weather Service forecast 20 degrees or lower across six states from North Dakota to Illinois. Fargo, North Dakota, could dip to 11 degrees. Madison, Wisconsin, could see 7 degrees and Des Moines 12.

Parts of Iowa, northwest Illinois and southern Wisconsin could reach below zero, the weather service said. In Minneapolis, where dozens of people huddled around fires to stay warm at an encampment outside a police station to protest the fatal shooting of a black man by officers there last week, the temperature was expected to reach 18 degrees early yesterday.

Chicago was to see a low of 9 degrees and around 20 degrees at noon when the Chicago Bears took on the Denver Broncos in an NFL game at Soldier Field. The first snowfall of the season brought amounts ranging from a few inches to 20 from South Dakota through Michigan earlier in the weekend. In the southern Wisconsin town of Janesville, between 10 and 20 inches of snow had fallen by late Saturday afternoon, the weather service said.

Southside True Value Hardware manager Matt Krienke said business had been good in the days leading up to the storm, but that it had become "very, very, very, very slick". "People who don't need to drive don't need to be out," he said. Chicago's O'Hare International Airport had recorded 7 inches of snow by midday Saturday, which forced the cancellation of hundreds of flights. But operations were expected to return to normal yesterday with only a few cancellations. — AP



KENOSHA, Wisconsin: A boy slides down packed snow on his stairs as another boy looks on while they play outside on Saturday. — AP

STATE OF EMERGENCY IN CRIMEA AFTER POWER LINES BLOWN UP

SEVASTOPOL: Crimea declared a state of emergency yesterday after its main electricity lines from Ukraine were blown up, leaving the Russian-annexed peninsula in darkness after the second such attack in as many days. More than 1.6 million people are without power, water supplies to high-rise buildings have stopped and cable and mobile Internet is down.

The electricity feed from Ukraine was cut at 00:25 am (2225 GMT), the Crimean branch of Russia's emergency situations ministry said in a statement. Crimea still depends on Ukraine for its electricity even after its annexation by Russia in March last year, a move which paved the way for the uprising in eastern Ukraine that has now killed more than 8,000 people.

The Black Sea peninsula produces only 30 percent of its own energy needs, according to the regional government. "As of 1 pm (1000 GMT), 1,641,000 people have been left without electricity," and 150 schools have no power, Russia's energy ministry said.

So far, Crimea has enough fuel to keep the gas and diesel-powered generators it has running for 29 days, the Russian authorities said.

An explosion on Saturday in Ukraine's Kherson region bordering Crimea cut the two

working power lines to the peninsula, the state energy company Ukrenergo told Interfax-Ukraine news agency. Two of the total four power lines had already been downed Friday in separate blasts.

In the port city of Sevastopol, electricity was cut off completely at 2:00 am, although different districts have since had brief rolling periods of power, an AFP journalist reported.

"I had no electricity all night. These useless officials can't run the city and they still haven't built a local power station," said 49-year-old resident Konstantin. "It's not the first time Ukraine has cut off electricity to Crimea, we are already used to power cuts and stock up on batteries," added Oleg, 56.

"The problem is the fridge keeps going off."

'Act of terrorism'

After the first attack on Friday, Ukrenergo posted pictures of a downed pylon and one with a hole blown through it. "The nature of the damage shows that it took place as a result of shelling or the use of explosive devices," it said.

The head of the anti-narcotics department of Ukraine's interior ministry, Ilya Kiva, who was at the scene, wrote on Facebook: "The pylons have just been blown up!!!"

The identity of the attackers is not known. "The investigation is ongoing. So far there are no hypotheses, the investigators are working," Ukrainian interior ministry spokeswoman Nataliya Stativko told AFP.

Crimea's leader Sergei Aksyonov suggested Ukraine was involved in the blasts and said Crimea's prosecutors have opened their own criminal probe. "I think Ukraine isn't looking for (the attackers). Its agencies may have done this themselves. I consider this action was agreed upon," Aksyonov told Moscow's Govorit Moskva radio.

Russian senator Franz Klintsevich called the attacks "an act of terrorism." "Blowing up the power lines... close to the Crimean border has practically cut off the whole peninsula. That's a real act of terrorism," he told RIA Novosti news agency. Crimean Tatars, an ethnic group native to the peninsula who oppose Russian rule, have been holding protests at the site of the broken power lines since Saturday, calling for a blockade of Crimea to protest at the jailing of dozens of activists.

"We want to end the occupation of Crimea," said Refat Chubarov, one of the leaders of the community. He declined to comment on whether activists could have been involved in the explosions, saying: "I wasn't



SIMFEROPOL: A man sells candles on a street after a power failure, in Simferopol, Crimea yesterday. Russia's Energy Ministry says nearly 2 million people on the Crimean Peninsula are without electricity after two transmission towers in Ukraine were damaged by explosions. — AP

there." Crimea experienced several total power cuts last winter, attributed by the authorities to repairs and technical problems, but seen by residents as deliberate pressure from

Ukraine. Russia plans to build two gas-powered power stations in Crimea which would burn gas piped from the mainland, but these are still at the planning stage. — AFP



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel, German Finance Minister Peer Steinbrueck, and Otmar Issing, of the German Government's task force for finance architecture, from right, brief the media after a meeting at the chancellery in Berlin. — AP file photo

GERMAN GOVT CLASH ESCALATES AS MERKEL MARKS DECADE IN POWER
CDU AND CSU EXCHANGE BARBS AFTER MUNICH CONGRESS

BERLIN: The parties in Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition government exchanged insults at the weekend in an escalating clash over refugee policy that has left the German leader looking more vulnerable than at any time during her decade in power.

Divisions between her conservatives and the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) over benefits for refugees prompted coalition leaders to cancel a special cabinet meeting planned for today where they had hoped to agree measures to speed up the processing of asylum seekers.

But the biggest fight was within Merkel's own conservative ranks as members of her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) lined up to condemn their Bavarian sister party for humiliating the chancellor at a congress in Munich on Friday evening. With Merkel standing next to him, Horst Seehofer, the leader of the Bavarian Christian Union (CSU), openly criticised her for refusing to put a formal cap on the number of refugees entering Germany. He was cheered loudly by members of his party as Merkel stood fidgeting uncomfortably on the stage.

Elmar Brok, a senior member of Merkel's CDU, denounced Seehofer's behavior as "impolite, unseemly and unacceptable" in an interview with the Tagesspiegel newspaper. Other CDU members said

the CSU leader had broken a taboo in how the two parties behave with each other.

Seehofer refused to back down, telling German television station n-tv that he could not in good conscience tell a "fairly tale of harmony and consensus" when major differences remained.

The barbs flew as Merkel marked her 10-year anniversary in office yesterday. Her popularity ratings have plunged from a gaudy 75 percent in April to below 50 percent and support for her CDU/CSU bloc has dipped five points to 37 percent, still more than ten points ahead of the next strongest party, the SPD.

LOOMING ELECTIONS

To prevent further damage, her advisers say she must find a way to curb the number of migrants entering Germany, ideally by the spring when three state elections will be held in a major test before the next federal vote in 2017. A party congress of her CDU in early December will be an important gauge of how strong support within her own party is.

"There are real Merkel loyalists in the CDU and those that are more tactical," an official close to the chancellor told Reuters on condition of anonymity. "The CDU is not a party that pushes out its leaders. But you will see a shift if people get the sense that Merkel

is a burden for them rather than a bonus." Roughly 7,000 migrants have been entering Germany each day in recent weeks, according to police, with the vast majority flowing into Bavaria over the Austrian border. Roughly a million are expected to arrive this year alone.

Merkel has rebuffed calls from the CSU and members of her own party to impose a ceiling on the number of refugees Germany will accept, saying this would be impossible to enforce. To reduce the numbers, she is hoping Turkey will agree to keep more refugees in exchange for financial support from the European Union. She is also pressing for so-called "hotspots" to be set up at Europe's external borders, and for faster processing of migrants at home, so that those who are not granted asylum can be expelled more rapidly.

But SPD resistance to her domestic plans and opposition in Europe, particularly eastern countries, to accepting refugee quotas are sowing doubts about whether her strategy can succeed.

"Up until a few months ago, most Germans saw Merkel as a rational, reliable and risk-averse defender of a very comfortable German status quo," the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung said in a weekend editorial. "Nowadays, even in her own party, one hears the refrain: we don't recognize her anymore." — Reuters

EU OFFICIALS SEE NO QUICK DECEMBER FIX WITH BRITAIN

BRUSSELS: European Union leaders are not only unlikely to reach a deal next month with Britain on its demands for reform of the bloc but may not even narrow differences at a pre-Christmas summit, officials and diplomats said.

After a week of "confessional" meetings between aides to summit chairman Donald Tusk and envoys from other member states, which should conclude today, people involved told Reuters many opposed demands British Prime Minister David Cameron laid out in a letter to Tusk two weeks ago. Cameron has set an end-2017 deadline for a referendum on EU membership. In order to stay in, he says, London needs changes. The longer such negotiations with EU partners take and the more divided they become, the greater the risk he will fail to deliver such reforms.

One proposal many leaders object to is that immigrants from EU states should wait four years before receiving in-work benefits such as tax credits and support for children living abroad. Officials and diplomats see that as discriminating between EU citizens on national grounds, which they say jars with basic EU treaty law. "The situation is between difficult and very difficult," one official said late last week, after more than 20 of the 27 other member states had had their meeting with staff working for Tusk, the European Council president whose job it is to forge compromise among the members of the European Union.

The one-to-one meetings, a standard EU procedure, are intended to frame negotiations and there had been some hope in recent months that at least the bulk of a deal might be ready for the Council to endorse at its next meeting on Dec. 17-18.

But the official said it was hard to imagine that a deal would be reached at that summit and that even constructive discussions were

not a certainty. "Many countries say they want more Europe, not less Europe. And Cameron wants less Europe."

"There is no agreement on individual issues like the four years and no one will agree to discrimination." A spokesman for the British government said: "We've always been clear that what matters is addressing the concerns of the British people. We'll be driven by substance not speed."

"The prime minister looks forward to a substantive discussion on the UK renegotiation at the December European Council."

DOWNBEAT

Cameron will have to work hard in the coming weeks to sway EU leaders to achieve a successful outcome to negotiations. Other EU leaders see him as failing to show solidarity on matters such as the influx of refugees to Europe and the euro zone crisis.

Earlier this month, the EU's executive divided Cameron's demands for reform into three categories: the feasible, the difficult and the "highly problematic". The last refers particularly to curbing benefits for workers from other EU states.

Such curbs are a particular dislike of ex-communist eastern states like Tusk's fellow Poles, not just because many of their citizens work in the wealthier west but also because it is a touchstone of their emergence from Soviet control. One EU diplomat said that, while most want to see Britain, the EU's second biggest economy, remain in the bloc, its demands posed complex problems.

In addition, the attacks on Paris, the conflict in Syria and with Islamic State, plus the refugee crisis, will leave leaders with little time to negotiate with Cameron over the next month, the diplomat said. — Reuters

UK TO BUY MORE F-35 JETS, BOOST ANTI-TERROR BUDGET

LONDON: Britain plans to increase the number of fighter jets it can launch from aircraft carriers and boost anti-terrorism spending, finance minister George Osborne said yesterday. The government is due to set out a new five-year defence strategy on Monday and a broader budget plan on Wednesday.

"We are going to step up the aircraft carrier punch of the United Kingdom. We are going to make sure that when these aircraft carriers are available they are going to have planes that can fly from them in force," Osborne told BBC television. "By 2023, we will be able to have 24 of these jets, some of the most powerful

in the world, the F-35, on the decks of these carriers."

Osborne denied his overall focus on cutting public spending might hurt Britain's attempts to prevent attacks like the ones seen in Paris earlier this month, saying spending on anti-terrorism defenses would be increased by almost a third. "We will make sure that Britain is properly defended against the terrorist threat," he said. "Precisely because we are making difficult decisions in other parts of our budget, we can give our military more kit, we can increase our counter-terrorism budget by 30 percent." — Reuters

UGANDAN GAYS HOPE THE POPE WILL SPEAK OUT ON THEIR BEHALF

KAMPALA: Gay activists are hoping Pope Francis will preach tolerance toward homosexuals, and even go so far as to condemn violent attacks against gays during his upcoming visit to Uganda. Church leaders, however, are praying he'll avoid the issue altogether.

The divergent expectations underscore the acrimonious state of the gay rights debate on a continent where homosexuality remains taboo and homosexuals are greatly despised. In Uganda, where homosexuality is illegal and where attacks against gays have forced many to seek refuge abroad or lead secret lives at home, gay leaders nevertheless hope Francis will weigh in with a firm message of tolerance. "I see this particular pope as more progressive but I wouldn't call him an ally like (President) Obama," said Frank Mugisha, a prominent gay leader. "I would like to see his position very clearly because what he said came as a by-the-way when he said he can't judge." Francis famously said "Who am I to judge?" in referring to a purportedly gay priest. He has called for a church that is more tolerant and welcoming for those on the margins, including gays.

But he has also denounced what he calls the "ideological colonization" of the developing world, a reference to the way wealthy countries and non-governmental organizations condition development aid on Western ideas about contraception and human rights.

In Africa, that can boil down to the loss of international funding for school or health pro-

grams unless they promote condom use. Some European countries such as Sweden and Norway cut funding to Uganda's government when it passed an anti-gay bill, which had widespread support in Uganda even as the international community condemned it as draconian.

The bill was signed into law last year before a court nullified it on a technicality; an earlier version had prescribed the death penalty for some homosexual acts. Homosexuality is still criminalized under a colonial-era law banning sex acts against the order of nature. Stronger anti-gay legislation was supported by local church leaders who said it was necessary to protect poor African children from Western homosexuals who lure them with money.

At a recent Vatican meeting on family issues, African cardinals were at the forefront in blocking the church's overtures to gays and in insisting that the Catholic Church as a whole denounce this "ideological colonization," saying wealthy countries have no right to impose their ideas on poor countries with different cultural views.

"I doubt that Pope Francis will talk about homosexuals," said Archbishop John Baptist Odama, who heads the local conference of Catholic bishops. "There is a clear teaching of the church on homosexuality. Because the aim of it is not to promote life but to act against it, those with that tendency are called to abstinence." — AP

BERLIN SETS UP REFUGEE SHELTER AT FORMER STASI HQ

BERLIN: Berlin has opened a shelter at the former headquarters of communist East Germany's feared Stasi secret police to help house a record influx of asylum seekers, weekend media reports said. Nearly 500 people, most of them from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, have been staying in the foreign intelligence wing of the imposing former Ministry of State Security since

late Friday, the daily Berliner Zeitung said. Up to 900 people will eventually be housed there temporarily.

"The rooms will finally be used for something meaningful," it quoted a spokesman for the German Red Cross (DRK), Ruediger Kunz, as saying. The Berlin social services agency could not immediately be reached for comment yesterday.



Migrants queue during a snow shower to board a bus after crossing the border between Austria and Germany in Wegscheid near Passau, Germany, yesterday. — AP

The office block was once the fiefdom of legendary spymaster Markus Wolf. Dubbed "The Man Without a Face" because Western intelligence services long lacked even a photograph of him, Wolf directed one of the world's most formidable espionage networks for nearly three decades.

A legend in his own lifetime, Wolf successfully ran more than 4,000 spies across the Iron Curtain during his tenure from 1958 to 1987, infiltrating countless "moles" deep into the West German government administration. Wolf's wing was used by the national railway company Deutsche Bahn in the 1990s but had been vacant for a few years, the Tagesspiegel newspaper reported.

Up to six people per office will sleep in bunk beds at the site, where asylum seekers can spend three months until they are placed in more permanent housing.

The main Stasi headquarters, where the enormous agency kept vast records on East German citizens, would remain a museum, the Berliner Zeitung said.

Around 7,000 Stasi employees worked in the sprawling complex in the city's Lichtenberg district, which was stormed by protesters in the weeks after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 to stop staff from destroying files. German authorities are scrambling to find beds for up to one million asylum seekers expected in the country this year alone.

In October, the iconic airport Tempelhof, built by the Nazis and later the staging ground for the Berlin Airlift, was also converted into a temporary shelter. — AFP

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KUALA LUMPUR: US President Barack Obama (left) shakes hands with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang as Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak (second right) watches on at the 10th East-Asia meeting during the 27th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday. — AFP

CHINA UNDER FIRE OVER SEA ROWS AS US COURTS SE ASIA

BEIJING MUST BEHAVE LIKE A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL LEADER: AQUINO

KUALA LUMPUR: China came under renewed criticism yesterday over its rising profile in the South China Sea as it jostled with the United States for regional influence at the conclusion to a week of top-level diplomacy. Asia-Pacific leaders met in Malaysia with China finding itself in the firing line over its land reclamation projects that have turned tiny atolls into fully-fledged islands with potential military uses. "The world is watching," to see if Beijing will behave like a "responsible global leader" in the standoff, Philippine President Benigno Aquino told the assembled leaders.

The talks—which included the United States, China, Japan and others were hosted by the 10-country Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). President Barack Obama, who earlier in the week repeated US calls for China to stop the land reclamation, announced Sunday he would host the ASEAN leaders at a meeting in the United States next year.

"This region ... is critical to security, prosperity and human dignity around the world," he said, while also pledging continued trade, diplomatic, and security support for the region.

The annual season of summitry, which began a week ago in Turkey for the Group of 20 meeting, and

continued with regional forums in Manila and Kuala Lumpur, has been overshadowed by the string of recent deadly extremist attacks. But attention in Malaysia shifted back to Chinese actions, which have raised fears of potential conflict at sea.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe waded into the fray, calling for the South China Sea, a key route for global seaborne trade, not to be militarized, while refraining from directly naming China, according to Kyodo news agency.

'Political provocation'

China insists on sovereignty over virtually all the resource-endowed South China Sea, which is also claimed in part by Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei, and non-ASEAN member Taiwan. Beijing has displayed irritation with Washington's expressions of support for the claims of China's neighbors, and once again refused to budge on the issue in Kuala Lumpur.

With Obama present, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang told yesterday's closed-door summit that countries "from outside the region" should stop inflaming tensions over the maritime dispute, a Chinese official said afterward. The official, Vice Foreign Minister Liu

Zhenmin, also criticized the recent US deployment of naval vessels to the South China Sea.

Washington has said the move was meant to stress the right to free passage in waters China claims, but Liu called it a "political provocation." At the same time, China offered its own carrot to ASEAN, announcing a new raft of infrastructure loans totaling some \$10 billion.

ASEAN on Saturday issued a joint statement stressing the need to maintain freedom of navigation and over-flight rights in the South China Sea.

Washington says navigation in a sea through which much of the world's trade passes could be threatened by actions such as China's island-building. ASEAN also called for quicker progress on agreeing a code of conduct at sea with Beijing.

China has been accused of dragging its feet on the code—which could hamper its freedom of action at sea—and seeking to run out the game clock while it works to turn its disputed territorial claims into a fait accompli. Obama also stressed US support for the code, and said on Saturday that "for the sake of regional stability, claimants should halt reclamation, new construction, and militarization of disputed areas." — AFP

UN CHIEF URGES RUSSIA, US TO COOPERATE ON TERRORISM

KUALA LUMPUR: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged Russia and the United States yesterday to cooperate in rooting out terrorism and said he would unveil a comprehensive plan to fight extremism and violence early next year. United States President Barack Obama and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev separately called on all countries to coordinate and thwart Islamic State after its recent devastating attack on a Russian plane and on multiple targets in Paris.

Ban said he counted on their support to wipe out a common enemy and the United Nations was gathering ideas from members towards a joint counter-terror strategy.

"All these terrorists and ideology extremists should be defeated in the name of humanity," he said during a meeting in Malaysia with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev at the annual East Asia Summit. "We need to unite. We need to show global solidarity to address ... the common enemy of ISIL, Daesh, some other extremists and terrorist groups," he said, referring to Islamic State.

US President Barack Obama at the same summit said Islamic State was "a bunch of killers with good social media" who would be thwarted by the United States and its allies. "Destroying (Islamic State) is not only a realistic goal, we're going to get it done," he told a news conference.

"We will take back land they are currently in, take out their financing, hunt down leadership, dismantle their networks, supply lines and we will

destroy them." Obama said it "would be helpful" if Russia directed its focus on tackling Islamic State and he hoped Moscow would agree to a leadership transition in Syria that meant its President Bashar al-Assad stepping down.

"The question at this point is whether (Russia) can make the strategic adjustment that allows them to be effective partners with us and the other 65 countries," he said.

"Russia has not officially committed to a transition of Assad moving out ... I think we'll find out in the next few weeks whether we can bring about that change in perspective." Russia and Iran have been Assad's strongest foreign supporters during Syria's civil war. But the United States, its Gulf allies and Turkey have insisted he steps down as part of any eventual peace deal.

Medvedev said countries with large Muslim populations, including Russia, should unite to fight against Islamic State and told a meeting of Asian leaders that should be done through institutions like the United Nations.

"Terrorists have blown up a Russian airplane over the Sinai Peninsula. They've conducted a massacre at the heart of Europe," he said. "These acts are atrocious. The whole world has shuddered."

He later told Ban: "We have to work together to fight Islamic State as a terrorist factor." "We also have to harmonize, to coordinate efforts - both political and military - that are undertaken by those countries that have suffered from terrorism." — Reuters



KUALA LUMPUR: United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon attends the 10th East-Asia meeting during the 27th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP



KOHAT: Pakistani relatives, journalists and residents offer funeral prayers for television journalist Hafeez Ur Rehman who was killed by gunmen in Kohat in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province yesterday. Unidentified gunmen yesterday killed a Pakistani TV journalist, police said, the second such murder this month in the insurgency-hit northwest. — AFP

BANGLADESH EXECUTES TWO OPPN LEADERS FOR WAR CRIMES

NEW DELHI: Bangladesh executed two opposition leaders yesterday for war crimes during the country's 1971 independence war, despite concerns that the legal proceedings against them were flawed and threats of violence by their supporters. A reporter was shot and wounded after covering the funeral of one of the men, though it was not clear who was responsible.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, secretary general of the main Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami, were hanged at 12:55 am at Dhaka Central Jail in the nation's capital, said Senior Jail Superintendent Mohammad Jahangir Kabir.

A few hours after the execution, a security detail escorted ambulances carrying the men's bodies to their ancestral homes, where their families were to perform burial rituals.

While there has been international concern over the legal process that led to the executions of the two men, most leading Bangladeshi newspapers and TV stations supported the hangings.

The leading English-language Daily Star's main report detailed the atrocities that Chowdhury was convicted of, and ran another story with the headline, "Heartless, hateful against Hindus ...". The second story narrated how minority Hindus were brutally attacked and killed and their homes torched under Chowdhury's leadership.

Two top Bangla-language dailies, Samakal and Prothom Alo, also published reports that demonstrated their support for the trials and executions of the two leaders.

Bangladesh was bracing for upheaval ahead of the hangings, with supporters of the two opposition leaders threatening violence if they were executed. Rajib Sen, a reporter for the Mohona TV station, was on his way back from Chowdhury's funeral in Chittagong district when his car was sprayed with bullets, the station said. Three other journalists in the car escaped unhurt, and Sen was rushed to a hospital in Chittagong. The TV station is owned by a member of the ruling Awami League party.

Local police would not provide any details on the shooting, and it was not

immediately clear who attacked the car or why. The Jamaat-e-Islami party, which had already had two other senior leaders executed for war crimes, issued a statement calling for a nationwide general strike today. Chowdhury was convicted on charges of torture, rape and genocide during Bangladesh's independence war against Pakistan, while Mujahid was found guilty on charges of genocide, conspiracy in killing intellectuals, torture and abduction.

On Wednesday, Bangladesh's Supreme Court upheld their death sentences, and on Saturday, President Mohammad Abdul Hamid rejected a clemency appeal, clearing the way for the executions.

Jamaat-e-Islami and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party say the trials were politically motivated. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has denied the allegations.

More than 15 people, mostly leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami, have been convicted of war crimes. The party had campaigned openly against independence for Bangladesh, which was part of Pakistan until the 1971 war.

Bangladesh's government says that Pakistani soldiers, aided by local collaborators, killed 3 million people and raped 200,000 women during the war.

In a statement late Sunday, Pakistan's foreign ministry said that the trials the two men faced were flawed, and that "Pakistan is deeply disturbed" by the executions. Mujahid, 67, was the head of Islami Chhatra Sangha, then the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami. He was accused of being the mastermind behind the killing of intellectuals, including teachers and journalists, days before the Pakistani military surrendered to a joint force of freedom fighters and Indian army units on Dec. 16, 1971, after a bloody nine-month war. Chowdhury, 66, whose father was the speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly and, at times, the acting president of Pakistan, also actively opposed Bangladeshi independence.

He was accused of carrying out war crimes, including killing more than 200 civilians, mostly minority Hindus, during the independence war, according to evidence presented at the tribunal.

US lawmakers overseeing foreign policy described the war crimes tribunal, set up in 2013, as "very flawed" and a means of political retribution. Leaders of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, in a letter sent Tuesday to the top US diplomat for South Asia, voiced concern that "democratic space is shrinking" in Bangladesh amid "a growing climate of violence, fear and self-censorship."

Since February, four secular bloggers, a publisher, and two foreigners - an Italian aid worker and a Japanese agriculture researcher - have been killed in attacks linked to Islamic militants.

The Islamic State claimed responsibility for some of the attacks, but authorities say the Sunni extremist group has no presence in the country. Instead, Hasina has blamed the attacks on the opposition, accusing them of trying to destabilize the country and halt the war crimes trials. Both opposition parties denied the allegation. Such extremist violence was once rare in Bangladesh, which is mostly Muslim but has a strong secular tradition. — AP



DHAKA: Bangladeshi activists shout slogans celebrating the execution of two war criminals Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid of Jamaat-e-Islami and Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party at the Central Jail in Dhaka yesterday. — AP

NEPAL POLICE FIRE ON ETHNIC PROTESTERS BLOCKING ROAD; 2 DEAD

KATHMANDU: Police in southern Nepal opened fire on ethnic protesters blocking the nation's main highway, killing two in fresh violence that threatened to escalate political tensions, officials said yesterday.

Police were trying to stop the protesters from blocking the main East-West highway when they were attacked with petrol bombs, spears and bricks around midnight, police official Bhim Dhakal said. He said that 25 policemen and several protesters were injured in two separate attacks. The two protesters were killed in the Bhardaha and Rupani areas, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) southeast of the capital, Kathmandu, Dhakal said.

A curfew was imposed to stop further violence. The clashes are expected to escalate the tensions, just as months-long protests by the Madhesi ethnic group over Nepal's new constitution had eased over the past few weeks during a series of festivals in the Himalayan nation. The Madhesi say the new constitution unfairly divides Nepal into seven states with borders that cut through their ancestral homeland. The Madhesi and other small ethnic groups also want the states to be larger and to be given more autonomy over

local matters. The protesters have imposed a general strike in southern Nepal since September and blocked the main border crossings with India, resulting in severe fuel shortages across Nepal.

At least 48 people have been killed in the protests since August. There is no official count of the injured. India, which has close cultural ties with the Madhesi community, has expressed concern over the new violence. Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup tweeted that his government was "distressed at (a) loss of lives in police firing," and that a political solution was required.

Nepalese authorities have been rationing gasoline for taxis and public buses, but there's been no fuel for private cars. Police have been escorting trucks through south Nepal at night to bring both passengers and cargo to cities in the north, including Kathmandu. Talks between the protesting groups and government have made little progress, but both sides have said they would continue. Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli called a meeting of the main political parties late yesterday to discuss the Madhesi demands. — AP

TRUMP WANTS RETURN OF WATERBOARDING BY US

WASHINGTON: Republican frontrunner Donald Trump called yesterday for the return of waterboarding, a near-drowning interrogation technique widely denounced as torture, saying it was "peanuts" compared to what Islamic State is doing. It was the latest in a series of inflammatory Trump responses to the threat of terrorism in the wake of the Paris attacks that appear to have bolstered his poll numbers. A new Washington Post/ABC News national poll showed Trump leading the Republican presidential field with 32 percent, a 10 point lead over his nearest rival, Ben Carson.

Trump, who ignited controversy earlier this week by calling for a registry of all Muslims in the United States, stepped up the hardline rhetoric in an interview with ABC News in which he advocated the use of simulated drownings, known as waterboarding, in interrogations of terrorism suspects. "I would bring it back. I think waterboarding is peanuts compared to what

they'd do to us, what they're doing to us, what they did to James Foley when they chopped off his head. That's a whole different level and I would absolutely bring back interrogation and strong interrogation," he said.

Waterboarding, which was used by the CIA in interrogations of at least three 9/11 suspects, was banned by President Barack Obama shortly after assuming office in 2009. Trump slightly shifted his position on tracking Muslims and closing mosques after a storm of criticism, including by other Republican presidential candidates. On mosques, he said: "I don't want to close mosques; I want to surveil mosques. I want mosques surveilled."

While not disavowing his earlier call for a Muslim registry, Trump said he wanted a database of Syrian refugees entering the country to guard against "the great Trojan Horse of all time." "We have to watch and see what we're doing," he said, adding that Syrian refugees should not be allowed into

the country at all.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, meanwhile, speaking on NBC's Meet the Press show, said there was "no specific credible intelligence about a threat of the Paris type directed at the homeland here". But he said there was always concern about potential copycat attacks by home-grown violent extremists of the kind seen in the past. He reaffirmed there are no plans to cancel the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade in New York City, an event expected to draw three million people.

The heightened fears generated by the Nov 13 attacks in the French capital has been seen by some as an opportunity for more politically seasoned candidates to gain traction with voters that has so far eluded them. But the latest polls showed little evidence of that. Trump and Carson, the retired neurosurgeon who is the other outsider in the Republican race, remained unbudged at top of the rankings. — AFP

SCORES DEAD IN MYANMAR JADE LANDSLIDE

Continued from Page 1

"We are seeing only dead bodies," said Nilar Myint. She added that because the men were mostly migrant workers, authorities were struggling to identify any of those killed. "The victims' families live elsewhere. They only live and work in this area but they come from many different places," she said.

Myanmar is the source of virtually all of the world's finest jadeite, a near-translucent green stone that is prized above almost all other materials in neighbouring China. Landslides are a common hazard in Hpakant as prospectors pick their way across perilous mounds, often under cover of darkness, driven by the hope that they might find a chunk of jade that would deliver them from poverty. Scores have been killed this year alone as local people say the mining firms, many of which are linked to the country's junta-era military elite, scale up their operations in Kachin. But this appears to be the largest such accident in the secluded region.

In an October report, advocacy group Global Witness estimated that the value of Myanmar jade produced in 2014 alone was \$31 billion, the equivalent of nearly half the country's GDP. But that figure is around 10 times the

official \$3.4 billion sales of the precious stone last year, in an industry that has long been shrouded in secrecy with much of the best jade thought to be smuggled directly to China.

Local people in Hpakant complain of a litany of abuses associated with the mining industry, including the frequency of accidents and land confiscations. The area has been turned into a moonscape of environmental destruction as huge diggers gouge the earth looking for jade. Itinerant miners are drawn from all parts of Myanmar by the promise of riches and become easy prey for drug addiction in Hpakant, where heroin and methamphetamine are cheaply available on the streets.

"Industrial-scale mining by big companies controlled by military families and companies, cronies and drug lords has made Hpakant a dystopian wasteland where locals are literally having the ground cut from under their feet," said Mike Davis of Global Witness, calling for firms to be held accountable for accidents. The group wants the jade industry, which has long been the subject of United States sanctions, to be part of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a global scheme designed to increase transparency around natural resource management. — AFP

GOVT MULLING RAISING FEES ON SERVICES...

Continued from Page 1

He said the committee will continue its meetings in order to complete the draft law for raising service charges without providing a specific date. The Assembly passed in early 1990s a law that bans the government from raising service charges without prior approval from the Assembly.

MP Ahmad Al-Qudhaibi said the government focused during the meeting on raising service charges and taxes as a means of meeting the potential budget deficit due to the sharp decline in oil prices. He said that MPs asked the government about its plan to meet the deficit and inquired why the state's main sectors are not participating in the effort. The only measure Kuwait has already taken was to start selling diesel, kerosene and aviation fuel at market prices from the start of 2015.

Saleh told Al-Rai the government will legislate to increase the fees without harming limited-income people, with keenness on maintain their living standards. He stressed on strengthening the principle of rationalization and a sense that the government spends on services that benefit citizens and residents, indicating that an increase of electricity and water fees, for example, will not affect the cash-strapped people.

The government spends heavily on subsidizing domestic gasoline prices; raising prices could save it large amounts of money, but would be politically sensitive and might attract criticism in parliament. Saleh had previously

said Kuwait, which has huge financial reserves, was considering various options to cover the deficit, including steps to save money as well as bond issues.

Meanwhile, the Assembly's educational committee reviewed the controversial electronic media law. Its rapporteur MP Humoud Al-Hamdan said that the committee found that many of the law's provisions require fundamental changes, especially those related to freedom and awarding of licenses. He said the law can be evaluated in a comprehensive way once all its articles and proposals to amend them are reviewed.

Qudhaibi meanwhile said he will demand that the report of the investigation committee on the controversial Dow project be returned to the committee because it is incomplete. The report was supposed to have been debated in the Assembly last week but due to shortage of time, the report is now expected to be debated early next month.

The lawmaker said that the investigation committee had refused to include the opinions of some former senior officials from the oil sector who offered to testify in the probe, but their offers were turned down. As a result, the report is incomplete and should be returned to the committee to complete it. The committee investigated why Kuwait scrapped in 2008 a multibillion-dollar joint venture with US Dow Chemical and as a result was ordered to pay a fine of \$2.2 billion. Kuwait immediately paid the fine and the committee is also investigating the reason for rushing the payment.



United States Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power plays the Sri Lankan bat and ball game called Elle with Muslim girls at the Osmaniya College in Jaffna, some 400 km north of Colombo yesterday. Power is the second member of President Barack Obama's cabinet to visit Sri Lanka in six months after Secretary John Kerry. — AFP

OBAMA: WORLD MUST NOT SUCCUMB...

Continued from Page 1

Facing accusations that he has allowed the Islamic State group to spread by refusing to send US troops to Syria or step up the air campaign there, Obama made his most determined pledge yet to win the fight. "The American people in the past have confronted some very real, enormous threats. And we beat them. We vanquished them," he said. "This will be no different." But Obama sought to show that even as allies take the fight to the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq, an equally vital battle will be fought on the home front.

"In addition to hunting down terrorists, in addition to effective intelligence, in addition to missile strikes and in addition to cutting off financing," he said, "the most powerful tool we have to fight ISIL is to say that we're not afraid." "They cannot strike a mortal blow against France or the United States or a country like Malaysia, but they can make people fearful," Obama said, speaking in Kuala Lumpur and using an acronym for Islamic State.

Obama also pressed Russian President Vladimir Putin to align himself with the US-led coalition, noting that IS has been accused of bringing down a Russian passenger jet last month, killing 224 people. "He needs to go after the people who killed Russian citizens," he said of Putin. While Russia has stepped up its air campaign in Syria, Obama said Moscow has focused its attention on moderate rebels fighting Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, a Russian ally. He called on Russia to make a "strategic adjustment" and drop its support for Assad, insisting the violence in Syria cannot be stopped as long as Assad is in office. "It will not work to keep him in power," Obama said. "We can't stop the fighting."

Obama was ending a nine-day trip to Turkey and Asia that has been clouded by the Paris terror attacks and credible threats that prompted Belgian authorities to deploy troops and impose a lockdown as they hunt suspects. Amid wall-to-wall and sometimes breathless television coverage of terror threats, Obama urged journalists to "maintain perspective". He also addressed sometimes shrill calls for the United States to close its doors to refugees from Syria and Iraq, for fear jihadists may lurk among them. He urged Americans against "succumbing to the fear that allows us to abandon our values, to abandon how we live".

Obama, the son of a migrant mother and migrant father, voiced his personal determination to face down anti-refugee measures that he has already threatened to veto. "Refugees who end up in the United States are the most vetted, scrutinized, thoroughly investigated individuals that ever arrive on American shores," he said. Remembering a Saturday visit to children from Myanmar at a refugee centre in Malaysia, Obama urged compassion. "If you are a parent and you saw those kids, and thought about what they went through, the notion we couldn't find a home for them anywhere in the United States of America...?" he said, trailing off into anger. "That is contrary to our values."

The president also paid tribute to Nohemi Gonzalez, a 23-year-old from California who was killed in the Paris attacks, and Anita Ashok Datar, a 41-year-old from Maryland who died in Friday's attack in Mali. He said the women reminded him of his teenage daughters and his late mother. "It is worth us remembering when we look at the statistics that there are beautiful, wonderful lives behind the terrible death tolls we see in these places," he said. — Agencies

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Focus

NEW YORK, PARIS:
UNITED BY TRAUMA
14 YEARS APART

By Brigitte Duseau

United by the trauma of terrorism, 14 years apart, New York and Paris have exhibited the same fortitude and determination to overcome the tears and fears with love, life and laughter. Experts say this is the best possible response to such horrors. Psychologists who have studied the effects of the 9/11 attacks on New York say that most people, including those directly exposed, will be ok and few experience prolonged symptoms of trauma.

But in the very short term, the vast majority of people "directly exposed to this kind of event will show considerable distress," said George Bonanno, clinical psychology professor at Teachers College, Columbia University who heads the Loss, Trauma and Emotion Lab. The co-author of a study on the psychological effects of the 2001 attacks over a decade, he said this first response is healthy and natural. "It means that your stress response is working," he told AFP.

Trouble sleeping, bursting into tears, anxiety, feeling low and being sensitive to particular noises and memories are typical symptoms. "The stress response is wonderfully adapted, it is conserved by evolution," said Bonanno, explaining that it allows people to move onto the second stage of recovery and adapting to a new reality. "It doesn't mean the person has gone crazy or even has a disorder or has PTSD," said Douglas Mennin of Hunter College.

Trauma normally dissipates in a couple of weeks or months. For only a small percentage of people - fewer than 10 percent - difficulties are more serious and last longer. On the bright, pristine morning of September 11, 2001, some 2,700 people were killed when Al-Qaeda hijackers flew two passenger jets into the Twin Towers in Manhattan, destroying the buildings. Hundreds more were killed when planes were hijacked and crashed at the Pentagon just outside Washington and in Pennsylvania.

No New Psychiatric Cases

Afterward, 10,000 people were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress. In the Paris gun and suicide attacks, 130 people were killed and several hundred others wounded. In New York, those who lived close to the World Trade Center, the first responders, family members of the victims or those with a good view of the skyscrapers, even at a distance, were the worst affected. "That's where you found higher incidents of depression and anxiety following these events," said Anne Marie Albano, director of Columbia University's Clinic for Anxiety and Related Disorders.

But other than those directly affected and those who suffered from pre-existing disorders "we didn't find... new cases of psychiatric illness like new cases of depression or PTSD or anxiety," she said. "This will be likely the same in Paris." New York experts praise the resilience of Parisians, the spontaneous vigils and determination to carry on normal life. They also praise the French authorities for keeping them well informed. "People need clear, accurate information and they need to trust this information," said Bonanno. Flowers, candles, photographs, memorials and ceremonies "can be very healing," said Albano. Bonanno agreed: "People need each other." Albano said there were a whole host of initiatives in New York after Sept 11, including in schools.

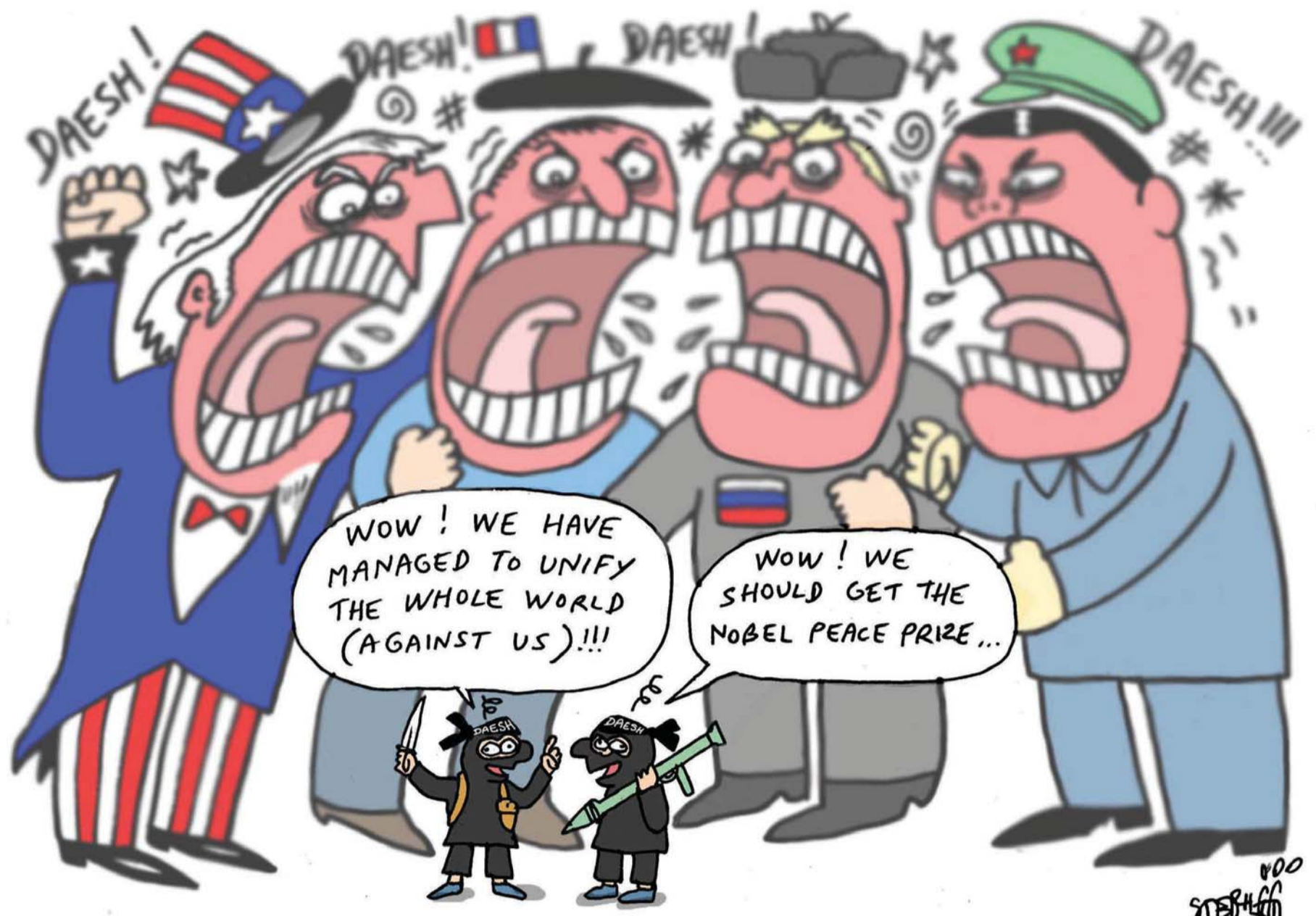
Returning to Cafes

"Kids and people should express themselves and do something that is within their means and appropriate to their age to feel that they are part of the solution," she said. Experts also say it is vital to resume normal life as soon as possible. Take up sport or yoga, go back to concerts and cafes, meet friends. "The idea is to be around people who anchor them," said Mennin. And to avoid media overexposure.

Is it necessary to immediately consult a therapist? Absolutely not - unless someone wants to, experts recommended. In the United States after 9/11, it was thought best to talk, relive the memories as quickly as possible in order to conquer them. Experience shows it is counterproductive, and possibly even dangerous, to fuel anxieties that may not even be real. "Human beings are profoundly resilient," said Bonanno.

New York continues to commemorate Sept 11 on each anniversary, reading out the names the victims and shining beams of light from the site of the lost towers into the sky. But New Yorkers have moved past the trauma, said Mennin. "The Twin Towers were part of our skyline, of our identity. We moved on, and incorporated the event in our narrative. I do believe Paris will do the same," he added. "We have a healthy respect for that day, it keeps our awareness, that yes these things can happen," said Albano. "But we also have a healthy respect for living life, and not giving into terrorism." —AFP

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EUROPE MISSED MANY 'RED FLAGS'

By John Irish, Robert-Jan Bartunek and Orhan Coskun

There were multiple chances to stop the men who attacked Paris. In January, Turkish authorities detained one of the suicide bombers at Turkey's border and deported him to Belgium. Brahim Abdeslam, Turkish authorities told Belgian police at the time, had been "radicalised" and was suspected of wanting to join Islamic State in Syria, a Turkish security source told Reuters. Yet during questioning in Belgium, Abdeslam denied any involvement with militants and was set free. So was his brother Salah - a decision that Belgian authorities say was based on scant evidence that either man had terrorist intentions.

On Nov 13, Abdeslam blew himself up at Le Comptoir Voltaire bar in Paris, killing himself and wounding one other. Salah is also a suspect in the attacks, claimed by the Islamic State, and is now on the run. In France, an "S" (State Security) file for people suspected of being a threat to national security had been issued on Ismail Omar Mostefai, who would detonate his explosive vest inside Paris' Bataclan concert hall. Mostefai, a Frenchman of Algerian descent, was placed on the list in 2010, French police sources say.

Turkish police also considered him a terror suspect with links to Islamic State. Ankara wrote to Paris about him in Dec 2014 and in June this year, a senior Turkish government official said. The warning went unheeded. Paris answered last week, after the attacks. A fourth attacker missed at least four weekly check-ins with French police in 2013, before authorities issued an arrest warrant for him. By that time he had left the country.

On any one of these occasions, police, intelligence and security services had an opportunity to detain at least some of the men who launched the attacks. That they did not, helps explain how a group of Islamist militants was able to organise even as they moved freely among countries within the open borders of Europe's passport-free Schengen area and beyond. Taken one by one, each misstep has its own explanation, security services say. They attribute the lapses in communication, inability to keep track of suspected militants and failure to act on intelligence, to a lack of resources in some countries and a surge in the number of would-be jihadis.

But a close examination by Reuters of a series of missed red flags and miscommunications culminating in France's biggest atrocity since World War Two puts on stark display the mounting difficulties faced by anti-terrorism units across Europe and their future ability to keep the continent safe. "We're in a situation where the services are overrun. They expect something to happen, but don't know where," said Nathalie Goulet, who heads up the French Senate's investigation committee into jihadi networks.

Many point to Belgium as a weak link in European security. "They simply don't have the same means as Britain's MI5 or the DCSI (French intelligence agency)," said Louis Caprioli, a former head of the DST, France's former anti-terrorism unit. Belgian Prime Minister

Charles Michel defended his country's security services and praised them for doing "a difficult and tough job." French President Francois Hollande also praised his country's security services, who hunted down and shot dead the man they identified as the ring-leader, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, five days after the attacks.

Europol, the European Union's police agency, says it has been feeding information to the Belgian and French authorities but acknowledges that some member states are better at sharing information than others.

Focus On Fighters
Returning From Syria

The focus of investigators over the past few years has been men and women who have grown up in Europe, have European passports and who travel to Syria to train and fight. As the number of those fighters has increased, authorities have struggled to keep up. The French Interior Ministry estimated about 500 French nationals had travelled to Syria and

returned to Europe by an unknown route and evaded police even though the Belgian Justice Ministry said microphones had been placed at the house where he was thought to be staying.

Then there's the case of Sami Amimour. French authorities had launched an official investigation into Amimour's possible terrorism-related activity in Oct 2012. Prosecutors suspected him of planning to join militants in Yemen. Amimour was a bus driver who had been radicalised in a mosque near his hometown of Drancy, north of Paris. Because of the investigation, police had ordered Amimour to check in with them every week. As reported by Reuters on Nov 20, he missed four weekly checks in 2013. But it was only after nearly a month that the authorities put out an international arrest warrant.

By then Amimour was already in Syria. His tracks were picked up a year later, in Dec 2014, when his father gave an interview to French daily Le Monde describing how he had trav-

elled to Syria but failed to convince his son to return.

Mostefai, the Bataclan suicide bomber, also travelled back and forth. Although he had eight convictions as a petty criminal, he had never been in prison, a place French authorities can watch for signs of radicalisation. Police say they suspected him of being in

Warnings

Mostefai, the Bataclan suicide bomber, also travelled back and forth. Although he had eight convictions as a petty criminal, he had never been in prison, a place French authorities can watch for signs of radicalisation. Police say they suspected him of being in

lum in Serbia, counter-intelligence and security sources said.

The French prosecutor has confirmed that fingerprints taken on arrival in Greece showed that man travelled with a second man, who also blew himself up near the Stade de France. The pair may have reached Paris relatively easily because, at the height of the migration crisis in Europe this year, asylum seekers were rushed across some national borders without checks.

It is unclear whether the passport issued under the name of Ahmad Al-Mohammad, a 25-year-old from the Syrian city of Idlib, was genuine or was stolen from a refugee. Whatever the truth, it has helped fuel rightwing criticism in Europe of the number of migrants allowed in this year. By the time the two men were making their way up through the Balkans to western Europe, France had received more evidence an attack was imminent.

French former anti-terrorism judge Marc Trevidic says a French Islamist he questioned on his return from Syria in August said Islamic State had asked him to carry out an attack on a concert venue. "The guy admitted that he was asked to hit a rock concert. We didn't know if it would be Bataclan or another, he didn't know the exact location that would be designated. But yes, that's what they asked him to do," Trevidic told Reuters.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari has also said that his country's intelligence services shared information indicating that France, as well as the United States and Iran, was being targeted for attack. He has not given details. Germany's top prosecutor is also investigating allegations that an Algerian man detained at a refugee centre in the western town of Arnsberg told Syrian refugees an attack was imminent in the French capital.

Europe is scrambling to respond to the attacks. France declared a nationwide state of emergency which will now last three months. Police now have the power to conduct searches without obtaining judicial warrants and can hold anyone suspected of posing a threat to security under house arrest for 12 hours a day. Internet sites deemed to incite or advocate "acts of terrorism" can be blocked and public demonstrations banned.

Belgium has also announced a security crackdown, saying it will spend an extra 400 million euros (\$430 million) on security and take measures such as stopping the sale of mobile phone cards to anonymous buyers. Police will be allowed to conduct night searches of homes and it is now easier to ban, convict or expel hate preachers.

Whether such measures will be enough is uncertain. Brussels is on high alert this weekend because of what authorities there called the "serious and imminent" threat of attack. In a video last week, Islamic State warned it would strike again. "When a large operation is prepared, they are told to keep a low profile in the months before. As they are no longer on police radars, it's like looking for a needle in a haystack," said Roland Jacquard, president of the Paris-based International Terrorism Observatory. —Reuters



This combination of photos made in Paris shows the suspected mastermind of the Nov 13, 2015 Paris attacks, 28-year-old Belgian IS group leading militant Abdelhamid Abaaoud (center), Frenchman Bilal Hadfi (left) one of the suicide bombers who blew himself outside the Stade de France stadium, Samy Amimour (right), one of the suicide bombers who attacked a Paris concert hall, suspect at large French Salah Abdeslam (second right), and an unidentified man (second left) suspected of being involved in the attacks. —AFP

almost 300 had returned. French authorities reckon up to 1,400 people need 24-hour surveillance. Yet France has only about the same number of officers to carry out the task, a tenth of those needed.

Some 350 people from Belgium have gone to Syria to fight - the highest per capita number in Europe. A Belgian government source said Belgium has a list of 400 people who are in Syria, have returned or are believed to be about to go there. There are another 400-500 people who authorities believe have radicalised. The number of people in the Belgian security services carrying out surveillance is believed to be considerably fewer than this.

The numbers partially explain why many of the attackers in Paris were well-known faces still at large. The attacks killed 130 people at various locations, including the Bataclan concert hall where 89 concert-goers were gunned down or blown up. Others were killed outside the Stade de France sports stadium and in bars and restaurants around central Paris. Seven assailants died during the attacks. Abaaoud was killed in a police raid north of Paris on Wednesday along with one other suicide attacker and a woman believed to be his cousin. Dozens of people have also been detained, some with weapons and explosives, in raids since then.

Abaaoud himself had been well-known to authorities for several years.

There was no response from French authorities, according to a senior Turkish government official and a security source. "It seemed there was a connection between this person and Daesh (Islamic State) and we reported it," the Turkish security source said. "We followed all international procedures. But they (the French) didn't display the same level of sensitivity." French officials declined to comment on this, but say that coordination with Turkey over potential French jihadis has improved markedly in the past year.

Determining how dangerous a person is, and whether they might carry out an attack, is a key challenge for security services, experts say. "The other difficulty is that if you have nothing concrete for several years, you can't keep either a sophisticated technical alert system or human resources on a person who makes himself forgotten for three or four years," said Arnaud Danjean, a former intelligence officer and now a member of the European Parliament.

Bilal Hadfi, who blew himself up outside the Stade de France, was another of the suicide attackers under surveillance. After visiting Syria in February, the 20-year-old French national, who was living in Belgium,

elled to Syria but failed to convince his son to return.

The Men from the Bar

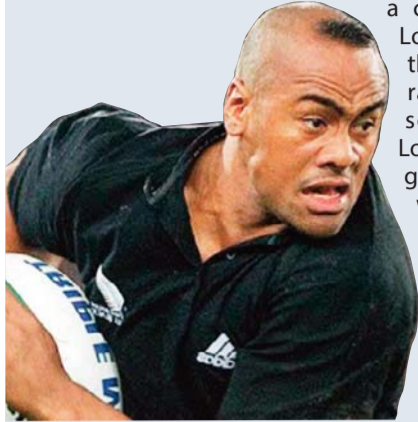
Police are still looking for Salah Abdeslam, who is known to have survived the attacks. Until six weeks before the attacks, Salah and his brother Brahim - one of the suicide bombers - were running a bar called Les Beguines on a quiet street in Molenbeek, a low-rent area of Brussels which has been linked with several attacks. After the attacks, Salah Abdeslam went to ground. Authorities say he was stopped on his way back to Belgium after the Paris attacks, but police waved him on. It is not clear what role he played on the night of the attacks and why he managed to survive.

Two men who were arrested later, Mohamed Amri, 27, and 21-year-old Hamza Attou, said they brought Abdeslam back to Brussels after receiving a call from him saying his car had broken down. Police checks meant they were pulled over three times, including a last check around 9 am near Cambrai just short of the Belgian border.

Mistakes did not just happen in France and Belgium. The Syrian passport found near one of the suicide bombers at the Stade de France had been used by a man registering himself as a refugee on the Greek island of Leros on Oct 3. That man travelled through Macedonia and claimed asy-

HUNDREDS ATTEND MEMORIAL FOR LOMU

AUCKLAND: Several hundred people have attended the first public memorial service for former New Zealand winger Jonah Lomu at the south-Auckland church his family often attended when he was a child. Mourners on Sunday at the Lotofale'ia Tongan Methodist Church in the suburb of Mangere, where Lomu was raised, included his wife Nadene, their sons Brayley, 6, and Dhyreille, 5, and Lomu's mother Hepi. Many of the congregation wore Ta'ovala, a traditional Tongan woven skirt worn to show respect, especially in times of mourning. Lomu died on Wednesday aged 40 of cardiac arrest after a 20-year battle with kidney illness. Details of his funeral service and other memorial events have yet to be finalized. — AP

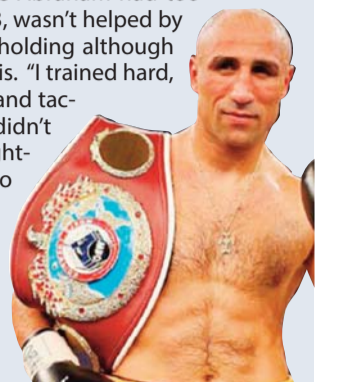


BOB FOSTER DEAD

ALBUQUERQUE: Bob Foster, the former light heavyweight champion who fought Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali and went on to become a sheriff's deputy, died Saturday. He was 76. New Mexico state Rep. Antonio Maestas said in a statement that Foster died at Presbyterian hospital in Albuquerque with wife Rose and his family at his side. "His wife Rose Foster, his children, and family thank you for your prayers and support in this time of healing," the statement said. In Las Vegas before the Miguel Cotto-Canelo Alvarez fight, a 10-count was tolled on the bell at Mandalay Bay in honor of Foster. Standing 6-foot-3, the big-punching Foster was 56-8-1 with 46 knockouts. He won the light heavyweight title in 1968 when he stopped Dick Tiger in the fourth round of their fight at Madison Square Garden. It was the only time Tiger was knocked out in his career. Two years later, Foster moved up to heavyweight to challenge Frazier for the title. The fight was a mismatch, with Frazier stopping Foster at 49 seconds of the second round. Foster regained his 175-pound title in his next fight, but in 1972 fought again as a heavyweight, meeting Ali at a Lake Tahoe casino. Again, Foster was overmatched, with Ali knocking him down seven times before the fight was finally stopped in the eighth round. Foster, who was named the third-greatest light heavyweight ever by Ring Magazine in 1994, made 14 successful title defenses before retiring as champion in 1974. —AP

ABRAHAM RETAINS TITLE, PAYS TRIBUTE TO MURRAY

HANOVER: Germany's Arthur Abraham defended his WBO super-middleweight title with a split decision, then paid tribute to Martin Murray as the British fighter failed for the fourth time to win a world crown. Abraham, 35, took the victory 115-112, 112-115, 116-111, to register his sixth successful defence of his title in Hanover on Saturday in Hanover. With a tight defence and accurate flurries, home favourite Abraham had too much class for the St Helens fighter. Murray, 33, wasn't helped by having a point deducted late in the fight for holding although the penalty had little impact in the final analysis. "I trained hard, have shed blood and sweat. I was technically and tactically the better boxer," said Abraham. "But I didn't box against a punchbag. He is a world-class fighter, who put in a good fight and you have to acknowledge that." It was the Berlin-based Abraham's 44th victory in 48 professional fights, while this was the third defeat of Murray's career after a draw with Germany's Felix Sturm in 2011 and a unanimous loss to Argentina's Sergio Martinez in 2013. —AFP



Fadi Boustani - scorer of highest points (Inset) Winner Ahmed Daham - 2015.

DAHAM CLAIMS 'KING OF DRIFT' TITLE AT RED BULL CAR PARK DRIFT FINAL

HEARTBREAK FOR DISQUALIFIED BOUSTANI

DUBAI: Representing the UAE, Ahmad Daham produced a master class performance to claim the coveted "King of Drift" title for the second consecutive year, in front of an adrenaline-fuelled 4,000 strong crowd at the Red Bull Car Park Drift Final 2015, held under the umbrella of the Dubai Motor Festival at the Meydan car park.

Daham secured the first place with a score of 358 points in his tuned Nissan Silvia. He finished ahead of Oman's Ali Al Balushi yet again, having beaten him by one point last year. Al Balushi ended the season with 335 points from the final. Jordan's Rafat Haroon took the third spot on the podium with 306 points.

Lebanese drifter Fadi El Boustani's night ended in heartbreak when his car stalled at the start line on his last run and in the final four. El Boustani had five minutes to address the mechanical problem, but luck was not on his side and he was disqualified. Having entered the Final as a dark horse, the Lebanese drifter certainly won the crowd's hearts, with a blistering run that earned him 370 points - the highest score for a single run in this

year's final. "To be crowned King of Drift is incredible, and to do it on such an extremely hard technical track is unbelievable," commented Ahmad Daham after the event. "The other guys pushed me all the way to the finish and I really had to be on top of my game. I couldn't relax for even a second."

Tough competitors

The final brought together fifteen drifters hailing from Tunisia, Kuwait, Mauritius, Lebanon, Jordan, Oman, Egypt, Qatar, Iran and the United Arab Emirates.

The tough job of separating the competitors went to judges Issa Ben Dalmouk, Robbie Nishida, Nikita Shikov and Dai Yoshihara, who watched closely for the 7 key judging criteria. A maximum of 80 points was allocated to drifting skills during the first and second sections, while the car's looks and design accounted for up to 60 points, with another 60 points allocated to the driver's proximity to the pendulum 'clipping point'. Tire smoke, car sound and performance in the 'Box' - a tight encl-

Final Ranking:

Points	Country	Driver	Position
358	UAE	Ahmad Daham	First
335	Oman	Ali Al Balushi	Second
306	Jordan	Rafat Haroon	Third
Retired	Lebanon	Fadi El Boustani	Fourth

sure the drifters need to do a 'donut' in - each contributed 40 points to the total score.

The Red Bull Car Park Drift Final was held in partnership with Ford Middle East, Aramex Shop and Ship, Pirelli, MBC Action, Al Arabiya 99 and Meydan.



Winners - RBCPD 2015

UNBEATEN VARGAS STOPS MIURA TO TAKE TITLE

LAS VEGAS: Mexico's undefeated Francisco Vargas rose from his first career knockdown to capture the World Boxing Council super featherweight title Saturday by dethroning Japanese champion Takashi Miura with a ninth-round stoppage.

In his first world title bout, the 30-year-old endured a fourth-round knockdown and a right eye nearly swollen shut to seize the crown when referee Tony Weeks halted the bout after 1:31 of the ninth round.

Vargas improved to 23-0 with one draw with his 20th victory in a row and 17th triumph inside the distance. Miura fell to 29-3 with two draws, a nine-fight win streak snapped by his first defeat since 2011. The 31-year-old Japanese southpaw was making his fifth defence of the crown he took from Gamaliel Diaz in 2013.

When the bout was halted, Miura was ahead on the scorecards of two of the judges and the third had scored the fight evenly to that point. Vargas pounded Miura in the opening round, the Asian fighter taking hard overhand rights to the head but still attacking.

Miura battled back in the second and third rounds and smashed Vargas with a powerful left to the face in the fourth round, sending the Mexican to the canvas for the first time in his career and opening a deep cut under Vargas' right eye.

Both fighters traded punishing body shots over the next few rounds, testing the limits of each other's endurance. But it was Vargas who took the decisive edge early in the ninth round, landing an uppercut left that stunned Miura and set the stage for a flurry of punches that sent the champion down to the canvas.

Miura gamely rose and battled on, but his determination in the wake of punch after punch to the head only prompted Weeks to stop the onslaught. — AFP

ALVAREZ BEATS COTTO TO WIN WBC MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLE



LAS VEGAS: Miguel Cotto of Puerto Rico (L) swings wide against Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez of Mexico (R) during their middleweight championship boxing match on Saturday at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. Alvarez captured the vacant World Boxing Council middleweight title with a unanimous decision victory over Cotto. — AFP

LAS VEGAS: Mexico's Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez beat Miguel Cotto on a unanimous points decision to win the WBC world middleweight title in Las Vegas on Saturday.

Alvarez, the pre-fight favourite, lived up to his billing with a powerful display at the Mandalay Bay Events Center as the 25-year-old improved his career record to 46-1-1 (32 KOs). His only loss was to Floyd Mayweather in 2013. All three judges agreed Alvarez had won the contest comfortably, awarding him between nine and 11 of the 12 rounds. "We knew going into this fight that it would be a difficult journey, but I feel that I was the faster and stronger fighter tonight," Alvarez said.

"I wasn't hurt by his punches. I was fully prepared for what Cotto was going to do in the ring, whether that was take a defence stance or be the aggressor."

No sooner was the fight over than talk turned to a possible clash with Kazak world champion Gennady Golovkin, the unbeaten WBA, IBF and interim WBC champion, nicknamed GGG.

"I have respect for him, but if we do fight it's going to be at my weight class," Alvarez said. "I'm the champion, I don't have to do what he wants."

After a relatively even contest early, Alvarez established his dominance over Cotto with a devastating series of blows in the eighth round. Cotto, who lost for just the fifth time in 45 career fights, was stripped of the WBC world title earlier in the week after refusing to pay the reported \$300,000 sanctioning fee the organisation demanded.

Had the Puerto Rican won on Saturday, the title would have remained vacant. "I am not disappointed by the WBC's decision," Cotto said before Saturday's fight. "It was all about money. The fee for this fight was absurd to me. And I prefer to keep the money in my account."

"The organisation wants four champions in every division just to earn a percentage from everybody. And then we have to pay for their mistakes. 'I don't need their belt. I have enough belts in my house. And with the money I saved, I can buy any belt I want.'" —Reuters

ROOKIE SRITHONG CLINCHES MANILA MASTERS IN THRILLING STYLE

MANILA: Thailand's Natipong Srithong hit a brilliant five-under-par 67 to claim the Manila Masters in thrilling style yesterday, becoming the second Thai newcomer to win in successive weeks on the Asian Tour.

The 22-year-old, who only turned professional in September, carded a 15-under-par 273 overall score at the par-72 Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club after overcoming a four-shot deficit

in the final round.

Srithong finished one shot ahead of South Africa's Jbe Kruger who closed with a 71 — while overnight leader Hung Chien-yao of Taiwan, who sank a hole-in-one, was two shots behind alongside compatriot Lee Chieh-po.

The winner of what is the richest golf event in the Philippines, a final year law undergraduate, earned US\$180,000 for his remarkable victory, emulating close

friend and fellow rookie Danthai Boonma, who won in Singapore last week.

"Seeing Danthai winning last week was an inspiration," said Srithong, who made crucial birdies on the 12th, 15th and 17th to emerge triumphant. "He was my roommate the past two weeks and after he won, he said it will be my turn soon. I didn't expect it to be so soon," added Srithong in comments supplied

by the organisers.

Overnight leader Hung endured a torrid start, dropping four shots in six holes before he staged a fightback with a magical hole-in-one on the 13th with a finely struck two iron tee shot. But despite his heroics, he only managed to card 73 on his final round.

Final scores (par-72)

273 - Natipong Srithong (THA) 71-

69-66-67.

274 - Jbe Kruger (RSA) 69-65-69-71. 275 - Lee Chieh-po (TPE) 68-66-71-70, Hung Chien-yao (TPE) 67-67-68-73.

276 - Rahil Gangjee (IND) 72-66-70-68, Chan Kim (USA) 69-71-68-68, Prom Meesawat (THA) 72-68-67-69, Carlos Pigem (ESP) 68-71-67-70.

277 - Paul Peterson (USA) 70-67-74-66, Lionel Weber (FRA) 72-67-70-68, Sam Brazel (AUS) 68-72-67-70. —AFP

KO ON VERGE OF \$1MN JACKPOT AT LPGA FINALE

FLORIDA: Lydia Ko is within sight of a haul of big prizes, two strokes from the lead after the third round at the CME Group Tour Championship in Florida on Saturday.

The South Korean-born Kiwi teenager carded three-under-par 69 to earn a share of third place, two strokes behind co-leaders Cristie Kerr (66) and Jang Ha-na (69), who set the pace on 11-under 205 at the Tiburon course in Naples.

With a strong final round on Sunday in the season-ending LPGA event, world number one Ko can win the money list, Player of the Year and the Vare Trophy (for best scoring average).

Most lucratively, she can snag the Race to the CME Globe for the second successive year and collect a \$1 million jackpot that goes to the winner of the season-long points competition. Ko leads South Korean Park In-bee in three of these four categories, the Vare Trophy being the exception. But Park is only two strokes behind Ko, and four from the lead with a victory in Naples giving her the jackpot prize, so Ko cannot plan any victory speeches just yet.

"I should be proud that I'm in this position," Ko, 18, told reporters.

Big lead

"Anything can happen. If I play well, it might end up being a good day where I'm holding a couple trophies. At the same

time, because everything is on the line, there is more added pressure."

Ko launched a late-season charge with three wins from July onwards (making it six for the year) to overtake Park, who had a big lead in the Race to the Globe when she won the Women's British Open four months ago. "When I won the British Open, there was so much gap in between me and the other players, I thought somebody had to win at least three or more times to even have a chance," said Park, winner of two majors this season.

"Obviously Lydia was one that was able to do it. It's good that I still have a chance at it." Not so concerned about the Race to the Globe are Kerr and Jang, who are focused on winning the tournament and its \$500,000 reward. Two-time major winner Kerr, 38, moved within sight of her 18th LPGA victory when she roared back after a three-putt bogey at the first hole to pick up seven birdies. "I played great," said Kerr.

Halfway leader Jang, meanwhile, overcame some physical ailments to remain in contention. "A little headache and little dizzy," she said. "Two times my nose bled today." The LPGA rookie is taking a straightforward approach as she chasing her first victory on the tour after three runner-up finishes this year. "I don't want to think about another player. Simple thinking is really a very good idea." — Reuters



DUBAI: Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland poses with the Race to Dubai trophy after he won the final round of DP World Tour Championship golf tournament in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, yesterday. —AP

MCILROY WINS EUROPEAN SEASON FINALE, TOPS MONEY LIST AGAIN

DUBAI: Rory McIlroy won Dubai's DP World Tour Championship yesterday, overhauling overnight leader Andy Sullivan with four birdies on the back nine to also be crowned Europe's top money earner for a third year in four. McIlroy carded a final round 66 to end with a 21-under aggregate score of 267, having begun the day on 15 under, a shot adrift of England's Sullivan at the \$8 million European Tour's season finale.

Playing partner Sullivan's 68 left him on 268, one stroke short despite stretching his advantage early on as McIlroy seized control mid-round with seven birdies in 11 holes. The four-time major winner could even afford to take a drop on the 17th after finding the water, eventually recovering to make a 40-foot bogey before sealing victory with a 12-inch par putt on the final green. It's probably the longest putt I've ever made for a bogey; I don't think there's been one that's come at a better time, so definitely the best bogey of my career," the Northern Irishman told reporters.

The victory was his fourth of the year and first since May, McIlroy having missed three tournaments including the British Open at St. Andrews after rupturing ankle ligaments while playing

soccer in July.

McIlroy's 12th tour title means the 26-year-old also retained the Race to Dubai, formerly known as the Order of Merit and given to Europe's top money earner. He was also victorious in 2012 and 2014.

Sullivan start

Ahead of play, McIlroy practiced his putting until almost the last moment while Sullivan casually waited on the opening tee. But the duo seemed at ease with each other, amiably chatting and joking as they walked the first fairway. Sullivan, ranked 53 in the world, sunk an eight-foot birdie on the first after seeing McIlroy miss a 15-footer that ended just short.

Both birdied the second, Sullivan moving to 18 under and McIlroy two adrift on 16 under. On the par-three fourth, McIlroy seemed perturbed after pulling his tee shot and although he recovered with an 80-foot putt to within four feet of the pin, he scuffed his next effort for a bogey that gave Sullivan a three-stroke advantage. The duo again picked up shots with close range putts on hole five, McIlroy's first of three successive birdies that lifted the world number

three to 18 under. Sullivan also birdied six but then bogeyed eight - his first dropped shot in 22 holes - as his lead was reduced to one stroke by the turn.

"I gave it everything on that front nine, I just couldn't quite get the putts to drop on the back nine," said Sullivan. "I didn't really hit it close enough again, (but) to come up head-to-head with someone of Rory's quality was absolutely awesome and something that will stick with me for a long time." McIlroy took a lead he was not to relinquish on 14, tapping in from two feet for a third birdie in four holes, although a bogey on 17 narrowed his lead to one stroke and gave Sullivan a final chance.

The Englishman's 20-foot birdie attempt on the 18th, which would have forced at least a play-off, rolled inches wide and McIlroy then took two putts to seal victory by a stroke. "If I hadn't won today, I wouldn't have been too happy," said McIlroy. "Andy had chances to make a couple of birdies and didn't quite convert and I was able to just hang on." South Africa's Branden Grace (67) was third on 273, while compatriot Charl Schwartzel (69) was one of six players tied on 275. — Reuters



NAPLES: Jessica Korda of the United States plays a shot on the third hole during the third round of the CME Group Tour Championship at Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Florida. — AFP

SENIOR BECOMES OLDEST AUSTRALIAN MASTERS CHAMP

MELBOURNE: Peter Senior outclassed a host of challengers half his age to clinch his third Australian Masters title by two strokes yesterday, and at 56 became the oldest winner in the tournament's 36-year history. The stocky veteran overcame a bout of nerves and withstood a late charge by Sydney professional Andrew Evans at Melbourne's Huntingdale Golf Club before sealing the win on the 18th hole with a clutch putt for par.

Senior's final round three-under 68 gave him an eight-under total of 276, sealing his third 'gold jacket' 20 years after his second at Huntingdale in 1995. He won his first in 1991. The hugely popular Queenslander now owns the records for the oldest winner at all three of his nation's marquee tournaments, having won the Australian Open at 53 in 2012 and the Australian PGA Championship in 2010.

"I'm getting a bit long in the tooth now," an emotional Senior said at the trophy presentation after donning the gaudy winner's coat. "But it's amazing some of the things that have happened the last few years."

Senior's performance on the storied sandbelt course stole the spotlight from tournament favourite and former world number one Adam Scott, who finished fifth on four-under after blowing his chance with a horror 77 in the third round. Scott

shot a final round 69 and paid tribute to Senior, who struggles against the big hitters in the modern game but was always a chance on Huntingdale's short holes. "He's based his career around being very accurate and precise and he's a hell of a competitor," Scott, now world number 12, told reporters.

Teeing off two strokes behind overnight leader Matthew Millar, Senior threw down the gauntlet at the 10th hole, the course's longest par-four at 477 yards, with a sublime two-iron approach that gave him a tap-in birdie for the lead. Another birdie at the 13th gave him a three-stroke buffer and Senior appeared set to cruise to victory before shanking a three-wood off the tee into trees on the 17th. The resulting bogey drew him level with fast-finishing Evans in the group behind, but the New South Welshman also stumbled on the penultimate hole to give up a one-stroke lead. Senior picked the wrong club for his approach on the 18th, landing it in a green-side bunker, but completed a nerve-wracking up-and-down to save par before Evans crumbled with a bogey on the last.

Evans's final round 71 left him joint second on six-under with John Senden (70), a two-time winner on the US PGA Tour, and US Amateur champion Bryce DeChambeau, who finished strongly with a four-under 67. —Reuters



MELBOURNE: Australia's Peter Senior holds the championship trophy after winning the Australian Masters at Huntingdale Golf Club in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

JONES CLASH EXCITES WALLABY BOSS CHEIKA

TWICKENHAM: Wallaby coach Michael Cheika said he would put his longstanding friendship with Eddie Jones on hold when the new England boss arrives in Australia for a three-Test series in June. The pair, who first knew each other as forwards with Sydney club side Randwick, now find themselves in charge of two of rugby's elite tier one nations.

Friday saw the 55-year-old Jones given the task of reviving England's fortunes, after the 2015 hosts' first-round exit at the World Cup, when he was installed as coach in succession to Stuart Lancaster on a four-year contract. Jones, Australia's coach when they lost the 2003 World Cup final to England in Sydney, now has the task of putting his own stamp on the Red Rose brigade ahead of their Six Nations opener away to Scotland at Murrayfield on February 6.

But the end of the European season is also set to see Jones lead England in Australia, with the reigning southern hemisphere Rugby Championship title-holders underlining their credentials in a gallant 34-17 World Cup final defeat by New Zealand at Twickenham last month. "Good luck to Eddie. I want him to do well as a mate...but not when England come over," Cheika said Saturday.

"I'm looking forward to the opportunity when we go up against each other. Just for the fact that I'm really proud that we're both from Australia and come from the same club, Randwick, and will be doing battle in a different arena. "It's going to be a bit weird but there's no such thing as friends when the game's on."

Cheika, back at Twickenham in the temporary role of coaching the Barbarians in a 49-31 defeat by Argentina, added: "Eddie has some very important encounters in the Six Nations before then but I'm sure there will be a bit of banter when England are due to come over to our place. "That's all good fun because both of us enjoy that kind of thing. That's part of our relationship I suppose."

"I played with Eddie and I'm not much younger than him," said the 48-year-old Cheika, Randwick's No 8 when Jones was the Galloping Greens' hooker. Cheika may have enjoyed World Cup semi-final success over Argentina, but the Pumas turned the tables on Saturday as they scored seven tries to his Barbarians team's five in

a non-cap international that helped celebrate the invitational side's 125th anniversary.

Lomu tribute

It was an emotional day which saw a minute's silence for the victims of the Paris attacks of November 13 as well as in memory of New Zealand great Jonah Lomu, a former Barbarian, whose sudden death at the age of 40 on Wednesday stunned the world of rugby.

The Pumas showed their respect by wearing black jerseys with the No 11 on during the warm-up in recognition of the shirt worn by the late All Blacks left wing.

Barbarians left wing Nemani Nadolo went a step further, with the giant Fijian, who at 6ft 4in and nearly 20 stone has a physique to rival that of Lomu, wearing a white No 11 on the back of his shirt rather than having his number printed

in traditional Baa Baas black.

Nadolo also scored a try reminiscent of Lomu when he charged past opponents on his way to the line. But the match belonged to Argentina, who carried on from where they left off at the World Cup with an attacking game that is set to be a part of next year's edition of Super Rugby as well with the creation of a new franchise in Buenos Aires.

"It won't be long before they are top of the Super Rugby tree," said Cheika. "They (Argentina) have a new generation of fine players and have come a long way since joining the Rugby Championship." Pumas coach Daniel Hourcade, smiling again after Argentina's 29-15 World Cup loss to Australia left him in tears, said: "I am proud of my team and their attitude. They took this game very seriously and it was a fine performance." —AFP



EXETER: Exeter Chiefs' lock from England Geoff Parling (R) is challenged by Bordeaux-Begles flanker from New Zealand Hugh Chalmers in the lineup during the European Rugby Champions Cup rugby union match between Exeter Chiefs and Bordeaux Begles at Sandy Park in Exeter, south west England, on Saturday. — AFP

INDIA, PAKISTAN DEADLOCK CONTINUES ON CRICKET SERIES

DUBAI: The deadlock over a proposed series between arch-rivals India and Pakistan continued despite a meeting between the heads of the two boards in Dubai yesterday, described as "fruitful" but without a breakthrough.

The newly-elected president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Shashank Manohar, who is in Dubai to familiarise with the working of the International Cricket Council (ICC), invited Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shaharyar Khan for a meeting at the ICC headquarters.

The meeting was also attended by

PCB Executive Committee head Najam Sethi and Giles Clarke, the president of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). Khan said the meeting with Manohar had been "fruitful." "We had a fruitful meeting in which Sethi was there, Clarke was there as facilitator, it was a fruitful meeting and the decision is that Clarke will brief the media tomorrow," Khan told media.

"We have also decided that there will be no further briefing. I am not in a position to say more than this." Earlier in the day, Manohar told The National newspaper that India have not received a reply

from the PCB on a proposal to play the matches in India.

"We want to play in India. That is the thing," Manohar said. "Presently, we gave an option to Pakistan asking them whether they will come to India. Pakistan was to get back to me, they haven't got back to me. So I don't know what is the position."

Khan maintained his team will not travel to India and would play the series in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as agreed under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed last year. Khan said a final decision on the series

will only be taken by the Pakistani government. "The matter is now political," Khan said on Friday. "Pakistan's prime minister Nawaz Sharif has directed us that any decision will now be taken by the government and not by the PCB."

Pakistan and India have not played a bilateral series since 2007. India stalled cricketing ties in the aftermath of 2008 terrorist attacks on Mumbai, which were blamed on militants based in Pakistan.

Under the MoU both the boards had agreed to play six series between 2015-2023, with four series to be hosted by Pakistan. But all series were subject to

clearance from the respective governments.

The December-January series comprises two Tests, five one-day and two Twenty20 internationals but with time running out the series could be shortened to limited over matches. There are reports that another neutral venue-Sri Lanka or Bangladesh-could also be considered, if India continued to refuse UAE as a venue.

The PCB had hoped that mediation by Clarke, also in Dubai to meet Manohar later Sunday, could help ensure a breakthrough on the fate of the series. — AFP

ICC TO EXPLORE OLYMPIC INCLUSION FOR CRICKET

DUBAI: Cricket's administrative body yesterday said that after a positive meeting with the officials of the International Olympic Committee it will explore ways to remove hurdles for the sport's inclusion at the Summer Games.

The sport's shortest format Twenty20 cricket has already been a part of the last two editions of Asian Games in Guangzhou (China 2010) and Incheon (South Korea 2014) but efforts to be included in the Olympic programme are far from being finalised.

The chief executive of the International Cricket Council (ICC) David Richardson and general manager cricket Geoff Allardice recently met IOC chief Thomas Bach in Lausanne, Switzerland to discuss cricket's inclusion at the Summer

Olympics. "We met the IOC president and we have really explored the possibilities, at least we are talking, and we are open to the opportunity if it's worthwhile to include cricket in Olympics," Richardson told BBC radio.

Richardson said it wasn't easy to get the nod. "If the ICC is committed then we have to overcome the hurdle of the IOC accepting cricket because there are a lot of other sports that want inclusion in the 2024 Olympics," said Richardson. "But it's not as simple as that and there are a lot of issues that you need to consider and the Olympics might not want cricket, they don't want second rate teams and they don't want Micky Mouse format, they want our major format, the Twenty20," said Richardson. — AFP

TWENTY20 HELPS ASYLUM SEEKERS BREAK DOWN BARRIERS DOWN UNDER

SYDNEY: A shared love of cricket is helping a team of Sri Lankan asylum seekers break down barriers and build relationships in Australia, even among some of the most fervent supporters of the country's hardline immigration policies.

The team's name, Ocean's 12, is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the way many of the players arrived in Australian waters, part of a wave of Tamils who made the journey to Christmas Island on overcrowded, rickety boats.

"Horrible, starving, no water, big waves," opening batsman Praveen Uruthiran said of the journey, which cost him \$2,000 and involved 22 days at sea with 120 other people. Like his team mates, Uruthiran ended up in Villawood Detention Centre in Western Sydney with hundreds of others, unable to work or study while their asylum applications were processed.

Some of the team had been in the centre since arriving in Australian waters six or seven years previously when Last Man Stands, who run eight-a-side leagues around the world, started running a competition for detainees.

They then struck upon the idea of organising an "exit side" made up of asylum seekers who had been released from the centre on restrictive temporary protection visas to play in the main Sydney league. "When the guys first came out of the detention centre and first got involved in the competition, they were all really shy, their English was poor, they had no confidence at all," recalled Last Man Stands organiser Rob Stevenson. "The early games they played, they really weren't a good side. I remember playing against them the first couple of times and you could see the talent was there, but they didn't have the confidence to express themselves on

the cricket pitch." Stevenson said that changed when they began to build friendships.

Impressive improvement

"As a result of playing together, making new friends, feeling more part of Australia, they have emerged into an exceptional cricketing side and that's great to see," he added. The team showed impressive improvement over the first two years and in March Ocean's 12 became champions of Sydney. Team captain Stephen Nathan, an engineer, left Sri Lanka in the wake of the country's civil war.

"I couldn't stay there," says Nathan, who is still unable to work in Australia under the terms of his visa. "We are really enjoying playing cricket," he told Reuters after Ocean's 12 had beaten a charity side by 84 runs on the back of an 18-ball half century from Praveen. "We are very happy to play with Australian people. They are sportsmen all, so they are very (welcoming). "And it gives me peace of mind."

The team, who are helped financially by Blue Mountains Refugee Support and Last Man Stands, is not only the best team in the Sydney area, it has become one of the most popular. "These guys play right out in Western Sydney and there's a lot of guys there, white Australians, who really have a pretty poor opinion of asylum seekers and the whole boat-people thing," Stevenson said.

"But what you find, when these guys come to games, they bring along food, they help out other teams, they're always polite and now they're by far the most popular team in Western Sydney and all the other teams love them. "So it's great to see sport transcending the political and social boundaries, and all these other Aussies seeing them as just like them, they love cricket and so do we." — Reuters



MIAMI: Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade, left, strips Philadelphia 76ers forward Robert Covington (33) of the ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, in Miami. The Heat defeated the 76ers 96-91. — AP

HEAT ESCAPE, TOP 76ERS 96-91 TO KEEP PHILADELPHIA WINLESS

MIAMI: Dwyane Wade scored 27 points and the Miami Heat survived a major scare from winless Philadelphia, rallying from 17 points down to beat the 76ers 96-91 on Saturday night. Hassan Whiteside scored 13 points and added nine rebounds and eight blocks for the Heat, who went on a 19-2 run in a seven-minute stretch of the fourth quarter to escape. Chris Bosh also scored 13 for Miami. Philadelphia is now 0-14 this season - the ninth-worst start in NBA history - and has dropped 24 consecutive games going back to last season. Few of those were as winnable as this was, but the 76ers simply folded in the final minutes. Isaiah Canaan scored 22 for Philadelphia, and Robert Covington finished with 21.

KNICKS 107, ROCKETS 102

Kristaps Porzingis had 24 points, 14 rebounds and seven blocked shots to lead New York over slumping Houston. The Knicks (8-6) won their fourth straight overall. They also snapped an 11-game losing streak against the Rockets and a 10-game skid when playing in Houston. The Knicks didn't get their eighth win last season until Jan. 23, when they were 8-36. James Harden had 24 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds as the Rockets lost for the sixth time in their last seven games.

CAVALIERS 109, HAWKS 97

Kevin Love scored a season-high 25 points, LeBron James added 19 and Cleveland beat Atlanta. The teams met for the first time since the Cavaliers swept the Hawks in the Eastern Conference finals, and it didn't take long for Cleveland to continue its dominance. The Cavaliers took control after trailing 17-16 midway through the first quarter. Cleveland quickly built a 10-point lead, stretched the margin to 57-40 late in the first half and the Hawks never recovered. Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer was ejected in the second quarter after making contact with an official. Budenholzer was given a technical for arguing a call, bumped referee Ben Taylor after stepping on the floor and was quickly tossed.

WIZARDS 97, PISTONS 95

Nene scored 18 points and Otto Porter added 17 as Washington beat Detroit. The Wizards had the ball and a two-point lead with 9.2 seconds left, but Porter was called for a five-second violation on the inbound attempt. That gave Detroit a last chance, but

Marcus Morris missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer. Marcin Gortat finished with 14 points and eight rebounds, while Ramon Sessions had 14 points and nine assists off the bench. Washington's reserves outscored Detroit's 51-15. Reggie Jackson led the Pistons with 20 points and nine assists, while Morris had 18 points and nine rebounds. Andre Drummond failed to get a double-double for the first time this season, finishing with eight points and 13 rebounds. He also didn't get an offensive rebound in 37 minutes.

SPURS 92, GRIZZLIES 82

Kawhi Leonard scored 19 points, Tony Parker had 18 and San Antonio snapped Memphis' four-game winning streak. Manu Ginobili added 15 points for San Antonio, which is unbeaten in six home games. Tim Duncan had 10 points, including a pair of running floaters in the lane in the final 90 seconds to seal the victory, as well as 10 rebounds. Mike Conley had 16 points and Courtney Lee added 15 points off the bench. Memphis' only lead came on Tony Allen's 20-foot jumper to open the game. Neither team had its starting power forward. LaMarcus Aldridge was a late scratch with a sprained left ankle, his first missed game with San Antonio. Memphis' Zach Randolph was in uni-

form, but did not play in his second straight game due to right knee soreness.

KINGS 97, MAGIC 91

DeMarcus Cousins had 29 points and 12 rebounds as Sacramento held off Orlando. Rajon Rondo added 13 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Kings, who had lost two in a row. Marco Belinelli chipped in 13 points off the bench. Trailing 65-61, the Kings outscored the Magic 22-2 in the final 5:03 of the third quarter to take an 83-67 lead into the fourth. Sacramento led by as many as 16 points in the final period. Orlando surged within 87-80 in the fourth, but after Evan Fournier was called for a technical for arguing an offensive foul, the Kings got the lead back up to double digits. Tobias Harris led the Magic with 24 points. Fournier added 17.

PACERS 123, BUCKS 86

C.J. Miles scored a season-high 21 points to lead Indiana over Milwaukee. Paul George had 20 points and seven rebounds, and Jordan Hill added a season-high 20 points off the bench for the Pacers (8-5), who have won five of six. Greg Monroe had 11 points and 14 rebounds for the Bucks (5-8), who have lost three straight and five of six. Jabari Parker and O.J. Mayo each finished with 10 points. — AP

NBA Results/Standings

Sacramento 97, Orlando 91; Indiana 123, Milwaukee 86; Cleveland 109, Atlanta 97; Washington 97, Detroit 95; Miami 96, Philadelphia 91; NY Knicks 107, Houston 102; San Antonio 92, Memphis 82.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB				
Boston	7	5	.583	-	Oklahoma City	7	6	.538
NY Knicks	8	6	.571	-	Utah	6	6	.500
Toronto	8	6	.571	-	Denver	6	7	.462
Brooklyn	2	11	.154	5.5	Minnesota	5	8	.385
Philadelphia	0	14	0	8	Portland	5	9	.357
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	10	3	.769	-	Golden State	14	0	1.000
Chicago	8	4	.667	1.5	Phoenix	7	5	.583
Indiana	8	5	.615	2	LA Clippers	6	6	.500
Detroit	7	6	.538	3	Sacramento	5	9	.357
Milwaukee	5	8	.385	5	LA Lakers	2	10	.167
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Miami	8	4	.667	-	San Antonio	10	3	.769
Atlanta	9	6	.600	0.5	Dallas	9	4	.692
Washington	6	4	.600	1	Memphis	7	7	.500
Charlotte	7	6	.538	1.5	Houston	5	9	.357
Orlando	6	7	.462	2.5	New Orleans	2	11	.154



PERTH: New Zealand's Martin Guptill (L) plays a shot on the final day of a cricket tour match between New Zealand and Western Australia in Perth yesterday. — AFP

WORLD CHAMPION MARIN WINS HONG KONG WOMEN'S TITLE

HONG KONG: Two-time world champion Carolina Marin of Spain took her sixth title of the year at the Hong Kong Open yesterday, beating Japan's Nozomi Okuhara in a tightly fought marathon three sets.

The epic 84 minute final—the longest match in the women's competition this tournament—saw the world number one have six championship points before finally taking the crown 21-17, 18-21, 22-20.

After steaming through the first set, Marin was seven points down in the

second set. The Spaniard looked on course for victory early on in the third until her Japanese rival had a late surge.

"I think it was a tough match. She had a good comeback at the end of the game but I tried to just keep myself down and think positive things that I can beat her," said Marin.

Marin has had a strong year, defending her World Championship title in August and shooting up the rankings from number eight to one. Okuhara took her first title at a Super Series

tournament on home ground in September, beating compatriot Akane Yamaguchi in an all-Japanese final.

The twenty-year-old had previously beaten Marin, in last year's semi-finals, but she then failed to take the title, falling to Taiwan's Tai Tzu-ying.

"I could not win but I have confidence because I still managed to catch up (in the third set) with Marin, who is the world number one," said Okuhara.

On the men's side, former world number one Lee Chong Wei will face China's Tian Houwei, currently ranked

tenth, later Sunday to fight for his third consecutive Super Series title.

Lee beat little-known Hong Konger Angus Ng in the semi-finals, who had thrilled the home crowd when he took down Chinese badminton legend Lin Dan in the second round.

Lee is on a winning streak after taking back-to-back titles in China and France as he has made a strong comeback following an eight-month doping ban earlier this year. His recent performances have silenced critics who questioned whether the 33-year-old

who has been a prominent fixture on the badminton circuit for nearly a decade—was past his peak, and he has his sights firmly set on next year's Olympics and finally clinching a gold.

Lee has two silver medals—from London and Beijing—where on both occasions he was beaten to the top podium position by arch-rival Lin.

Tian, a former junior world champion, has never taken the title at a big event, but made it to the finals of the Asian Championship this year, losing to compatriot Lin. — AFP

LEE SCOOPS THIRD TITLE IN HONG KONG

HONG KONG: Former world number one Lee Chong Wei cemented his strong comeback to the badminton circuit, taking his third consecutive Super Series title at the Hong Kong Open yesterday. The Malaysian beat Chinese world number ten Tian Houwei in straight sets 21-16, 21-15 to take the crown after a marathon final rally. "Today Tian played very well. He played a good defence because I just attacked," said Lee.

Lee is on a winning streak after taking back-to-back titles in China and France in a strong return from an eight-month doping ban earlier this year. His recent performances have silenced critics who questioned whether the 33-year-old—a prominent fixture on the badminton circuit for nearly a decade—was past his peak. He has his sights firmly set on next year's Olympics and on finally clinching a gold.

Lee has two silver medals—from London and Beijing—where on both occasions he was beaten to the top podium position by arch-rival Lin Dan. "Now I (will) just concentrate on qualifying for the Olympics, and I want to get (to) the top four in the world," said Lee, who finally returned to the top ten at the end of October after dropping out of the rankings during his ban. He is now ranked sixth.

In the women's competition, two-

time world champion Carolina Marin of Spain took her sixth title of the year, beating Japan's Nozomi Okuhara in a tightly fought marathon three sets.

The epic 84-minute final—the longest match in the women's competition this tournament—saw the world number one lose five match points before finally taking the crown 21-17, 18-21, 22-20. After steaming through the first set, Marin was seven points down in the second set. The Spaniard looked on course for victory early on in the third until her Japanese rival had a late surge.

"I think it was a tough match. She had a good comeback at the end of the game but I tried to just keep myself down and think positive things that I can beat her," said Marin.

Marin has had a strong year, defending her World Championship title in August and shooting up the rankings from number eight to one. Okuhara took her first title at a Super Series tournament on home ground in September, beating compatriot Akane Yamaguchi in an all-Japanese final. The 20-year-old had previously beaten Marin, in last year's semi-finals, but she then failed to take the title and fell to Taiwan's Tai Tzu-ying.

"I could not win but I have confidence because I still managed to catch up (in the third set) with Marin, who is the world number one," said Okuhara. — AFP



MINNESOTA: Nashville Predators center Mike Fisher (12) hits Minnesota Wild left wing Thomas Vanek, right, of Austria, during the first period of an NHL hockey game in St. Paul, Minn., Saturday. — AP

DUBNYK, WILD SHUT OUT PREDATORS 4-0

ST PAUL: Devan Dubnyk made 23 saves for his third shutout of the season and Ryan Suter had a goal and two assists against his former team, helping the Minnesota Wild beat the Nashville Predators 4-0 on Saturday night. Mikael Granlund, Jonas Brodin and Thomas Vanek also scored for Minnesota, which had dropped three in a row. Suter notched his first career goal against the team he played for his first seven NHL seasons. Pekka Rinne made 23 saves for Nashville, which has been outscored 8-0 the past two games. The Predators lost at Columbus on Friday night. A testy game between Central Division foes featured three fights, and a 10-minute misconduct against Nashville's Mike Ribeiro.

STARS 3, SABRES 0

Antti Niemi got his second shutout this season, Jamie Benn scored two third-period goals and Dallas beat Buffalo for its fifth straight win. Niemi made 22 saves to shut down a Sabres team that has only scored four goals in its last four games. Benn's first goal was at 7:11 after the Stars failed to score on their first four power plays. He scored again at 9:04, and Tyler Seguin assisted on both goals. The Stars have won eight of their last nine games and lead the league with 34 points. Buffalo's Chad Johnson made 29 saves, including 15 in the third period.

SHARKS 3, PENGUINS 1

Brent Burns scored twice for San Jose, and Patrick Marleau got his 1,000th career point. Marleau became the 83rd NHL player to reach 1,000 points with an assist on Burns' first goal 7:54 into the game. Burns has seven goals this year, and the Sharks have won the first five games of a season-high six-game trip that ends tonight against Columbus. Sharks defenseman Paul Martin scored his first goal of the season and had an assist against his old team. Phil Kessel scored his seventh of the season for Pittsburgh. Marc-Andre Fleury made 26 saves.

CANUCKS 6, BLACKHAWKS 3

Daniel Sedin had three goals and an assist and twin brother Henrik Sedin added a goal and four assists, leading Vancouver to the win. Daniel Sedin's ninth goal of the season snapped a 3-3 tie at 14:35 of the third, and he scored again just two minutes later. Alexandre Burrows added an empty-netter with 38 seconds left as Vancouver stopped a four-game slide. It was Sedin's first hat trick since Dec. 6, 2011, against Colorado. Henrik set a career high for points and matched his career best for assists, accomplished three times previously. Jonathan Toews had a goal and an assist for the Blackhawks, and Ryan Garbutt and Artem Anisimov also scored. Patrick Kane assisted on Anisimov's tying goal at 12:20 of the third, running his career-best point streak to 16 games. He has 10 goals and 16 assists in the surge.

RED WINGS 4, BLUES 3, OT

Teemu Pulkkinen scored 4:41 into overtime, lifting Detroit to the victory. Pavel Datsyuk, Luke Glendening and Dylan Larkin also scored and

Jimmy Howard made 30 saves for the Red Wings. Detroit has won three of its last four, including a 3-2 win at home over Los Angeles on Friday night. Kyle Brodziak, Jori Lehtera and Vladimir Tarasenko scored for St. Louis, and Jake Allen made 28 saves. The Blues have lost four of six.

RANGERS 5, PANTHERS 4, OT

Rick Nash scored 2:01 into overtime for his third goal of the game, lifting the Rangers to the road win. Mats Zuccarello and Viktor Stalberg scored in the third period to put the Rangers ahead 4-2. Henrik Lundqvist made 39 saves as New York bounced back after a loss at Tampa Bay on Thursday night snapped its nine-game winning streak. Jaromir Jagr, Aleksander Barkov, Jussi Jokinen and Nick Bjugstad scored for the Panthers. Roberto Luongo stopped 26 shots.

CAPITALS 7, AVALANCHE 3

Alex Ovechkin scored one of Washington's four goals in the first, leading the Capitals to the win. Evgeny Kuznetsov had two assists before adding his seventh goal of the season in the third period, providing Washington some insurance. Jason Chimera had three assists, Ovechkin also added a late assist in a three-goal third period, and Dmitry Orlov and Nate Schmidt got their first goals of the season for the Caps. Colorado goaltender Reto Berra gave up four goals for the third straight game and was replaced after the first period by Calvin Pickard. Nathan MacKinnon scored his ninth goal of the season for the Avalanche, who allowed seven goals for the first time this season.

LIGHTNING 5, DUCKS 0

Steven Stamkos had two goals and an assist for Tampa Bay, and Ben Bishop made 30 saves. Nikita Kucherov, Brian Boyle and Jonathan Marchessault also scored for the Lightning, who had 21 goals over their previous 13 games. The

Ducks completed a four-game road trip at 2-2. It was Bishop's first shutout this season.

BRUINS 2, MAPLE LEAFS 0

Zdeno Chara scored at 16:17 of the third period and Tuukka Rask held on for his second shutout of the season, powering Boston to the victory. Boston outshot Toronto 37-22, but goaltender James Reimer kept the Maple Leafs in the game. Brad Marchand added an empty-net goal in the final seconds, sending the Bruins to consecutive home wins for the first time this season. Reimer had 35 saves, but he was unable to stop Chara's slap shot from the left circle. Zach Trotman and Matt Beleskey assisted on Chara's third goal of the season. It was Rask's 28th career shutout.

SENATORS 4, FLYERS 0

Mike Hoffman had a goal and an assist for Ottawa, and Craig Anderson made 36 saves for his second consecutive shutout. Mika Zibanejad, Milan Michalek and Kyle Turris also scored for the Senators. Anderson helped Ottawa beat Columbus 3-0 on Thursday night. Steve Mason made 27 saves for the Flyers, who lost 1-0 at home to San Jose two nights ago. The Senators had a 3-0 lead after two periods.

JETS 3, COYOTES 2

Chris Thorburn scored a short-handed goal with 8:51 left, lifting Winnipeg to the victory. Mark Scheifele and Dustin Byfuglien also scored to help the Jets earn consecutive wins for the first time since Oct. 31. Winnipeg goaltender Ondrej Pavelec left after two periods due to a lower-body injury. He stopped 20 of the 22 shots before Michael Hutchinson earned the win in relief by stopping seven third-period shots. Shane Doan and Connor Murphy had power-play goals in the first period for Arizona. Anders Lindback made 20 saves. — AP



HONG KONG: Lee Chong Wei of Malaysia hits a return against Tian Houwei of China in the men's singles final match of the Hong Kong Open badminton final at the Coliseum Arena in the Hung Hom district of Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

BOPANNA MISSES OUT ON TOUR FINALS TITLE

LONDON: India's Rohan Bopanna and his Romanian doubles partner Florin Mergea missed out on the ATP Tour Finals title after suffering a 6-4, 6-3 defeat against Jean-Julien Rojer and Horia Tecau in yesterday's final. Bopanna and Mergea had hoped to cap a memorable first season together by winning the prestigious event at London's O2 Arena. But they were blown away in just 60 minutes as Rojer, from the Netherlands, and Romania's Tecau showed why they are set to finish the season as the world's top ranked doubles pair.

The second seeds, who had beaten top ranked Bob and Mike Bryan in the semi-

finals, needed just one break to take the first set and then swept to victory with two more breaks in a one-sided second set. It was another frustrating Tour Finals experience for Bopanna, who also finished as runner-up with compatriot Mahesh Bhupathi in 2012. Even so, Bopanna and Mergea's run to the final promises better things in the future for the duo.

Having only teamed up in April, this was their fifth final together. The pair won the Madrid and Stuttgart titles and qualified for the Tour Finals, which features the world's top eight doubles teams, on the last day of the regular season. — AFP



LONDON: Netherlands' Jean-Julien Rojer, right, and Romania's Horia Tecau lift the winners' trophy after beating India's Rohan Bopanna and Florin Mergea in their ATP World Tour Finals doubles tennis match final at the O2 Arena in London, yesterday. — AP

NHL Results/Standings

Boston 2, Toronto 0; Ottawa 4, Philadelphia 0; Tampa Bay 5, Anaheim 0; NY Rangers 5, Florida 4 (OT); San Jose 3, Pittsburgh 1; Washington 7, Colorado 3; Winnipeg 3, Arizona 2; Detroit 4, St. Louis 3 (OT); Dallas 3, Buffalo 0; Minnesota 4, Nashville 0; Vancouver 6, Chicago 3.

Western Conference										
Central Division										
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS				
Dallas	17	4	0	74	50	34	Ottawa	10	5	5
St. Louis	13	6	2	57	52	28	Detroit	11	8	2
Minnesota	11	5	3	57	51	25	Tampa Bay	10	9	3
Nashville	11	5	3	53	48	25	Boston	10	8	1
Chicago	11	8	2	57	55	24	Florida	8	8	4
Winnipeg	10	9	2	57	65	22	Buffalo	8	10	2
Colorado	7	12	1	56	61	15	Toronto	7	10	4
Pacific Division										
Los Angeles	12	7	0	48	41	24	NY Rangers	15	3	2
San Jose	12	8	0	54	48	24	Washington	13	5	1
Vancouver	8	7	6	62	57	22	Pittsburgh	12	8	0
Arizona	10	9	1	55	59	21	NY Islanders	10	7	3
Anaheim	7	10	4	38	55	18	New Jersey	10	8	1
Calgary	8	12	1	50	75	17	Philadelphia	6	9	5
Edmonton	7	12	1	55	63	15	Columbus	8	13	0
Eastern Conference										
Atlantic Division										
Montreal	15	4	2	74	48	32	Carolina	6	10	3

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

LOUIS VAN GAAL CONFIRMS INTEREST IN RONALDO RETURN

LONDON: Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal confirmed yesterday that he would be interested in bringing Cristiano Ronaldo back to Old Trafford, six years after the superstar left for Real Madrid.

Van Gaal, quoted by several British Sunday newspapers, said: "We are looking at all players, not just Ronaldo. But these players are mostly ungettable. "With Ronaldo, let's wait and hope. There is no trainer in the world that doesn't like him. He plays on the wings and he is fast, and scores goals."

Ronaldo cost Real Madrid a then world record fee of £80 million when he left England in 2009 but he turns 31 in February and was off the boil in Saturday's 4-0 defeat to Barcelona where he cut a frustrated figure.

The Portuguese international is a three-time World Player of the Year and is Real Madrid's all-time leading goalscorer. In Spain, he has won one league title as well as the 2014 Champions League.

During his time under Alex Ferguson at Old Trafford, he helped United win three Premier League titles as well as the 2008 Champions League. Meanwhile, Van Gaal conceded United are far from pretty to watch after they ground out a 2-1 victory at Watford on Saturday thanks to Troy Deeney's late own goal.

Van Gaal's side have been criticised for their conservative style of play under the Dutchman this season, but their latest defensive display paid dividends at Vicarage Road. They had taken an 11th minute lead through Memphis Depay and, although Deeney's 87th minute penalty ended a run without conceding of 10 hours, United snatched the points at the death when Deeney turned Bastian Schweinsteiger's effort into his own net in stoppage-time.

Defensive

"I have changed the system," Van Gaal said. "Our positional game was not so good and that was disappointing. I know

some people think our positional game is boring but I think it is a way to disorganise the opponent's organisation.

"I was very satisfied about our defensive organisation. We didn't give more than three chances away, one in the first half and two in the second. "Memphis and Jesse Lingard played a very good game. We could have finished the game much earlier. I have to say after the penalty, I thought we gave it away but then you see the spirit of the game.

"We created three chances in a row. It was an injection, the equaliser. I am very proud I am the manager of that team." Van Gaal will now assess a depleted team ahead of Wednesday's home Champions League clash with PSV Eindhoven.

Having been without a host of players including forwards Wayne Rooney (illness), Anthony Martial (foot) and James Wilson (knee), United also lost Ander Herrera and Phil Jones at Vicarage Road.

"We are in a lousy period because there are a lot of injuries," said Van Gaal. "We had already injuries. Antonio Valencia has been operated on. Luke Shaw, you know. Jones and Herrera are not available for Wednesday. "The first impression is they are not heavy injuries but we have to play Wednesday.

"Jones has a twisted ankle and Herrera maybe a hamstring injury. Rooney is ill and illness is a matter of days, not weeks. "I do expect that he shall play Wednesday. He is at home. Tomorrow (Sunday) he comes and then I can say more. "Martial has a foot problem. It is not so heavy but we have to wait and see. "Every position is double occupied. It is only now that the striker position is not occupied because Rooney, Martial and Wilson are injured." Watford manager Quique Flores was left to rue the own goal that cost his side a point.

"It was very harsh," he said. "To lose the points is very tough. It was a pity for Troy because he was only in that position because he is so committed all over the pitch." —AFP



BERLIN: Hertha Berlin's Ivorian striker Salomon Kalou (L) and Hoffenheim's midfielder Nadiem Amiri vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match Hertha BSC Berlin vs TSG 1899 Hoffenheim at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin yesterday. —AFP

HERTHA BEAT HOFFENHEIM TO RECLAIM FOURTH PLACE

BERLIN: Hertha Berlin held onto fourth spot in the Bundesliga yesterday as an own-goal during a freak blizzard in Germany's capital sealed their 1-0 win over bottom side Hoffenheim. There was a minute's silence out of respect for the victims of the Paris terror attacks, but snow began to fall just after kick-off at Berlin's Olympic Stadium and the referee soon had to call for an orange ball. Hertha profited most from the winter weather when Hoffenheim defender Eugen Polanski got a slight touch on the ball, which he headed into his own net on 30 minutes when trying to clear a free-kick.

The pitch was cleared of snow during the break and the result masked a poor result for Berlin, who managed just a single shot all game, while the defeat leaves Hoffenheim at the foot of the table.

On Saturday, Javi Martinez scored his first goal since August 2013 for Bayern Munich as their 3-1 win at Schalke 04 opened an eight-point lead in the table.

After second-placed Borussia Dortmund's shock 3-1 defeat at Hamburg on Friday, Pep Guardiola's Bayern took their chance to extend their lead. David Alaba's early goal was cancelled out by Schalke's Max Meyer before

Martinez, then Thomas Mueller struck for Bayern. Germany striker Max Kruse netted twice in Wolfsburg's 6-0 rout of Werder Bremen, who gifted the opener when defender Alejandro Galvez slid the ball into his own net on 11 minutes.

Kruse put third-placed Wolfsburg 2-0 up at the break by heading home a free-kick then Portugal international Vieriinha netted on 56 minutes. The floodgates opened when France midfielder Josuha Guilavogui, on for the injured Brazil star Luiz Gustavo, stabbed home his shot, Kruse then set up Netherlands striker Bas Dost on 78 minutes.

He completed the scoring three minutes from time by converting a cross and the result leaves Wolfsburg five points behind Dortmund.

Gladbach extend run

Borussia Mönchengladbach are fifth as Andre Schubert celebrated his first match in charge as head coach with a 2-1 win at home to Hannover 96 thanks to goals by forwards Ibrahim Traore and Raffael.

Having taken over in September with Borussia bottom of the table, the 42-year-old has been promoted from a caretaker role after steer-

ing Gladbach to seven wins and a draw in his eight league games. Ex-Manchester United star Javier Hernandez scored his first brace for Bayer Leverkusen in their 3-1 win at Eintracht Frankfurt. Christmas came early for Hernandez in Frankfurt when Eintracht centre-back David Abraham allowed a cross to roll between his legs and the striker stabbed home on 11 minutes.

The Mexico striker doubled his tally on 39 minutes, but it finished 2-1 at the break when Serbian midfielder Slobodan Medojevic headed home on the stroke of half-time before Hakan Calhanoglu scored Leverkusen's third goal on 72 minutes.

Augsburg climbed off the bottom of the table with an emphatic 4-0 win at VfB Stuttgart as woeful defending by the hosts allowed the visitors to take an early 2-0 lead with both goals by midfielder Alexander Esswein. Defender Jan-Ingwer Callens-Bracker grabbed a third before former South Korea captain Koo Ja-Cheol scored Augsburg's fourth when he hit the top right-hand corner from 10 metres out on 54 minutes.

The Rhine derby finished goalless as Mainz drew at Cologne as the hosts abandoned plans to play in a special-edition carnival-themed shirt out of respect for those who died in Paris. — AFP

MARSEILLAISE RINGS OUT IN CORSICA AS CAEN HELD

BASTIA: 'La Marseillaise' rang out in Bastia yesterday ahead of the much-anticipated Corsican Ligue 1 derby won 2-1 by Gazelec-Ajaccio as Caen missed the chance to go second behind Paris Saint-Germain following a goalless draw against Angers.

Tightened security checks were in place throughout France, just over a week after terrorist attacks in Paris and the Stade de France left 130 people dead and more than 350 injured.

And despite threats by Corsican nationalists to boo the French national anthem 'La Marseillaise' was sung with gusto at the Armand Cesari Stadium in Bastia in tribute to the victims of the Paris attacks.

The club's leading supporters group Bastia 1905 announced prior to the game that they would not enter the stadium until after the national anthem.

Only one solitary whistle could be heard in the stands during the rendition, before the Corsican chant "Diu vi salvi Regina" was sung and followed by the release of 130 white balloons, and a blue one for a club official who died the day before the attacks.

"The silence as the players walked out gave me the chills," said Ajaccio coach Thierry Laurey. "I would say that the best response has been given," added Bastia coach Ghislain Printant. In a match which had been postponed from Saturday because of strong winds in the

Mediterranean island, Brandao opened for the hosts after five minutes following good work by midfielder Julian Palmieri.

But 14 minutes later Cameroon international striker Jacques Zoua got the visitors on level terms, slotting home a penalty awarded when Bastia goalkeeper Jean-Louis Leca fouled Khalid Boutaib in the box.

Boutaib missed a golden chance to put the visitors ahead with half an hour to go but alone on front of goal it was Leca who won the duel. Ten minutes later Leca made no mistake volleying in following a pinpoint David Ducourtieux headed cross.

The win away lifts Ajaccio out of the relegation zone with neighbours Bastia taking their place. In Normandy, Caen were down to ten men after half and hour after Alaeddine Yahia was given a straight red card for a dangerous tackle.

A win would have seen Caen move second behind PSG, who stretched their lead to 13 points on Saturday with a 2-1 win at Lorient. "It's a good point given the game," said Caen coach Patrice Garande.

"Until the sending off we'd gotten off to a bright start and things were looking good for the match." Caen are now third, equal on 25 points with Lyon, who lost 3-0 to Nice on Friday, and are ahead on goal difference. Angers are sitting fifth.

Marseille travel to Saint-Etienne later as Rennes host Bordeaux. —AFP



CAEN: Caen's French forward Andy Delort (R) vies for the ball with Angers' French defender Yoann Andreu during the French L1 football match between Caen (SM Caen) and Angers (SCO Angers), yesterday, at the Michel d'Ornano stadium, in Caen, northwestern France. — AFP

WENGER ROCKED BY ARSENAL NIGHTMARE

WEST BROMWICH: Arsene Wenger described Arsenal's 2-1 defeat at West Bromwich Albion as the "perfect nightmare" after midfielders Francis Coquelin and Mikel Arteta added to his injury problems.

Arteta's own goal, coupled with a late penalty miss by Santi Cazorla, ended the Gunners' six-match unbeaten Premier League run and dented their title challenge. And Wenger, already without Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, Theo Walcott, Aaron Ramsey and Danny Welbeck, suffered further setbacks as he lost Coquelin to a knee problem and Arteta to a recurrence of a calf injury.

Both players will be assessed and are doubts for Tuesday's Champions League home match against Dinamo Zagreb, which Arsenal must win to stand any chance of staying in the competition.

"It was a very bad afternoon for us. We had 70 per cent possession, we scored an own goal, we missed a penalty, we gave away a goal from a set piece. That's perfect to make the afternoon a nightmare," Wenger said.

"We missed open goal chances too. I believe that West Brom fought with 100 per cent commitment as well. You have to give them credit for that. "We landed a huge blow when we scored. We just had to make sure that they didn't come back with an easy goal.

"We lost a bit of focus at 1-0. After 35 minutes, we were 1-0 up. After 45 minutes, we were 2-1 down. Our defending on that level was very, very poor. "On top of that, we have two more injuries. One is a recurrence of a calf problem for Arteta, one is a knee problem for Coquelin. I don't know how severe that is. We'll know tomorrow." Wenger refused to blame Cazorla for his missed penalty, which came amid confusion, as it initially appeared as though referee Mark Clattenburg had ordered a retake for encroachment.

As it turned out, Clattenburg had penalised the midfielder for taking two touches as he slipped; with the rules not allowing a penalty taker to touch the ball again until another player has done so.

Highly focused

Arsenal were consigned to defeat despite an early goal from Olivier Giroud who, like France team-mate Laurent Koscielny, played eight days after being caught up in the horrific Paris attacks.

Giroud and Koscielny were playing for France in a friendly against Germany at the Stade de France, which was targeted by three attackers who blew themselves up outside the stadium, with the explosions heard during the match. Wenger said that he had no doubts about fielding either player, citing their professionalism. "They were highly focused and had a desire to play," Wenger said. "We produced enough to win the game. I don't know about the influence of what happened (in Paris) on the game.

"For my part, I would not explain our defeat by that. I think it's sad. We are all down. But when you're on the pitch, you're on the pitch." West Brom manager Tony Pulis, whose side drew level through James Morrison before Arteta's own goal, acknowledged that his players had gained victory despite not being at their best. —AFP



VILLARREAL: Villarreal's forward Roberto Soldado (L) vies with Eibar's Argentinian defender Mauro Dos Santos during the Spanish league football match Villarreal CF vs SD Eibar at El Madrigal stadium in Villarreal yesterday. — AFP

VILLARREAL DRAWS LATE TO CLAIM FOURTH IN SPAIN

BARCELONA: Villarreal scored late to salvage a 1-1 draw at home with Eibar that lifted it into fourth place in the Spanish league yesterday.

At the other end of the standings, Deyverson scored twice in Levante's 3-0 win at Sporting Gijon to move the team off the bottom of table.

In a match that both Villarreal and Eibar finished with 10 men, left back Jaume Costa received Denis Suarez's through-ball and poked home Villarreal's equalizer off the post with five minutes left. Sergi Enrich gave Eibar the lead in the 27th minute, following a tribute before kickoff to the victims of the Paris terrorist attacks. The French anthem was played, while a large monitor displayed the message "We Are All France" in Spanish at El Madrigal Stadium.

Eibar had a great chance to double its advantage in the 43rd, but goalkeeper Alphonse Areola saved Dani Garcia's penalty kick following a foul by Costa in the area.

Villarreal was hit by two injuries in defense. Eric Bailly was carried off with his neck in a brace in the 33rd. His replace-

ment, Daniele Bonera, had to be substituted in the 63rd, leaving the hosts with 10 men as their three changes had already been made. Eibar, which remained in sixth place, was left a man down in the 77th when Sergio "Keko" Gontan earned a second booking for a handball.

Villarreal moved above Celta Vigo and into Spain's last Champions League spot, but its players lamented not getting the win. "It's a pity because we were convinced of the importance of taking all three points," Costa said.

Deyverson opened the scoring for Levante in the 18th and added another just before halftime after Zouhair Feddal had doubled the lead in the 27th. Goalkeeper Ruben Martinez also saved a penalty to keep a clean sheet. It was Levante's first win in three matches under new coach Joan Ferrer. Later Sunday, Atletico Madrid seeks a win at Real Betis to move ahead of crosstown rival Real Madrid and take over second place after leader Barcelona routed Madrid 4-0 on Saturday. Athletic Bilbao also visits Granada. — AP

Sports

McIlroy wins European season finale, tops money list again



Hertha beat Hoffenheim to reclaim fourth place



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LONDON: West Ham United's English striker Andy Carroll (R) jumps to win a header during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United at White Hart Lane in north London yesterday. — AFP

KANE BRACE SETS SPURS ON ARSENAL'S TAIL



LONDON: Harry Kane scored his seventh and eighth goals in five matches as Tottenham Hotspur dispatched West Ham United 4-1 yesterday to close on the Premier League's top four. Defenders Toby Alderweireld and Kyle Walker also found the net at a chilly White Hart Lane as Mauricio Pochettino's side equalled the club record of 12 successive Premier League games without defeat. Spurs now trail fourth-place Arsenal by just two points and leaders Leicester City by four, leaving them ideally placed for an assault on the Champions League berths ahead of next weekend's home game with spluttering champions Chelsea, who will not relish the trip to

north London.

Kane, who has scored 12 goals in 14 London derbies, branded the display Spurs' best of the season and Pochettino said: "It was a high-level performance. It was fantastic and we feel very proud. "It was a brilliant effort. We showed how we can play and we need to keep the whole season the performance that we showed." The only disappointment for the Spurs manager was the booking collected by rising star Dele Alli following a shoving match with Mark Noble, which rules the England newcomer out of the Chelsea game.

It was only a second defeat in 10 league games for Slaven Bilic's West Ham, who replied late on through Manuel Lanzini, and left them three points adrift of Spurs in sixth place. "The performance matches the result, to be fair," Bilic told BBC Sport. "They were better than us."

The visitors badly missed injured playmaker Dimitri Payet, whose place was taken by Diafra Sakho in West Ham's only change. Bilic strung his midfielders across the pitch in a 4-1-4-1 system, with Sakho wide on the right, in an attempt to stop Spurs' centre-backs sliding

passes into the feet of Alli, Christian Eriksen and fit-again Son Heung-Min, who replaced the suspended Erik Lamela.

Victor Moses gave Spurs early concern by skipping past Mousa Dembele and crossing from the left, but Spurs were in control and after Eriksen had warned Adrian's palms from range, they took a 23rd-minute lead.

Alli's shot from the edge of the box was partially blocked and fell to Kane, who easily rolled Carl Jenkinson before rifling a left-foot shot into the roof of the net for his seventh goal of the league campaign. West Ham threatened to reply immediately when Cheikhou Kouyate volleyed acrobatically against the crossbar after Noble's blocked shot ballooned into the air.

But in the 33rd minute the hosts added a second, Alderweireld outjumping Andy Carroll at the near post and nodding in Eriksen's corner. Spurs should have put the game out of sight before half-time. Alli headed against the bar after Adrian had thwarted Son and moments later Kane was sent clean through, only to

miscue horribly and bobble a left-foot shot well wide.

It did not take long for him to atone, however, as an ill-advised attempt to play the ball out from the back by West Ham gifted Spurs their third goal five minutes after the change of ends.

The reluctant recipient of a throw from Adrian, Tomkins passed the ball straight to Eriksen, who moved it on to Kane, and the England striker drove a low strike through Adrian from outside the box.

Adrian should have done better than allow the ball to slip beneath him, but he provided a firmer barrier shortly after, blocking from Son at his near post and then parrying Eriksen's volleyed follow-up.

Walker was booked after a needless face-off with Sakho, but the right-back made amends in the 83rd minute by using the outside of his right foot to curl Son's lay-off around Adrian's forlorn dive and into the net.

Lanzini denied Hugo Lloris a clean sheet by flummoxing Walker with a step-over and slamming home left-footed, but Spurs finished strongly, with substitute Ryan Mason hitting the post. — AFP

NAPOLI, FIORENTINA SHARE LEAD AHEAD OF INTER GAME

MILAN: Title-chasing Napoli were left provisionally top of Serie A on goal difference yesterday after a Nikola Kalinic-inspired Fiorentina were held 2-2 by Empoli in Florence. Earlier, Gonzalo Higuain hit his 10th goal of the campaign to take the lead in Serie A's scoring charts and fire Napoli one-point clear of Fiorentina after a 2-0 win at struggling Verona.

But Fiorentina maintained their hopes in what continues to be a thrilling battle for this season's scudetto and were unlucky not to go two points clear after spurring a series of late chances at the Artemio Franchi.

Inter Milan, in fourth one point off the pace, can return to the top of the table with a win over Frosinone at the San Siro in Sunday's late game. In the meantime, Napoli will enjoy at least a few hours as the Serie A leaders, although Fiorentina are only in second due to inferior goal difference and Roma are just one point adrift in third after being held 2-2 at Bologna on Saturday.

Empoli travelled to Florence looking for their fourth win in six league outings and were well on their way after taking a 2-0 half-time lead thanks to goals from Marko Livaja and Marcel Buchel.

Livaja put the visitors ahead with a crisp strike that beat Ciprian Tatarusanu at his top corner on 18 minutes, although there were clear signs of offside. Buchel doubled Empoli's lead nine minutes later and for the remainder of the opening half Fiorentina struggled to find the breakthrough.

Paulo Sousa had rested his most potent strike pair, Kalinic and Josip Ilicic, with one eye on Thursday's Europa League clash against the coach's former club, FC Basel.

But the canny Portuguese handler soon changed tack, Kalinic and Federico Bernardeschi replacing Mario Suarez and Ante Rebic for the start of the second half. The impact was almost immediate, Croatia marksman Kalinic reducing arrears with a finely-taken header from just outside the six-yard box that Lukasz Skorupski could only swipe at in the 56th minute.

Kalinic had his brace inside five minutes when he squeezed between two defenders to slot Babacar's low delivery home after the Senegalese striker had been given acres of space on the right.

Kalinic could have secured his second hat-trick of the season, after his triple in a 4-1 win at Inter Milan, 13 minutes from the end but



VERONA: Napoli's Gonzalo Higuain, left, and Hellas Verona defender Evangelos Moras vie for the ball during a Serie A soccer match at Bentegodi stadium in Verona, yesterday. — AP

saw his first-timer from eight yards out glance off the top of the crossbar.

Babacar made way for Giuseppe Rossi moments later but the American-born striker was eclipsed as Kalinic, and then Matias Vecino, came closest to securing all three points. — AFP

TERRY HOPES NORWICH SUCCESS WILL SPARK WINNING STREAK

LONDON: Chelsea captain John Terry expressed his relief after the West Londoners chalked up only their fourth league win of the Premier League campaign on Saturday at Stamford Bridge. Diego Costa's second half strike was enough to defeat Norwich 1-0 as the defending champions finally had something to celebrate after an appalling start to the season.

Terry, who had a strong game at the heart of the Chelsea back-four, says the win was a welcome boost to the squad who still lie a distant 14 points behind surprise leaders Leicester down in 15th position.

"We're delighted to win," Terry told Chelsea TV ahead of the Champions League trip to Maccabi Tel Aviv tomorrow. "Relieved as well. Picking up three points has been a really good feeling.

Good performance to top it off as well. "Hopefully we can put ourselves on a good run of games now and climb up this table. The victory was also a much needed boost for under-fire manager Jose Mourinho who had overseen three straight league defeats for the

first time since owner Roman Abramovich took over the club 12 years ago.

A victory in Israel combined with a Porto success over Dynamo Kiev the same evening will see the 2012 European champions qualify for next year's knockout phase. "We can build on this now and hopefully get another win tomorrow," continued the 34-year-old. "We have three points on the board now in the Premier League and switch focus to the Champions League again," Terry added. "With that in mind and the importance of qualifying it's all there for everyone to see and to go and do."

"Anyone who has been to the games and watched the last five, six games has seen the performances have been there," Terry added. "(Against Norwich was) very much the same. Creating chances, shots on goal, crosses into the box. It could've been four or five. It wasn't. "We'll certainly take the 1-0 and we have something to build upon now," said Terry after the team's third clean sheet of the season. — AFP

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The new Mercedes-Maybach S600 Pullman

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ETIHAD AIRWAYS OPENS NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART CREW BRIEFING CENTER

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KUALA LUMPUR: (From left) Philippine President Benigno Aquino, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha, Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak, Laos Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong, Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen, Indonesia's President Joko Widodo and Myanmar President Thein Sein join hands together as they pose for a group photo after the signing ceremony as part of the 27th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit at the Kuala Lumpur convention center yesterday. —AFP

SE ASIA CREATES ECONOMIC COMMUNITY LEADERS SIGN AEC DECLARATION, BUT SEE CHALLENGES

KUALA LUMPUR: Thirteen years after mooting the idea, Southeast Asian leaders yesterday formally created a unified economic community in a region more populous and diverse than both the European Union and North America, and one that hopes to compete with China and India.

The 10 leaders in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations signed a declaration during their summit establishing the ASEAN Economic Community, as part of a larger ASEAN Community that aims for political, security, cultural and social integration. The summit's host, Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia, hailed the ASEAN Community as a "landmark achievement," and urged members to accelerate integration. "The region is primed to expand exponentially," he said. The community, known by its acronym AEC, is already a reality and many of its fundamentals have been applied in the region, including the removal of tariff barriers and visa restrictions. It has also led to greater political and cultural cooperation.

AEC will bolster income and employment, and provide the region with stronger economic muscle

in facing the other giants, said Michael G. Plummer, a professor of international economics at the Europe Center of Johns Hopkins University, based in Bologna, Italy.

"ASEAN integration will help balance the economic power of China and India," Plummer said. "Individually, ASEAN countries are, perhaps, too small to be important players in the economic and security game, but as an integrated group of more than half a billion people, they would be in the major league."

But there is a long way to go before the AEC becomes fully functional after becoming a legal entity on Dec 31. The region's diversity can sometimes be a hindrance. ASEAN has 630 million people, speaking different languages, following various faiths and governed by various systems, including rambunctious democracies, a military dictatorship, quasi-civilian, authoritarian, monarchy and communism.

"The AEC is arguably the most ambitious economic integration program in the developing world," Plummer said. "But implementation of the

AEC is increasingly uphill. Much remains to be done and the region faces many challenges in finishing. The AEC is a process."

Investment flow

It falls short in more politically sensitive areas such as opening up agriculture, steel, auto production and other protected sectors. ASEAN citizens will be allowed to work in other countries in the region, but will be limited to jobs in eight sectors, including engineering, accountancy and tourism. This accounts for only 1.5 percent of the total jobs in the region, and host countries still can put up constitutional and regulatory hurdles restricting the inflow of talent. Intra-regional trade has remained at around 24 percent of ASEAN's total global trade for the last decade, far lower than 60 percent in the European Union.

ASEAN members also struggle to resolve diplomatic flare-ups among each other such as border disputes between Cambodia and Vietnam, or Indonesia's inability to fight annual forest fires that spew noxious haze for months over Malaysia,

Singapore and Thailand. Plummer said progress has been slow in services liberalization. Cross-border flow of investment is also restricted by large exclusion lists and caps on foreign ownership. Government procurement and curbing monopolies by state-owned enterprises are highly sensitive and untouched, he said. Although the four poorer economies - Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam - have until 2018 to bring down tariffs, economic integration could further reinforce income equalities in the region, he said. AEC "is not the finished article. Neither is it officially claimed to be. There is much work to be done," said Mohamad Munir Abdul Majid, chairman of a council that advises ASEAN on business matters. "There is a disparity between what is officially recorded as having been achieved ... and what the private sector reports as their experience."

There are also other hurdles, such as corruption, uneven infrastructure and unequal costs of transportation and shipping. A wide economic gulf divides Southeast Asia's rich and middle income economies - Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei,

Thailand and the Philippines - and its four less developed members, Communist Vietnam and Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

The AEC was envisaged in 2002 - and a blueprint created in 2007 - to face competition from China and India for market share and investments. While China's economic growth is expected to slow to an average of 6 percent annually over the next five years, India's expansion is likely to pick up to 7.3 percent in the same period, according to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development.

The AEC is one of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community, which was created by the signing of the declaration Sunday. The other two pillars are political-security and socio-cultural.

After the ASEAN summit, the 10 leaders huddled with heads of state from four other Asian countries as well as President Barack Obama, Russian Prime Minister Dimitri Medvedev, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and New Zealand Prime Minister John Key for a two-hour East Asia Summit. —AP

ALGERIA SEES ENERGY EARNINGS, RESERVES DROPPING IN 2016

ALGIERS: Algeria's energy earnings are forecast to fall to \$26.4 billion next year while foreign exchange reserves will dip to \$121 billion after low oil prices cut into the OPEC nation's economy, Finance Minister Abderrahmane Benkhalfa said yesterday.

The North African state, a major gas supplier to Europe, has already said energy earnings will fall by 50 percent this year to about \$34 billion. Oil and gas sales make up 95 percent of its exports and account for 60 percent of the country's budget. Algeria is considering higher taxes, import duties and a hike in subsidized diesel and electricity prices to help cover its deficit after the slump in crude oil prices eroded its revenues, according to a draft of its 2016 budget.

"We have to be vigilant in the management of our money. We have to control public spending," the minister told the parliament where the draft budget law was presented. "We have to mobilize new resources. We have planned a reasonable increase in the prices of fuel and electricity to cover production costs," he said. Domestic prices for energy products are very low by international standards in Algeria, which analysts say is the main reason behind high consumption rates in the country of 40 million people.

The world oil price slide is testing an economic system that relies on energy revenues to pay for a vast range of social subsidies, from public housing

to cheap loans and subsidized fuel, which helped Algeria avoid the kind of "Arab Spring" uprisings that erupted in its North African neighbors. Benkhalfa said overall spending on subsidies will rise 7.5 percent next year. That includes mainly food, transport, housing and public health coverage. Algeria is also trying to draw more foreign investment to help increase oil and gas production, which has remained largely stagnant in the past three years. Algeria posted a trade deficit of \$10.825 billion in the first 10 months of 2015 against a \$4.29 billion surplus a year earlier, after a 40.7 percent drop in energy earnings, customs data showed yesterday. The finance minister said foreign exchange reserves will drop to \$151 billion by the end of this year before reaching \$121 billion in December 2016. That represents the equivalent of 23 months of imports, he said.

Reserves were \$159 billion in June 2015, down from \$193 billion in the same month in 2014. The law is widely expected to be approved by the parliament, but some lawmakers have criticized the government's plans to increase the prices of some subsidized fuels.

"This is a dangerous law. The government wants its citizens to pay for deficits from their own pockets," said Lakhdar Benkhellaf, a deputy for the opposition Islamist party Justice and Development Front. "The price increases will push inflation up." —Reuters

SAUDI BOUNCES FURTHER FROM CHART SUPPORT

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's stock market bounced further from a technical support level yesterday but other Gulf bourses were little changed. Egypt's market edged up. The Saudi stock index has been rebounding in the last few days from support at November's two-year low of 6,828 points. Yesterday, it added 2.1 percent to 7,179 points, rising above resistance on the November high of 7,161 points.

A second straight daily close above that resistance would confirm a clean break, triggering a minor double bottom formed by the November lows and pointing up to 7,461 points.

However, with Brent oil still below \$45 a barrel, an extended rally by the Saudi market still looks unlikely to many fund managers. Traders said they were not aware of any positive, concrete news behind Sunday's surge and turnover was only moderate, suggesting that many local retail investors remain wary of the market even as others buy on dips.

Real estate firm Dar Al Arkan climbed 2.4 percent and leading petrochemical producer Saudi Basic Industries added 2.6 percent. Elsewhere in the Gulf, Dubai's index rose 0.5 percent to 3,290 points in modest turnover. On Thursday it triggered a minor double bottom formed by the November lows; the target of that pattern is 3,327 points.

Eight of the 10 most heavily traded Dubai stocks rose, with builder Arabtec, the most active stock, up 0.8 percent. Abu Dhabi's index edged down 0.2 percent as telecommunications firm Etisalat, to be included in MSCI's emerging markets index at the end of this month, lost 1.2 percent because of profit-taking. But Dana Gas, the most active stock in Abu Dhabi, surged 4.9 percent after saying the British High Court, ruling in a longstanding payment dispute, had ordered the Kurdish regional government to pay Dana's consortium \$100 million within 14 days. It remains unclear whether it will get the money, as similar rul-

ings in the past have not resulted in payments actually taking place.

Qatar's index dropped 0.2 percent as petrochemicals and metals producer Industries Qatar slid 1.2 percent.

Oman's market also fell 0.2 percent in thin trade after credit rating agency Standard & Poor's downgraded Oman's sovereign debt, citing pressure on state finances from low oil prices. Egypt's stock index rose 0.6 percent, with Palm Hills Development up 2.9 percent after the Al-Borsa newspaper reported the government's New Urban Communities Authority was expected to sign a contract with the firm within days for a major real estate project in New Cairo. Orascom Telecom Media, the most heavily traded stock, fell 1.5 percent after the company said it was removing its North Korean subsidiary Koryolink from its consolidated financial statements because sanctions against Pyongyang had affected its ability to operate there. —Reuters

HAMAD INT'L AIRPORT WINS BEST AIRPORT AWARD IN WESTERN ASIA

FIRST FUTURE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE ASIA AWARDS IN SINGAPORE

DOHA: Hamad International Airport (HIA) announced yesterday that it has won the Best Airport Award at the first Future Travel Experience (FTE) Asia Awards ceremony which took place in Singapore on 18 November 2015.

The Awards ceremony took place during the FTE Asia EXPO 2015, with the winners being selected by industry executives from around the world. Out of five nominees shortlisted in the category of 'Best Airport' in the Western Asia region, HIA was announced as the winner on Wednesday 18 November, 2015. Badr Al-Meer, Chief Operating Officer at HIA said: "Hamad International Airport receiving this award reinforces its global standing as an international travel hub and five-star gateway for Qatar and the rest of the world. The airport's success, which is demonstrated by this award, as well as our successful operations, also furthers our ambition to position HIA as a major player in the international aviation sector."

The FTE Asia award was introduced this year for airlines and airports from across Asia to be rewarded for their end-to-end customer experience achievements. The awards recognize the most innovative, ambitious and effective initiatives and organizations.

Daniel Coleman, Founder, Future Travel Experience said: "Here at Future Travel Experience we would like to congratulate Hamad International Airport on winning the 'Best Airport in West Asia' award at the Future Travel Experience Asia Awards 2015. The judging panel was hugely impressed with HIA's modern facilities. Ranging from the use of self-serve to speed-up passenger processing and the trial of Smart Security with Qatar Airways, to the simple



transit experience and luxurious premium facilities, the airport's dedication to providing the best possible passenger experience makes it fully deserving of this prestigious industry award."

This award adds to HIA's multiple award wins this year including the Best Airport in the Middle East award which the airport received at the Skytrax Airport Award Ceremony, held at the Passenger Terminal

Expo 2015 in Paris as well as the 'Strategic Project of the Year' award which the airport received at the 2015 Global Projects of the Year awards ceremony organized by CG/LA Infrastructure in New York.

Bayt.com weekly report

CHECKLIST: 10 JOB FAIR TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

Job fairs allow employers to meet many prospective employees in a single day. However, with so many people attending the job fair, the atmosphere can sometimes be hectic, making it difficult to connect with qualified applicants. To make the most of this opportunity, employers need some tips for attracting the interest of attendees and identifying applicants with the most potential.

Whether you are new to job fairs or a seasoned pro, here's a checklist to help maximize your experience from the Bayt.com experts:

1. Let people know you'll be there. Before heading out to the job fair it's advisable to let people know that you will be there. You can do this by advertising your presence through billboards, mass mailers, social media or online ads. This ensures that there will be a decent crowd at your booth.
2. Prepare brochures and banners and have an attractive booth. A main component of job fairs is giving out brochures of your company and advertising your space through great banners. The idea is to stand out so that you can attract the best candidates. Ensure that all of your collateral is professionally designed and does not have spelling mistakes.
3. Train whoever is going. Your staff going to the job fair must remember that they will be representing your company, and their actions are likely to leave a lasting impression on visitors. They should therefore be trained on how to speak to people who come to your booth. You may consider preparing a sheet of talking points and guidelines for staff working at the booth to ensure they know exactly what to say, what not to say, and how to answer questions by visitors.
4. Arrive beforehand. Come at least 2-3 hours earlier to set everything up and make your booth look awesome. Doing everything in a hurry will make your booth look shoddy and will repel visitors.
5. Make a list of your job vacancies. Staff representing your company at the job fair should be aware of what job vacancies are currently available and what the requirements are for each vacancy. So make sure that your representatives are familiar with all your open positions and hard-to-fill 'niche' career opportunities.
6. Decide if you will be accepting CVs. When someone hands you a CV, will you accept it, or will you direct him or her to apply online? If you will not be accepting CVs on the spot, you can consider setting up a web page for candidates to upload their CVs to. An easy way to do that is by using 'CV Kiosk', a service provided by Bayt.com that helps you gather hundreds of CVs during a job fair electronically, without the need to gather a stack of paper CVs.
7. Have your business cards and name tags with you. Candidates aren't going to magically remember your name so have your business card with you at all times. And in order to avoid awkwardness it's best to print out your name tag and pin it up. Sometimes, event providers give name tags for security purposes. Ensure you have all the details and resources at hand before the job fair begins.
8. Stand beside or in front of your booth. Most booth representatives prefer to sit behind the booth. What they don't know is that job fairs can be intimidating to job seekers. In order for people to come to your booth, ensure that you are standing next to or in front of your booth. Be formally dressed and have a smile on your face. In fact, do all it takes to generate an inviting atmosphere.
9. Have competitions and giveaways that lure visitors to your booth. Some exciting competitions seen at job fairs are wheels of fortune, lottery tickets, Instagram photo contests, and much more. Brainstorm with your marketing team on competitions and giveaways. This will ensure that your booth is talked about even after the job fair is over!
10. Create a follow-up plan. Have a plan for following up with candidates you're interested in. Take their names and contact information and assign someone to send them a follow-up email or make a quick call thanking them for their interest. Also, make it easy for job seekers to follow up with you. If attendees contact you after the event, respond promptly and tell them what step you want them to take next, whether it's coming in for a job interview or sending a CV to the HR department.

News

in brief

US dollar rises against dinar

KUWAIT: The US dollar rose to KD 0.304, the euro dropped to KD 0.323 yesterday as compared to Thursday's trades, the Central Bank of Kuwait said. The CBK said the sterling pound fell to KD 0.462, the Swiss franc to KD 0.298 while the Japanese yen firmed at KD 0.002.

Dana Gas wins UK ruling for \$100m Kurdistan payment

DUBAI: United Arab Emirates energy firm Dana Gas, one of the largest investors in Iraq's Kurdistan region, yesterday said the British High Court had ordered the Kurdish regional government to pay Dana's consortium \$100 million within 14 days. The decision reinforces a December 2014 ruling by a London arbitration court which made the same demand of the Kurdish government with a 30-day deadline, Dana said in a bourse statement. Its consortium, which also consists of the UAE's Crescent Petroleum, Austria's OMV and Hungarian oil and gas group MOL, filed an arbitration case in London in October 2013, seeking to confirm its contract rights and to obtain payment for production. Dana Gas said it then filed the case with Britain's High Court after failing to receive payments. There was no immediate comment from the Kurdish regional government.

Gold price stays at \$1,078 per ounce

KUWAIT: Global gold prices over the weekend fell for the fifth time to stand at \$1,078 per ounce, due to the rising of US dollar and increase the sale of the precious metal, said an economic report issued yesterday. It is predicted that the price of gold will reach \$1,000 in case that the US central bank raised interest rates by 25 points, Head of Sabayik Al-Kuwait Company Rajab Hamed said. Silver price dropped to \$14.1 per ounce. Other precious metals fell at the weekend, where platinum reached \$855 per ounce and palladium rose to \$556 an ounce. The local market was characterized with calmness at the beginning of the week, as purchases of golden ore and gold bar climbed, after the gram dropped to KD 10.6.

OMAN GOVT MARKETING \$1BN 5-YR LOAN TO BANKS

DUBAI: The government of Oman has invited banks to participate in a \$1 billion sovereign loan, two sources aware of the matter said yesterday, as the Gulf country seeks funds at a time of stretched state finances due to lower oil prices. The sultanate recorded a 2.93 billion rial (\$7.63 billion) budget deficit for the first nine months of 2015, while its central bank governor told Reuters last month it was seeking to reduce spending and increase revenue to cope with the current fiscal position.

It raised a debut sovereign Islamic bond worth 250 million rials in October to help bridge the gap in its finances, and now the sultanate is seeking bank finance as well, according to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity as the information isn't public. Oman's Finance Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The loan will be arranged by Citigroup, Gulf International Bank and Natixis and will run for five years, the sources said.

The interest rate on the loan will be 110 basis points over the London interbank offered rate (Libor), according to one of the sources, a Gulf-based banker, who added that

marketing of the deal will close by the middle of December.

The loan syndication comes at a time when credit rating agency Standard & Poor's downgraded Oman's sovereign debt and retained a negative outlook, citing risks over the next two years due to low oil prices. "Once Saudi Arabia was downgraded, it was obvious that Oman and Bahrain would be downgraded as well, so people were expecting this," said the second source, a senior regional banker.

He was pointing to S&P's downgrade of Saudi, the Gulf's largest economy, last month due to pressure on state finances. Oman has minimal overseas debt though so the loan is expected to be relatively well received due to its rarity value and modest size of the transaction, the Gulf-based banker added.

The country has a protracted domestic borrowing program, including regular treasury bill auctions, which is adding pressure to the liquidity in the local banking system and forcing the government to raise money abroad. The government has also talked about raising an international bond, which bankers expect to happen in 2016. —Reuters

EMIRATES GLOBAL ALUMINUM PICKS ARRANGERS FOR \$4.9BN LOAN

DUBAI: State-owned Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA), one of the largest aluminium firms in the world, has picked seven banks to raise a \$4.9 billion loan to refinance debt taken on for some of its projects, sources aware of the matter told Reuters yesterday. EGA, created by the merger of two state-owned aluminium companies Dubai Aluminium (Dubal) and Abu Dhabi's Emirates Aluminium (Emal), is jointly owned by Abu Dhabi investment fund Mubadala and the state company which holds Dubai's most high-profile

assets, Investment Corporation of Dubai (ICD). The company has mandated BNP Paribas, Citi, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates NBD, ING, National Bank of Abu Dhabi and Natixis to arrange the loan. Marketing to other banks is expected to start as early as this week, the sources said on condition of anonymity as the information is not public.

A spokeswoman for EGA said a statement would be released to the media in coming days. She made no further comment. The company is seeking funds with a lifespan between 12 and 14 years to refi-

nance loans taken for the Emal projects and is planning to consolidate existing debt into a single loan at improved costs, sources told Reuters last month.

Given the projects have been operational, they now have financial track records which banks can use to base their lending decisions against—meaning the new debt should be priced at a much cheaper rate than the original project finance which had included risks relating to construction and getting the scheme up and running. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.474
Indian Rupees	4.615
Pakistani Rupees	2.890
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.149
Nepali Rupees	2.887
Singapore Dollar	215.940
Hongkong Dollar	39.328
Bangladesh Taka	3.846
Philippine Peso	6.471
Thai Baht	8.501
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.323
Qatari Riyal	83.771
Omani Riyal	792.100
Bahraini Dinar	809.880
UAE Dirham	83.029
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	38.550
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.994
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.423
Tunisian Dinar	150.890
Jordanian Dinar	429.510
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.032
Syrian Lira	2.173
Morocco Dirham	30.757
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.800
Euro	327.660
Sterling Pound	466.340
Canadian dollar	230.910
Turkish lira	107.040
Swiss Franc	301.780
Australian dollar	220.070
US Dollar Buying	303.600

GOLD	
20 gram	220.34
10 gram	112.87
5 gram	57.12

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

COUNTRY	SELL DRAFT	SELL CASH
Australian Dollar	203.93	
Canadian Dollar	233.57	
Swiss Franc	304.38	
Euro	329.59	
US Dollar	305.00	
Sterling Pound	468.71	
Japanese Yen	2.51	
Bangladesh Taka	3.863	
Indian Rupee	4.607	
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.152	
Nepali Rupee	2.883	
Pakistani Rupee	2.888	
UAE Dirhams	0.08300	
Bahraini Dinar	0.8106	
Egyptian Pound	0.03886	
Jordanian Dinar	0.4338	
Omani Riyal	0.7920	
Qatari Riyal	0.08409	
Saudi Riyal	0.08130	

DOHAR EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	305.300
Canadian Dollar	230.715
Sterling Pound	464.385

Euro	326.235	
Swiss Frank	311.930	
Bahrain Dinar	810.310	
UAE Dirhams	83.420	
Qatari Riyals	91.460	
Saudi Riyals	82.140	
Jordanian Dinar	430.200	
Egyptian Pound	38.878	
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.147	
Indian Rupees	4.606	
Pakistani Rupees	2.892	
Bangladesh Taka	3.864	
Philippines Peso	6.482	
Cyprus pound	581.505	
Japanese Yen	3.480	
Syrian Pound	2.615	
Nepalese Rupees	3.875	
Malaysian Ringgit	72.100	
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	48.125	
Thai Bhat	9.490	
Turkish Lira	108.030	

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

COUNTRY	SELL CASH	SELLDRAFT
British Pound	0.457753	0.466753
Czech Korune	0.004100	0.016100
Danish Krone	0.039777	0.044777
Euro	0.319779	0.327779
Norwegian Krone	0.031462	0.036662
Romanian Leu	0.087435	0.087435
Slovakia	0.009118	0.019118
Swedish Krona	0.031109	0.036109
Swiss Franc	0.293458	0.303658
Turkish Lira	0.102421	0.112721

Australasia	
Australian Dollar	0.212777
New Zealand Dollar	0.194402

America	
Canadian Dollar	0.223132
US Dollars	0.300700
US Dollars Mint	0.301200

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003514
Chinese Yuan	0.046314
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037226
Indian rupee	0.004414
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018
Japanese Yen	0.002398
Kenyan Shilling	0.003168
Korean Won	0.000254
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067553
Nepalese Rupee	0.002920
Pakistan Rupee	0.002743
Philippine Peso	0.006414
Sierra Leone	0.000068
Singapore Dollar	0.212766
South African Rand	0.015902
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001769
Taiwan	0.009257
Thai Baht	0.008221

Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.801276
Egyptian Pound	0.037487
Iranian Riyal	0.000084
Iraqi Dinar	0.000208
Jordanian Dinar	0.425910
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022169
Nigerian Naira	0.001261
Omani Riyal	0.785268
Qatar Riyal	0.083010
Saudi Riyal	0.800643
Syrian Pound	0.001292
Tunisian Dinar	0.145768
Turkish Lira	0.102421
UAE Dirhams	0.082005
Yemeni Riyal	0.001378



MANHATTAN: People walk by Macy's Herald Square in midtown Manhattan November in New York. Lackluster earnings reports from retailers have raised questions about whether the 2015 holiday shopping season will bring as much of a boost to the US economy as hoped. — AFP

RETAILERS CAUTIOUS AHEAD OF US HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON

GRIM FORECASTS RAISE DOUBTS OVER HOLIDAY BOON

NEW YORK: Lackluster earnings reports from retailers have raised questions about whether the 2015 holiday shopping season will bring as much of a boost to the US economy as hoped.

Apparel giant Gap and kitchen and home furnishings chain Williams-Sonoma late this week became the latest big US retailers to slash their profit forecast for the critical December quarter.

The grim forecasts raised doubts about whether an improving US jobs market and lower gasoline prices will translate into a holiday boon for retailers. Consumer spending accounts for about 70 percent of US economic activity. Earlier in November, Macy's also gave a dim outlook, citing a drop in sales to foreign tourists because of the strong dollar and the need to

sharply discount a glut of cold-weather merchandise that has not moved due to unseasonably warm weather. "I wish I could say it's going to get ice cold across the country," Macy's chief executive Terry Lundgren said in a November 11 conference call with Wall Street analysts. "But you can see in our forecast for the fourth quarter we are not expecting that."

"We're not selling lumber, so I can't carry the lumber over to 2016 and sell it at the same price next year. We're selling fashion apparel, so we're going to mark that inventory down. That will be good for consumers but it will obviously put pressure on our own margins."

Inventory levels at auto dealers, furniture stores, home improvement centers and department stores

all rose in September, lifting the inventory-to-sales ratio in that month to the highest level since May 2009, according to a report by consultancy IHS.

IHS projects a 3.5 percent rise in holiday retail sales in 2015 compared with last year. Growth of 3.5 percent is "a pretty strong forecast," said economist Chris Christopher, adding that the economic effects are mixed. "Consumers are benefitting, but retailers are having a hard time," he said.

Black Friday changes

Chris Morran, deputy editor at the Consumerist, an independent consumer advocacy site, predicted no major changes to overall sales in 2015. "There hasn't been a drastic change in the jobs picture. There hasn't been a huge increase in wages," he said. Much bigger than any change in overall sales will be the role of online commerce this holiday shopping season, which kicks off in force the day after Thanksgiving, known as "Black Friday." The focus on e-commerce means stores are no longer emphasizing opening up on Thanksgiving night and are stretching out the season of holiday promotions. Amazon has had "Black Friday" specials since November 1. "People have become a lot more savvy and realize that a lot more of these Black Friday doorbusters are just junk," Morran said.

Online has been embraced much heartily than before by retail giants like Wal-Mart stores, which this year for the first time will make the more than 90 percent of its "Black Friday" discounts available online. Fewer in-store specials reduces the chance of dangerous crowds that have sometimes led to serious injury, including the 2008 fatality of one Walmart worker stampeded to death. Walmart will also offer online-only specials on Thanksgiving Day of high-definition television, Star Wars gaming headsets and other goodies "so customers can shop while the turkey is in the oven," the company said in a November 12 announcement of its Black Friday plans. — AFP

CHINA PLEDGES TO BOOST RETAIL, TRAVEL SECTORS

BEIJING: China will promote the development of the retail, health, travel and sports sectors in a bid to boost domestic consumption, the cabinet said yesterday. In a statement on its website, the State Council said it will encourage financial institutions to accept a broader range of collateral for extending loans to "lifestyle-related businesses."

Other sectors that the government highlighted are service ones related to families and the elderly, culture, law, accommodation and catering as well as education and training.

The State Council said the government will also expand consumer credit, improve the system of Internet payments and study the management of credit card fees "to further reduce overall expenses" related to their use. No details were given.

The government will crack down on price-gouging as well as the sale of counterfeit goods, and prosecute monopolies and businesses engaged in unfair competition, according to the statement.

Top leaders have flagged a "new normal" of slower growth as it tries to shift the world's second-largest economy to sustainable, consumption-led development. China's economy is on track this year to grow at its slowest pace in more than two decades. Chinese growth dipped to 6.9 percent in the third quarter, the weakest since the global financial crisis, hurt partly by cooling investment.

Earlier this month, the government said it will increase financial, fiscal and tax policy support to drive consumption. — Reuters

TINY SWISS BANK BREAKS NEGATIVE RATES TABOO

ZURICH: A tiny Swiss bank specialized in financing social and environmental projects will on January 1 go where no retail lender has gone before, applying negative interest rates on individual clients.

The Alternative Bank Schweiz (ABS) caused shockwaves with a letter sent to all clients in mid-October informing them that it would begin imposing interest charges on deposits in 2016.

For current accounts, the bank said it would impose a -0.125-percent rate, while slapping a -0.75-percent rate on client deposits higher than 100,000 Swiss francs (\$98,650, 92,420 euros).

So far individual depositors have been shielded from the burn of decisions by several central banks, including Switzerland's, to introduce negative inter-

est rates to light a flame under growth or ward off unwanted currency investors. ABS, which grew out of the ideals the 1960s protest movement, justified the unprecedented development by saying it would provide maneuvering room for financing "meaningful projects". The move did not go unnoticed in Swiss financial circles as banks in the wealthy Alpine nation search for ways to deal with the negative rates imposed on them by the central bank in January.

"This decision on negative rates is costing us a lot of money—pretty much the equivalent of our entire annual profit last year," ABS chief Martin Rohner said. The Swiss central bank introduced a negative deposit rate in January after it abruptly abandoned

its three-year effort to hold down the franc's exchange rate to protect exports. The -0.75 percent rate is meant to dissuade foreign investors buying and holding Swiss francs as a safe haven investment, which had been putting upward pressure on the currency. In the weeks that followed that rate decision, several Swiss banks, including giants UBS and Credit Suisse, decided to pass on some of the pain to their larger institutional clients.

None of them however imposed interest charges on individual depositors. "We have determined that applying a negative rate was a more transparent and fairer solution for our clientele," Rohner said, insisting this was a better solution than upping management fees. Some clients did not see things in the same light, jumping on the phone to demand explanations from their bankers.

Some clients 'surprised'

"We have had clients who were surprised but who after talking with us on the phone understood in the end," Rohner said, adding that most clients had accepted the move. Some remained critical, he acknowledged, but stressed that the bank's clientele in general was not made up of people who accept top-down decisions sitting down. Based in the central town of Olten, ABS counts the Swiss branch of environmental group Greenpeace and the Swiss Green Party among its founding organizations.

The bank describes itself as an ethical organization focused on backing firms investing in social and environmental projects. With its balance sheet totalling nearly 1.6 billion Swiss francs last year, most of its activities are concentrated in cooperative housing projects, providing affordable housing and sustainable energy solutions, as well as organic farming.

Other projects it has backed include a youth circus and a company creating a new kind of electric bicycle. In its annual study on the sector, the Swiss Bankers Association found that the central bank's negative rate decision was hitting most of all banks specialised in wealth management, and that most preferred taking on the cost themselves for fear of seeing their clients abandon ship. — AFP

SPANISH RETAILERS CHEER SIGNS OF XMAS RECOVERY

MADRID: From department stores to delicatessens, Spanish retailers are anticipating their best Christmas in years as shoppers gear up for a spending spree that should help extend an economic recovery and boost a struggling jobs market. Tax cuts, low inflation and falling energy prices have helped bump up stretched family budgets this year and, with a national election due next month, the government will hope the positive effects of a Christmas splurge rub off on voters.

Businesses believe this year's retail campaign, widely expected to be the most successful since 2008 when the downturn began, may also mark the turning point the country has been hoping for since it exited recession in mid-2013. "Not everything that was lost has come back, and we're not back to 2007 levels (in revenues), but some of it has been recovered," said Alberto Marti, whose family-owned company produces gift hampers packed with Iberian ham, fine wines and sweets, which businesses traditionally offer to their clients.

The company, which operates out of Madrid and Barcelona, increased its range of budget hampers during the crisis, and has noted modest improvements in sales since 2013. But this season things are looking much rosier with order up 10 to 20 percent on 2014. While unemployment, to date the most intractable legacy of Spain's long slump, has started tailing off, it is still running at above 21 percent - the second highest rate in Europe after Greece.

So recruitment group Adecco's prediction that 850,000 jobs could be added between November and January - up 16 percent on 2014 - points to a welcome retail-driven employment spurt, even if most of the hiring will be temporary. El Corte Ingles - a department chain viewed as an economic bellwether and selling everything from clothing and household goods to food and holidays - said it was taking on 7,000 extra staff for the season. That is nearly three times as many as last year.

Online retailer Amazon said its Spanish warehouse would operate with 75 percent more staff at Christmas than a year ago, adding 600 jobs, while delivery firms, supermarkets and electronics stores are all recruiting too.

Spaniards also are among the Europeans expected to spend more on presents, food and leisure this Christmas, forking out an average of 560 euros, 0.2 percent more than in 2014, according to a survey by consultants Deloitte.

UNDETERRED

The survey was compiled before the Nov. 13 militant attacks in Paris that put much of Europe on a heightened terror alert, but so far shoppers in Spain - which held its alert level at 4 on a scale of 5 - seem undeterred. Victoria Larroy, partner at Deloitte in Spain, did not expect the attacks to overly affect footfall in the country's shops.

"Online sales could go up if people shy away from large crowds," she said, suggesting spending habits could change slightly. There was little early evidence of that in central Madrid, where large stores were bustling on the Saturday following the attacks.

But scars from the economic crisis remain, and a widening salary gap between high earners and the poorest is just one symptom of an uneven recovery that has left the outcome of the Dec. 20 election in the balance. Despite having helped engineer one of Europe's fastest growth rates, President Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's centre-right People's Party (PP) is far from securing another majority, polls show. Economists also project that the pace of growth in Spain will slow as some of the tailwinds that have helped boost spending, including low inflation, peter out. Marti, like many retailers, agrees Spain's economy remains a work in progress. But he is encouraged by the improving outlook and hopes Christmas will be good enough to warrant overtime for his staff for the first time in years. "We can't wait to start working on Saturdays and extra hours again," he said. — Reuters

5 YEARS INTO AUSTERITY, UK PREPARES FOR MORE CUTS

LONDON: After laying off nearly half its staff over the last five years, scaling back street cleaning and relying on volunteers to work at some of its libraries, the London borough of Lewisham is getting ready for what could be much more painful spending cuts. Officials in Lewisham's town hall, like those across the country, know they will have to shoulder much of finance minister George Osborne's renewed push to fix Britain's budget.

Osborne is due to announce on Wednesday the details of a new spending squeeze which, according to International Monetary Fund data, ranks as the most aggressive austerity plan among the world's rich economies between now and 2020. It is also a gamble by Osborne, a leading contender to be the next prime minister, that voters can stomach more cuts.

He rejects accusations that his insistence on a budget surplus by the end of the decade is a choice, saying Britain needs fiscal strength to fight off future shocks to the economy.

As in the first five years of his austerity push - which Osborne originally hoped would wipe out the budget deficit - he plans to spare Britain's health service, schools and foreign aid budget from his new cuts and will increase defense spending. That means that cuts for unprotected areas of government, such as local councils, will be all the deeper.

Kevin Bonavia, a councillor who oversees Lewisham's budget, said the borough had just agreed to merge computing teams with another one on the other side of London as it seeks to make more savings in its back-office operations and protect services.

But voters are likely to notice the cuts more in the years ahead than they have done so far. Rubbish bins may no longer be emptied weekly. Delivery of cooked meals could be replaced with help for people in need to do their own online shopping. Lewisham will also have to find savings in the way it provides social care for the elderly and children, which accounts for the lion's share of its spending.

"We are always trying to rationalize. But we have to do it at pace now, and when you do it at pace, you can make mistakes," Bonavia, a member of the opposition Labour Party, said.

It's not just Labor politicians who are wor-

ried about the latest spending squeeze. The Conservative leader of a council in Oxfordshire recently wrote a blunt letter to Prime Minister David Cameron to spell out the challenge of funding care for the elderly and children after Cameron had complained about cuts to frontline services in the area, where he has a family home.

POLICE CUTS TOO

Britain's police departments and the justice system, which runs courts, are also likely to bear the brunt of further cuts. Ben Priestley, an official with public sector workers' union Unison, said the number of police community support officers (PCSOs) - who typically work most closely with local people but cannot make arrests - had been cut by 27 percent since 2010 and some regional forces might have to lay them all off. "The penny will gradually drop for the public," Priestley said. "We might only see police officers when they speed by at 60 miles per hour with their blue lights flashing."

Osborne acknowledges that his spending cuts will be painful. But he also says that Britain is learning to do more with less. He points to statistics which show crime has fallen by more than a quarter since 2010, despite a 23 percent cut in the interior ministry's budget since then, and surveys which show stable or rising satisfaction with local services.

As well as the departmental spending cuts that he is due to announce on Wednesday, Osborne has to tweak his plan for big savings in Britain's welfare budget after an original proposal to scale back tax credits for lower-earning households was rejected in a rare rebellion by the upper house of parliament.

WILL VOTERS REBEL?

Some economists say the scale of the austerity plan is too ambitious to achieve in its entirety. "We are pretty confident that the government manages to get the deficit down but it will be at a somewhat slower pace than the government plans," said Kathrin Muehlbronner, senior vice-president of sovereign risk at ratings agency Moody's. A bigger risk for Osborne is that voters start to feel the spending cuts more acutely and reject his case for them. — Reuters



COIMBATORE: Indian film actor Suriya inaugurates the newly-relocated, bigger and more spacious Malabar Gold showroom at Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India in the presence of Managing Director India Operations Asher O, Group Executive Directors A K Nishad, K P Veerankutty, dignitaries from media and other well-wishers.

Do you think to INVEST IN UK?

- Are you interested in migrating to the UK with your family?
- Are you interested in the citizenship by investment programme for Cyprus, Malta and UK which gives you access to live and work in the UK?
- Are you interested in the citizenship by investment programme for Caribbean Islands which gives you a lot of benefits.

You are all invited to meet with Mr. Garth Coates in Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait City in Wednesday 25 November from 3PM - 9PM.

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SHOULD WE WORRY AS OIL STOCKS HIT 3BN BARRELS?

LONDON: Nearly 3 billion barrels of crude petroleum and refined products are being stored by oil firms in the advanced economies according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). Commentators have seized on the 3 billion figure as a shorthand way to convey how oversupplied the oil market has become.

Large round numbers exert a powerful pull on the imagination but shorn of context they are meaningless and apt to confuse rather than illuminate. The statistic is technically accurate but the way in which it is being employed by analysts and journalists is hugely misleading. It would be more helpful to report the change, which is 240 million barrels, or 9 percent, over the last year.

GLOBAL OIL INVENTORIES

The 3 billion barrels figure being widely quoted is actually for a relatively small subset of the total crude and products being stored. Global stocks of crude oil and refined products are probably at least double this figure, at more than 6 billion barrels.

Oil producers, traders, pipeline operators and refiners held crude and products stocks in the OECD countries amounting to 2.989 billion barrels in September, according to the IEA ("Oil Market Report" Nov 2015). But the figure excludes government-controlled stocks in the OECD, private and government stocks in emerging markets, oil in transit by tanker, as well as all stocks held by wholesalers and end-users.

OECD governments controlled a further 1.581 billion barrels of oil and refined products stocks as emergency reserves, taking total stocks on land in OECD countries to almost 4.6 billion barrels, according to the IEA. Developing countries tend to hold smaller stocks in private and government-controlled storage but they account for half of global oil demand and could easily be holding another 1 billion barrels of stocks. China, for example, is thought to hold more than 200 million barrels in its government-controlled Strategic Petroleum Reserve ("Oil Market Report" Sep 2015).

If refiners in emerging markets hold the same operational stocks on site as their counterparts in the advanced economies, there are likely to be at least

another 500 million barrels in private storage in developing countries. All the figures given so far exclude stocks in transit by tanker from oil exporting countries to the major refining centers.

There are roughly 650 very large crude carriers (VLCCs) plying the seas with a total carrying capacity of around 1.3 billion barrels of crude oil.

If roughly half are filled with crude, while the other half are in ballast on the return journey, that would imply another 650 million barrels of crude in transit. Hundreds of millions more barrels of crude are in transit in smaller Suezmax and Aframax vessels plus millions of barrels of refined fuels in transit by tanker. It is relatively easy to produce an estimate that puts global crude and products stocks somewhere in the region of 6-8 billion barrels.

In the United States alone, there were almost 100 million barrels of crude oil in transit by pipeline, railroad tank car and barge in March 2015, all of which are counted in commercial crude stocks by the US Energy Information Administration (EIA). Then there are hundreds of millions of barrels stored in tanks at oil fields and ports around the world awaiting for export by tanker.

In the United States, there were 35 million barrels of crude still in storage at the oilfields in March, which are again included in the EIA reported commercial stocks figures ("Working and net available shell storage capacity" May 2015). Refineries also hold hundreds of millions of barrels of partially refined oil as part of their operations, and there are hundreds of millions of barrels of refined fuels ready for shipping to customers.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The impression is sometimes given that stocks are sitting idle waiting for an upturn in demand before being consumed, but holding large volumes of stock at all points in the supply chain is an operational necessity. Looking at just the commercial and crude stocks reported by the IEA, oil refiners typically want to hold crude oil on site in their tank farms equivalent to around 6-10 days' worth of processing.

Tank farm storage gives the oil time to settle, permits optimal blending, and enables the distillation units to be fed continuously, while protecting against any delays in fresh crude arriving.

Global refineries process more than 80 million barrels of crude every day which implies they need around 500-800 million barrels in storage for immediate operational needs. In addition, well over a billion barrels of oil and refined products are moving from oil fields to refineries and then to bulk distribution terminals every day via tankers, pipelines, barges and railroad tank cars.

Every figure so far has been for "primary stocks", but additional stocks of refined fuel are held by wholesalers and distributors ("secondary stocks") as well as end users ("tertiary stocks").

The enormous inventory held at every stage in the supply chain from oilfield, export terminal, pipeline and tanker to tank farm, refinery and bulk fuel terminal explains why refined fuels are nearly always available. Prices are volatile but there are almost never actual physical shortages of crude or fuels like gasoline and diesel because inventories create operational flexibility and resilience in the supply chain.

Oil storage is becoming very big business. According to the IEA: "An impressive 230 million barrels of new land-based storage capacity could be commissioned before end-2016 in locations as diverse as North America, the Middle East, Africa and South East Asia, with Chinese SPR capacity expected to account for more than half." — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Sunday 22 November 2015

Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low
Price Index	▲ 30.73	5,756.14	5,725.41	5,756.82	5,726.06
Weighted Index	▲ 3.26	394.10	390.84	394.15	391.03
KSX 15	▲ 11.75	945.74	933.99	945.74	935.59

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	124	104	60348	6,471	9	110	▼ -4.0
IKARUS	91	86	2,080	189	3	91	▲ 5.0
IPG	250	250	12,000	3,000	3	250	— 0.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	620	— 0.0
ENERGYH	42.5	42.5	4,000	170	2	42.5	— 0.0
GPI	53	52	1,332,915	69,321	39	52	▲ 1.0
ABAR	102	102	400	41	1	102	▲ 2.0
Oil & Gas			1,411,743	79,191	57	782.17	▲ 5.53
KFOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	240	— 0.0
BPCC	560	550	47,236	26,419	6	560	— 0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	610	— 0.0
ALQURAIN	194	190	211,442	40,622	19	194	▲ 4.0
Basic Materials			258,678	67,041	25	1040.09	▲ 7.80

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
KCEM	395	395	848	335	1	395	▼ -10.0
REFRI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	325	— 0.0
CABLE	380	380	1,000	380	1	380	▼ -5.0
SHIP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	148	— 0.0
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,140	— 0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	395	— 0.0
MRC	64	64	1,000	64	1	64	▼ -5.0
ACICO	295	290	6,128	1,778	4	295	▲ 5.0
GMCM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	495	— 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	130	— 0.0
KPAK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	— 0.0
KBMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	— 0.0
NICBM	222	222	161	36	1	222	▼ -10.0
EQUIPMENT	63	61	649,207	40,222	36	62	▲ 1.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	— 0.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	— 0.0
SALBOOKH	86	82	444,400	36,498	30	82	▼ -1.0
AGLTY	520	510	359,408	184,068	28	520	▲ 10.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	226	— 0.0
CLEANING	44.5	42.5	281,858	12,144	11	43.0	▼ -2.0
CITYGROUP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	390	— 0.0
KGL	48.0	47.5	605,000	28,940	28	48.0	▼ -1.5
KPCP	222	212	9,306	1,973	2	222	— 0.0
HUMANSOFT	790	790	10	8	1	790	▲ 50.0
NAFAIS	178	174	2,342,176	416,853	5	178	▲ 10.0
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	325	— 0.0
GFC	83	78	9,437	760	14	78	▼ -5.0
MAYADEEN	24.0	23.5	2,372,851	56,933	48	24.0	▲ 0.5
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	780	— 0.0
MTCC	73	68	2,548,987	183,443	86	73	▲ 5.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700	— 0.0
ALAFCCO	224	220	64,377	14,164	5	224	▼ -6.0
MUBARRAD	83	79	3,253,159	265,537	45	82	▲ 3.0
LOGISTICS	66	64	2,413,746	155,395	88	64	▼ -5.0
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	88	— 0.0
GCEM	83	83	13,301	1,104	1	83	▲ 1.0
QCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	— 0.0
FCEM	74	74	120,075	8,886	3	74	▼ -1.0
RKWC	104	104	4,350	452	2	104	▼ -4.0
SPEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	87	— 0.0
Industrials			15,500,783	1,409,974	441	1053.37	▲ 4.50

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220	— 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	62	— 0.0
PAPCO	106	106	30	3	2	106	▼ -8.0
CATTL	146	142	37,403	5,375	5	144	▲ 2.0
DANAH	93	90	938,010	85,977	37	92	— 0.0
POULT	176	176	50	9	1	176	— 0.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,260	— 0.0
Consumer Goods			975,493	91,364	441	1109.29	▼ -5.46
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190	— 0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0
YIACO	154	154	297,950	45,884	13	154	▲ 10
Health Care			297,950	45,884	13	967.78	▲ 7.34

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
KCIN	970	970	40,000	38,800	2	970	— 0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	— 0
SULTAN	68	67	87,424	5,932	12	68	— 0
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	25.0	— 0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	310	— 0
IFAHR	136	134	1,000	135	2	136	▲ 4
OULAFUEL	112	112	23,906	2,677	12	112	▼ -2
MUNTAZAHAT	99	98	10,877	1,071	3	99	▲ 1
JAZEERA	470	465	125,199	58,506	7	465	— 0
SOOR	114	110	123,981	13,979	26	112	▼ -2
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	110	— 0
ALNAWADI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	— 0
ALRAI	168	168	100	17	1	168	— 0
ZIMAH	120	116	1,738,076	203,144	78	118	▼ -2
UFIG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	130	— 0
KOUTFOOD	720	620	275	186	2	620	▼ -50
Mezzan	1,080	1,060	532,445	565,212	13	1,080	▲ 20
Consumer Services			2,683,283	889,658	158	1006.50	▼ -7.44

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
ZAIN	380	370	2,160,718	810,898	61	380	▲ 10
OOREDOO	1,020	1,020	52	53	2	1,020	— 0
HITSTELEC	32.5	30.0	17,468,036	550,962	205	32.5	▲ 3
VIVA	1,040	1,040	7,804,682	8,116,869	237	1,040	▲ 70
Telecommunications			27,433,488	9,478,781	605	626.14	▲ 32.07
NBK	830	820	806,325	669,179	30	830	— 0
GBK	275	275	42,000	11,550	2	275	— 0
CBK	510	500	20,000	10,020	3	500	— 0
ABK	375	370	100,225	37,583	6	370	— 0
ALMUTAHED	540	540	105,585	57,016	3	540	▼ -10
KIB	230	228	111,500	25,605	12	228	▼ -2
BURG	390	385	26,407	10,292	6	390	— 0
KFIN	590	580	1,533,302	889,403	69	590	▲ 20
BOUBAYAN	445	440	522,178	229,894	26	440	— 0
AUB	210	210	100,000	21,000	2	210	— 0
ITHMR	46.5	43.5	5,051,547	229,105	115	44.5	▲ 1
WARBABANK	208	206	265,525	54,751	70	206	▼ -2
Banks			8,684,594	2,245,398	344	929.95	▲ 1.88

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	310	— 0.0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	800	— 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	410	— 0.0
WINS	112	108	106	12	2	108	— 0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	206	— 0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	65	— 0.0
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	40.5	— 0.0
BKIRWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0
Insurance			106	12	2	1123.57	— 0.00

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	48.5</						



THE NEW MERCEDES-MAYBACH S600 PULLMAN HIGH-END LUXURY-CLASS MOTOR VEHICLE WITH A PROUD PEDIGREE

KUWAIT: The new Mercedes-Maybach S600 Pullman has arrived in the region and will be available in Kuwait as part of the regional road show for private viewing for the prestigious clients of Abdul Rahman Albisher & Zaid Alkazemi Co, the authorized General Distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait. The second model from the Mercedes-Maybach's ultra-luxurious family of cars is a top-of-the-range vehicle, with face-to-face seating in the partitioned-off passenger compartment.

Never before seen in Kuwait, the newest Mercedes-Maybach model made its regional debut at the Dubai Motor Show earlier this month. Car enthusiasts will have the chance to admire the beautiful vehicle up close.

"The Mercedes-Maybach S600 Pullman stands as a proud example of the high-end automotive luxury traditionally associated with Maybach," said Michael Ruehle, CEO, Abdul Rahman Albisher & Zaid Alkazemi Company. "Offering new levels of drive comfort, technology and innovation, this is a car that we are certain will excel in the luxury segment."

Many governments, heads of state and royal families around the world have for decades chosen Mercedes-Benz saloons with the designation "Pullman" to drive them with the glory and style befitting their status. With its new

model, the company is now extending its unique position in this demanding segment.

Its length of 6.50 metres is a sign of the special status of the Mercedes-Maybach Pullman. Providing appropriate space for the tasteful club lounge in the rear, a multitude of

superior fittings ensures the chauffeur-driven limousine lives up to today's expectations of total exclusivity and luxury.

With two standard-specification executive seats facing the direction of travel, VIP occupants can enjoy the greatest legroom with the

assurance of comfort and ease getting in and out of the car. As is typical for a Pullman, the four passengers can sit facing each other in the compartment, partitioned off from the driver by an electrically-operated partition window. The seating arrangement also offers additional privacy, thanks to the rear roof pillar.

The Mercedes-Maybach is characterized by its extraordinary and perfect craftsmanship and offers customers the opportunity to individualize the appointments of their top-class limousines, including exquisite Maybach paint finishes.



Mercedes-Benz

The V12 biturbo engine in the Mercedes-Maybach S600 Pullman has an output of 390 kW (530 hp). It has a displacement of 5980 cc and maximum torque of 830 Nm from 1900 rpm.

Extremely spacious seating in the rear, entire vehicle interior is leather-clad

The interior of the Mercedes-Maybach Pullman is upholstered in high-quality leather throughout as standard including the roof lin-

er, the door frames and seat consoles. Additionally, there are three analogue instruments in the roof liner informing passengers in the rear of the outside temperature speed and time.

The partition wall which can be lowered electrically, ensures discretion and can also change from transparent to opaque at the touch of a button. This allows - in combination with the equally standard-specification curtains for the rear windows - for different levels of privacy. The standard-fit 16:9 format 18.5-inch (47 cm) monitor located in front of the partition can also be extended electrically.

Those who demand uncompromising quality of sound and appreciate perfect music reproduction can choose between two innovative Burmester sound systems. The existing Burmester surround sound system delivers the legendary and unmistakable magical sound for which the high-end audio specialist from Berlin is famous. But as an option par excellence, the Burmester High-End 3D Surround Sound System provides matchless listening pleasure and outstanding sound quality.

The new Mercedes-Maybach S600 Pullman is available for consultation and placing orders at Abdul Rahman Albisher & Zaid Alkazemi Co.



AL-TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al-Najma Account draw on 22nd November, 2015.

The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The winners of the Al-Najma Daily Draw are:

Yaseen Allah Barakat Khan — KD 7000, Silvia Antwanik Toutounjian and or Ohannis Dikramanjan — KD 7000, Mohammed Ali Al-Salamah — KD 7000, Tareq Khorsheed Ahmad — KD 7000, Hayat Yaseen Salem Al-Zaidan — KD 7000.

The Commercial Bank of Kuwait announces the biggest daily draw in Kuwait with the launch of the new Najma account. Customers of the bank can now

Thousands have won with us!
Be the star and win with Al Tijari.

Al Najma account
KD 7,000
Daily

and **KD 100,000**
in 4 Mega Draws

Commercial Bank of Kuwait
Al-Tijari
1-888-225 cbk.com

enjoy a KD 7,000 daily prize which is the highest in the country and another 4 mega prizes during the year worth KD 100,000 each on different occasions: The National Day, Eid Al-Fitr, Eid Al-Adha and on the 19th of June which is the date of the bank's establishment.

With a minimum balance of KD 500, customers will be eligible for the daily draw provided that the money is in the account one week prior to the daily draw or 2 months prior to the mega draw. In addition, for each KD 25 a customer can get one chance for winning instead of KD 50.

Commercial Bank of Kuwait takes this opportunity to congratulate all lucky winners and also extends appreciation to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for their effective supervision of the draws which were conducted in an orderly and organized manner.

MARKETS LOOK BEYOND A DECEMBER RATE HIKE

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

US housing remains healthy

US housing starts fell to a seven-month low in October as single-family home construction tumbled, but a surge in building permits suggested that the housing market remained on solid ground. Housing starts dropped 11 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual pace of 1.06 million units, the lowest level since March. September's starts were revised down to a 1.19 million-unit pace from 1.21 million units. Nevertheless, October marked the seventh straight month that starts remained above 1 million units, the longest period since 2007 suggesting a sustainable housing market recovery. Meanwhile, building permits increased 4.1 percent to a 1.15 million-unit rate last month higher than expectations.

Mixed data

Manufacturing activity in the Philadelphia-region in November grew for the first time in three months, supporting the case for a US interest rate hike next month. In a report, the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia said that its manufacturing index improved to 1.9 this month from October's reading of -4.5. Analysts had expected the index to rise to -1.0 in November. Meanwhile, the New York Federal Reserve's index of manufacturing conditions contracted for the fourth straight month in November, dampening optimism over the strength of the economy. The Empire manufacturing index showed a reading of -10.74, whereas expectations were for a reading of -6.50.

Jobless claims remain subdued

Initial jobless claims in the US continued to hover around four-decade lows last week as the labor market strengthens toward full employment.

The number of jobless claim applications decreased by 5,000 to 271,000 in the week ended Nov. 14 from 276,000 in the previous period. The number of claims dipped to 255,000 in mid-July, the fewest since the 1970s. Employment has shown enough signs of strength to allow Federal Reserve policy makers to consider raising interest rates for the first time in almost a decade. In another sign that the Federal Reserve's rate-setting committee could be on the verge of raising interest rates, minutes from the Fed's October meeting showed wide agreement that labor and inflation measures were pointing toward a December liftoff. Federal Reserve policy makers inserted language into their October statement to stress that "it may well become appropriate" to raise the benchmark lending rate in December and largely agreed that the pace of increases would be gradual, minutes of the meeting showed.

Europe & UK

German economic sentiment improved more than expected in November, one month after falling to the lowest level in a year. In a report, the ZEW Centre for Economic Research said that its index of German economic sentiment rose by 8.5 points to 10.4 this month from October's reading of 1.9, which was a 12-month low. Analysts had expected the index to rise by 4.1 points to 6.0 in November. Meanwhile, the index of euro zone economic sentiment declined to a 12-month low of 28.3 in November from 30.1 a month earlier, missing forecasts for 35.2.

ECB willing to act fast

The European Central Bank is ready to act quickly to boost anemic inflation in the euro zone, its president said on Friday, highlighting changes to its asset purchase program and deposit rate as possible tools.

Mario Draghi's comments offered the strongest hint yet that the ECB will unveil fresh stimulus measures at its Dec. 3

meeting to stop inflation from falling further below its target of just under 2 percent. "If we decide that the current trajectory of our policy is not sufficient to achieve our objective, we will do what we must to raise inflation as quickly as possible," Draghi told a conference in Frankfurt.

UK inflation in negative territory

Consumer price inflation in the UK remained in negative territory for the second straight month in October, underlining concerns over deflationary pressures and reinforcing views that interest rates will remain pegged at record-lows in the near future. In a report, the UK Office for National Statistics said the rate of consumer price inflation held steady at a seasonally adjusted -0.1 percent last month, in line with expectations and unchanged from September.

UK retail sales fall

Retail sales in the UK fell more than expected in October, dampening optimism over the country's economic outlook and dimming the case for higher interest rates, official data showed on Thursday. In a report, the UK Office for National Statistics said retail sales declined by a seasonally adjusted 0.6 percent last month, worse than forecasts for a decline of 0.5 percent. Retail sales in September rose by 1.7 percent, whose figure was revised from a previously reported gain of 1.9 percent. Year-on-year, retail sales increased at an annualized rate of 3.8 percent in October, below expectations for a 4.2 percent gain, after rising at a rate of 6.2 percent in September. Core retail sales, which exclude automobile sales, fell by a seasonally adjusted 0.9 percent last month, disappointing forecasts for a 0.5 percent decline and following a gain of 1.5 percent in September.

BoJ keeps monetary policy unchanged

The Bank of Japan left its monetary policy unchanged again, despite the Japanese economy falling back into recession in Q3, and despite a sharp drop in imports revealed in the latest trade data. The BoJ maintained its asset purchase program unchanged at an annual pace of JPY80tn. It also left its general economic assessment unchanged, saying the economy has continued to recover moderately. But the board downgraded its assessment on inflation expectations by acknowledging the relatively weak development in inflation according to some recent indicators. On the data front, imports fell by 13.4 percent in October after an 11.0 percent drop in September, while exports dropped 2.1 percent on a yearly basis.

Australia: Further easing is open

The Reserve Bank of Australia left the door open towards further easing if needed in the latest meeting minutes while still sounding optimistic towards the future of the economy. The RBA has also stated that it will be most probably holding off from making any changes in the near future including their next meeting on December 1st until they get a "clearer picture" with more labor and inflation data.

Oil glut not going away for now

Oil traded near three-month lows on Friday on a persistent supply glut that has cut prices by up to 13 percent since the start of November. US crude West Texas Intermediate closed the week at \$41.90 after dipping to \$39.89 during the previous session, its lowest since Aug. 27.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30420
The USDKD opened at 0.30420 yesterday morning.

ETIHAD AIRWAYS OPENS NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART CREW BRIEFING CENTER

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways has officially opened a new state-of-the-art Crew Briefing Centre (CBC) at its hub in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates.

The purpose-built crew terminal, the first built by the airline, is the most advanced of its kind in the region, and is fitted with leading-edge baggage handling systems, electronic check-in kiosks, security and customs scanning equipment and E-gate facilities for immigration control.

The airline will provide user-friendly technology and convenience for its 2,250 flight crew and approximately 5,800 cabin crew during the check-in and briefing processes prior to boarding their flights. Operating crews will be provided with up-to-date flight information such as flight plans, weather reports, destination information, service protocol and passenger data, for review in dedicated briefing areas within the CBC.

James Hogan, Etihad Airways' President and Chief Executive Officer, said: "We are tremendously proud to open this spectacular facility, which has been designed and built to provide our operating crew, and those of our partner airlines, with the latest technological advances and the utmost convenience."

"The Crew Briefing Centre will allow us to meet the challenges of an ever-transforming business and to meet the phenomenal growth of both Etihad Airways and Abu Dhabi well into the future. This will be particularly important in the period leading up to

the opening of the new Midfield Terminal."

The technology used in the CBC allows operating crews to start their travel from home by using their

members will receive real-time information about the flight and the airline will receive up-to-date information about their expected arrival time at the airport.

a bespoke cladding system reflecting Etihad Airways' "Facets of Abu Dhabi" corporate design, and features branded fleet and product renders throughout the building, with a

Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The terminal features 20 fully-equipped pilot and cabin crew briefing rooms, four of which can be joined to accommodate larger

plementary WiFi, Mac Book computers, hot and cold beverage stations, and shower facilities. The smaller Airside Lounge is equipped with the same facilities with the exception of showers. The airline has also provided a landside Quiet Room where crew can relax in a calm environment before they commence their duties.

The CBC boasts laundry and dry-cleaning services, a mail room and a 24-hour coffee shop serving light meals and snacks. A dedicated duty-free outlet will open within the arrivals hall.

The Guest Services department, which oversees the airline's cabin crew, has relocated its Performance Managers to the CBC to enhance communication between cabin crew and management, providing access to the latest updates, information and advice. An employee service desk providing HR assistance and travel information has also been set up at the center.

The CBC was completed with the cooperation and support received from Abu Dhabi Airports Company (ADAC), which released the necessary land required, and which was instrumental in expediting the approval of the appropriate permits necessary for the construction of the facility.

The CBC is an airside / landside facility which also accommodates government entities such as Police, Customs, Immigration and State Security, and meets all necessary health and safety requirements set by the relevant authorities.



phones and tablet devices to connect to the centre, providing the airline with a higher degree of visibility to guarantee a seamless operation. On their journey to the airport, crew

Located adjacent to Terminal 1 at Abu Dhabi Airport, the expansive new facility measures approximately 88,264 ft² set over two floors, consisting of a steel frame structure with

superior high quality finish. The contract for the building of the CBC was awarded to leading British construction firm McLaren, which operates from its two UAE bases located in

Airbus A380 crews.

Etihad Airways has opened three crew lounges within the CBC. The luxurious Landside Lounge, located on the first floor, is equipped with com-



ABK WINS ELITE QUALITY RECOGNITION AWARD FROM J P MORGAN CHASE

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) was recently presented the Elite Quality Recognition Award for the year 2015 from J P Morgan Chase, New York, for its exemplary execution of electronic payments.

Somnath Menon, Chief Operating Officer at ABK received the award saying: "We are delighted to see ABK's commitment to international quality standards being recognized by JP Morgan Chase. ABK's partnership with

correspondent banks such as JP Morgan Chase underlines our dedication to evolve as an institution that constantly provides our customers with international standards of service."

In its role as an international financial institution, ABK utilizes the latest internationally approved systems and methods to facilitate transactions and enable Straight-through-Processing (STP). By ensuring STP at the highest levels, ABK guarantees their cus-

tomers error free and timely credits for their US dollar, cross border transactions. ABK was recently also recognized by other correspondents such as Commerzbank and Standard Chartered Bank for Excellence in STP for 2014-15.

For more information about Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait please contact an ABK representative via 'Ahli Chat' or a customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' on 1899899.

BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the lucky winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners for the daily draws took home a cash-prize of KD 5,000 each, and they are:

1. KATABJIWALA SALMA SAIFUDDIN
2. JASEM RASHIM MANSOUR AL ABOUDI
3. MOHAMMAD HASSAN ALI KAMAL
4. SOUHAIL HOMSI
5. JARRAH MUTLAQ DGHAIM AL KHALDI

To further add to the anticipation of Yawmi account customers, Burgan Bank now offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, entitling one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account now offers Daily and quarterly Draws, the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for 2 months prior to draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account, will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone

to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances to becoming a winner. The more customers deposit, the high-

to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch and receive all the details, or simply call the bank's Call Center at 1804080 where customer service rep-



er the chances they receive of winning. For more information on opening a Yawmi account or about the new quarterly draw, customers are urged

representatives will be delighted to assist with any questions on the Yawmi account or any of the bank's products and services.

OWN ANY CHEVROLET VEHICLE AND GET A PREPAID BANK CARD UP TO KD 1,000 CHEVROLET ALGHANIM CELEBRATES CAMPING SEASON WITH AN EXCLUSIVE OFFER

KUWAIT: In celebrating the most anticipated return of the outdoor season in Kuwait, Yusuf Ahmad Alghanim & Sons Automotive, the exclusive distributor of Chevrolet vehicles in the country, is happy to announce a spectacular offer that will not only make the customers' shopping experience at Chevrolet Safat Alghanim showroom more rewarding than ever, but also their camping trips more memorable than ever.

Starting this November, customers who purchase a new Chevrolet vehicle from any of Chevrolet Alghanim showrooms will instantly get a prepaid bank card worth up to KD 1000. This gratifying offer will provide customers the opportunity to own the cars of their dreams at unbelievable prices while enjoying an exceptional driving experience thanks to Chevrolet's signature state-of-the-art technology and latest safety standards. The offer includes all Chevrolet line-up of: Spark, Sonic, Aveo, Cruze, Malibu, Impala, Caprice, Camaro, Captiva, Trailblazer, Traverse, Tahoe, Suburban, and Silverado.

Among the select Chevrolet cars is the 2015 Impala, full-size flagship sedan that boasts a head-turning design, a spacious refined interior and advanced technologies.

Introducing new levels of comfort and technology, the 2015 Impala features 10 standard air bags as well as a host of available safety technologies such as forward collision alert, lane departure warning, side blind zone alert, rear cross traffic alert, rear camera and rear-park assist.

The 2015 Chevrolet Impala represents the 10th generation of one of the industry's most enduring and popular nameplates. Last year, Chevrolet Impala received the "Best Large Sedan Award" at Middle East Motor Awards and named the "Best American Full-Size Passenger Car" by Automobile magazine in the region. In the US, it earned the highest score in the Consumer Reports ratings and named in the Kelley Blue Book's 12 Best Family Cars.

The Impala's V6 engine is the most powerful naturally aspirated engine in the segment. The car also receives a responsive electric power steering system and enhanced suspension that provides customers with a confident driving experience.

Inside, the vehicle offers ultimate comfort in a quiet environment with spacious front and rear legroom, generous storage and smartphone-influenced connectivity with MyLink infotainment system.

The 2015 Impala is offered in LS, LT and LTZ models.

Design Details
The 2015 Impala reflects a new aesthetic for Chevrolet's flagship sedan.

Its long, low proportion has a wind-swept profile that suggests motion, while the range of 18-, 19- and 20-inch wheels is tailored to the body to provide that "just right" stance. At the front, low-profile projector-beam headlamps - or HID headlamps and LED daytime running lamps on LTZ - sweep around the corners and frame a wide grille, while a power dome hood conveys performance. The LTZ's LED daytime running lamps provide a contemporary visual statement, along with great visibility.

Sculpted coves in the body sides add to the Impala's design drama, with a sweeping signature cue in the rear fenders that acknowledges classic Impala designs. The "greenhouse" area is long, enhancing the sleek look of the car while maintaining excellent visibility. The deck lid appears short to complement the overall proportion, but opens to reveal a trunk with 532 liters of cargo space.

Exterior colors include Black, Blue Velvet Metallic, Champagne Silver Metallic, Crystal Red Tintcoat, Red Rock Metallic, Ashen Gray Metallic, Silver Ice Metallic and Summit White.

Quiet and Refined Cabin
The Impala builds on Chevrolet's signature dual-cockpit interior with greater attention to detail and upscale features - seen in everything from the wraparound flow of the bold instrument panel into the door panels and the available ambient lighting, to the soft feel of the materials and the premium appearance of the seats' stitching.

Premium interior materials and details such as high-quality fabric, suede microfiber and perforated leather appointments, complement the quiet environment and give the Impala a substantive look and

feel. The instrument cluster has a rich look, with multidimensional gauges and a configurable color driver information center with a 4.2-inch screen. The cluster's ice-blue lighting enhances the upscale aura of the cabin, while available chrome trim with "bleed-through" ambient lighting further enhances the cabin's sophisticated flair. It completely transforms the trim's appearance by illuminating it during nighttime driving.

A prominent "center stack" is integrated in the instrument panel and houses the climate controls and Chevrolet MyLink, which includes navigation and Bluetooth audio streaming among many other features - and is controlled via a touch screen on an available eight-inch display. A standard audio amplifier is a feature not typical for the segment and a Bose surround-sound audio system is available - the first in a Chevrolet car.

LS model features premium cloth seats, while LT model comes standard with premium cloth with leatherette seats and suede microfiber-trimmed seats are available. LTZ model features standard leather seats.

Additional available features include remote start, passive entry/exit, keyless starting, power tilting/telescoping steering column with memory, dual-zone climate control and heated and ventilated front seats. The Impala also packs great storage options, including a generous center console and a hidden storage area behind the optional motorized eight-inch color touch screen.

Interior color choices include Brownstone, Dark Titanium, Jet Black and Mojave.

Easy-to-use Chevrolet MyLink Infotainment System
The Impala features an award-winning Chevrolet MyLink infotainment system, which is easy, intuitive operation of basic functions, yet also highly customizable.

MyLink on the Impala is designed to accommodate new features and enhancements and be highly customizable. The system can store up to 60 favorites, including radio stations (AM/FM), contacts, destinations, music and other media. Four specific graphic appearances are designed to appeal to the distinctive personalities of

Chevrolet customer groups. Customers simply use the Settings menu to personalize their Impala.

MyLink is standard on LT and LTZ models. On its eight-inch screen, customers can flip through lists, swipe and drag just as they would on a tablet. Users with compatible smartphones can pair them with MyLink using Bluetooth or a USB connection. This gives customers the ability to play passengers' music or other media through the vehicle.

Another feature allows customers whose Impalas are equipped with available embedded navigation to enter destinations in a single step, without having to enter the state, city, street number and street name in successive efforts.

Responsive Driving Experience
The Impala is powered by a 3.6L V6 with Variable Valve Timing which featuring fuel-saving direct injection and lightweight components. Matched with six speed automatic transmissions, it is rated at 305 horsepower and 356 Nm of torque, with excellent fuel economy of 8.1 L/100km (highway).

The powertrain is the force behind Impala's confident, responsive driving experience, which is tuned for comfortable performance and rooted in a more robust body structure. The long wheelbase with a wide rear track, gives the Impala an excellent feeling of comfort and control.

A MacPherson-strut front suspension delivers a greater measure of control with rebound springs that are internal to the struts. They enable more refined calibration of the struts that result in a smoother overall ride, while also enhancing body roll control and weight transfer during acceleration or turning. That helps keep the wheels planted, which contributes to the new Impala's more precise, controlled feel - especially while cornering at speed.

An isolated front cradle for the engine and transmission, as well as a hydraulic ride bushing, help deliver a smoother, quieter ride. At the rear is a proven four-link suspension design, with a slightly wider track that contributes to the Impala's more planted feel on the road. Isolated mounting provisions for the rear suspension also contribute to the car's quiet, smooth driving experience.

All models feature an electric variable-assist steering system (EPS) that helps save fuel by drawing energy only when the steering wheel is turned. Designed to complement Impala's balance of responsiveness and comfort, the EPS's feel is light and direct, with great assistance at low speeds and high effort at highway speeds. It also incorporates Pull Drift Compensation, which automatically adjusts the steering effort to account for factors such as crowned roads or high crosswinds - factors that typically cause the driver to turn the steering wheel slightly to maintain a straight path.

Sensors detect the steering correction and adjust the torque applied to the steering system to relieve the effort on the driver, helping to maintain smooth, straight driving with less input. Pull Drift Compensation is an integrated feature of the EPS system and engages seamlessly, without the driver's knowledge.

Advanced safety technology
The 2015 Impala offers one of the most comprehensive collections of standard and available safety features in the segment. It employs advanced technologies to help avoid crashes. Visual and audible alerts, depending on the alert feature, help drivers identify potential crash situations and even intervene when a crash threat appears more imminent. The alerts are designed to identify potential threats with sufficient warning to give the driver time to react and make changes.

Chevrolet Care
All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Alghanim will receive the benefits of the Chevrolet Care, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance. Customers are welcome to visit any of Chevrolet Alghanim's showrooms today in order to take a full advantage of this exclusive November offer.

HACKERS MAY HIT HOME FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

WASHINGTON: It could be a merry holiday season for hackers, with millions of new and potentially vulnerable Internet-connected gadgets hitting the market.

Security experts say the vulnerabilities of "Internet of Things" devices such as fitness bands, smartwatches, drones and connected appliances could be exploited as consumers adopt these products for the holiday season.

Any connected device "can be a pivot point into your network," said Bruce Snell, cybersecurity and privacy director for Intel Security. Although breaking into a wearable device or drone does not necessarily provide immediate value for a hacker, it can lead to a connection to a smartphone and data which is stored in the Internet cloud, security experts note.

"These could potentially install malware that sniffs out all the passwords on your network and sends them to a remote location," Snell told AFP.

For easier use, many consumer gadgets use relatively insecure connections and often require minimal use of pass-

words or other authentication. Gary Davis, who heads consumer online safety for Intel, said the holidays could be a vulnerable time for consumers and a time for hackers to celebrate.

"With the excitement of getting new devices, consumers often are so eager to begin using them that they do not take time to properly secure them," he wrote.

In some cases, security can be improved by simply changing the password on the device, which may be something as simple as 1234 or 0000, but many people fail to do this.

"When you get that shiny new toy for Christmas, you want to just get it working," said Alastair Paterson, chief executive at the security firm Digital Shadows.

Exposing documents

Paterson noted that with a blurring of lines between work and leisure time, many people take home sensitive corporate material that can be then stored in a hackable home network.

In some cases, Paterson said, "just by

connecting it to the home Wi-Fi network, they are exposing documents to the entire Internet."

The research firm Gartner earlier this month forecast that 6.4 billion connected things will be in use worldwide in 2016, up 30 percent from 2015, and will reach 20.8 billion by 2020.

Juniper Research predicts "smart toy" sales will hit \$2.8 billion this year, while noting that "vendors will likely require third-party software expertise to avoid PR disasters caused by hackers."

Smart home devices such as thermostats can be a gateway for hackers, according to a report this year by researchers at TrapX Labs.

The researchers took apart and then used a Nest thermostat as a point of attack for a home network and were able to track the users' Internet surfing activity and get access to their private credentials.

The report said that even though Nest "is relatively secure," there is a concern "that the manufacturers of IoT

devices at all points in the supply chain do not seem to have the economic incentives to provide initial cybersecurity... the manufacturers involved with IoT are obsessed with cost-cutting and minimal design footprints."

Northeastern University researchers found some smartphone fitness apps can leak passwords and location information over public Wi-Fi networks.

"Our devices really store everything about us on them: who our contacts are, our locations and enough information to identify us because each device has a unique identifier number built into it," said computer science professor David Choffnes, who led the study, which also developed a system to detect and fix data leaks.

Put on the kettle

Researchers at British security firm Pen Test partners said a similar vulnerability exists in Wi-Fi connected kettles and coffee-makers.

The devices allow users to turn the

kettle on without getting up but it also means "a hacker can drive past your house and steal your Wi-Fi key," Pen Test's Ken Munro said in a blog post last month. "If you haven't configured the kettle, it's trivially easy for hackers to find your house and take over your kettle." California-based security firm Veracode found vulnerabilities in many smart home hubs that control systems such as garage doors or lighting.

Its study noted that cybercriminals could turn microphones on and listen to conversations or get notifications when a garage door is opened or closed, offering an opportunity to break into a given house.

A US Federal Trade Commission report highlighted the numerous risks for connected devices, while recommending that companies "build security into their devices at the outset."

The FTC also said companies "should limit the data they collect and retain, and dispose of it once they no longer need it" to minimize privacy risks. — AFP

IS THE BUBBLE BURSTING FOR INDIA'S ONLINE START-UPS?

MUMBAI: Hundreds of layoffs at several Indian start-ups have sparked fears the bubble is starting to burst for the country's e-commerce companies, amid claims by analysts that many of them are overvalued. Restaurant search website Zomato, food delivery app TinyOwl and property portal Housing.com are all letting staff go, and experts are warning of echoes of the dot-com boom which crashed spectacularly in 2000. "The valuation bubble is bursting. The valuations had reached levels where they were ridiculous and could not be justified at any level," said Arvind Singhal, chairman of management consulting firm Technopak. Wealthy investors boosted by low interest rates have been lining up to lavishly back India's booming start-ups, with the government hailing the sector as proof of the country's entrepreneurial spirit. Prime Minister Narendra Modi views online startups as key to providing jobs to aspirational young Indians, seeking to fuel the sector through a government campaign, "Start up India, Stand up India".

In September he visited Silicon Valley calling on deep-pocketed investors to turn their attention to India's thriving start-up ecosystem, with large tech hubs in the cities of Bangalore, Hyderabad and Mumbai. Yet despite the billions of dollars invested in recent years, most of India's online startups are yet to turn profits and investments are largely based on speculative future earnings.

"Investors are not looking objectively at the sector. They are just seeing a few success stories and ignoring the failures, just like they did in the dot-com era," Paras Adenwala, investment consultant at Capital Portfolio Advisors in Mumbai, told AFP.

Adenwala is concerned that once the United States' central bank starts moving on interest rates, as it has long been tipped to do, investors will be less generous with their cash, making the situation worse. "You will see a lot of these start-ups falling by the wayside once the US Federal Reserve starts raising rates and funding dries up," he said.

Dramatic scenes

Recent events at TinyOwl, Zomato and Housing.com suggest that not all is well. There were dramatic scenes at TinyOwl's

offices in Pune, in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, earlier this month when disgruntled staff refused to leave the building after losing their jobs.

They also held hostage a member of top management, who laid off 300 employees, preventing him from leaving for two days as they demanded the immediate payment of their severance deals. TinyOwl co-founder and chief executive Harshvardhan Mandad said the redundancies had been necessary to get the start-up on a more sustainable footing. "This has involved some difficult decisions for us as well, but we believe it's an integral step for the sustainability and growth of the business," Mandad said.

Housing.com recently fired 600 employees, according to widespread reports, and on Thursday announced there would be a "reorganising of the company", although it declined to confirm the layoffs.

Zomato, a so-called "unicorn" startup because it is valued at more than \$1 billion, is laying off 10 percent of its 3,000-strong staff worldwide, mostly in the United States. An official for the New Delhi-headquartered company, which operates in 22 countries, said "the restructuring that led to the redundancies was based on a business call." "I do not think that the pace of growth has suddenly slowed. Is the market correcting? Perhaps it is, and I guess it's about time that happened as well," added the official, who asked not to be named.

Some signs of consolidation are already evident in the highly competitive market. Grofers, a "hyperlocal" grocery app that allows customers to order goods from corner shops online, last month made two acquisitions in a week, taking over its shuttered competitor Townrush and meal delivery service SpoonJoy. And earlier this month Mumbai-based CarTrade, a portal for selling used autos, acquired its rival CarWale for an undisclosed sum. Singhal, the Technopak chairman, sees the job cuts as part of an inevitable "evolution" of startups, where the early movers lacked well thought-out business models but successors will learn from their mistakes. "It will encourage new startups with clearer plans," he said. —AFP

SAMSUNG'S GEAR VR SHOWS THE PROMISE OF VR - TODAY

NEW YORK: Samsung made history of a sort on Friday by launching the first major consumer-oriented virtual-reality headset. (It comes with an asterisk; prototypes and other not-quite-mass-market versions have been available for a while.) And its Gear VR headset is pretty impressive as first-generation devices go.

The biggest surprise after using the new Gear VR for a few days: There's a lot of stuff to watch and play in the virtual world the headset opens up. Granted, some of that material is gimmicky or amateurish. But the best of it hints at some of the mind-expanding experiences VR can make possible.

The Gear VR is relatively cheap, too, at just \$100. You do need your own headphones, preferably wireless, plus a recent Samsung phone - the Galaxy S6, S6 Edge, S6 Edge Plus or Note 5. If you don't already have one, the package could set you back nearly \$1,000. (Other VR systems will also need companion devices, such as high-end personal computers.)

Samsung developed the Gear VR with the virtual-reality startup Oculus (now part of Facebook). It supplants the \$200 "innovator edition" Samsung has sold for a year. That earlier prototype was mainly intended to build enthusiasm for VR and to help developers start producing games and apps for it. Samsung bills the

new model as its first consumer VR product, although it still requires some savvy on the consumer's part to use.

ABOUT THE DEVICE

Your phone attaches to the front of the Gear VR headset, just in front of the lens for your eyes. Put the headset on, and your surroundings disappear as the phone screen opens a window into an unreal, three-dimensional world. As you turn your head, the image shifts accordingly to give the sense of being there in real life. You can even turn all the way around to see what's behind you. The screen projects slightly different perspectives to your left and right eyes to give the virtual world depth.

The Gear VR wasn't easy to set up. I had trouble figuring out where all the Velcro straps and hooks were supposed to go. I couldn't get the phone to snap into place. I needed the manual to find a lever I had to switch because I had a larger phone, the Note 5. Many consumers might need help from a tech-savvy friend or kid.

I also got frustrated having to wait for apps and video to download - a few minutes in some cases. The Gear VR can stream relatively few videos for instant playback.

WHAT TO DO WITH IT

Fortunately, it was worth the wait most of the time, even if many of the videos seemed like concepts intended to demonstrate the Future of Virtual Reality or are merely promotions for regular movies and TV shows. A lot of it is free, though some videos or apps will set you back \$2 to \$10. And some apps were surprisingly absorbing. The notion of the Netflix app, which streams video to a virtual TV in front of you, initially seemed silly. Why not watch a real TV? Well, the virtual TV is huge, much larger than what I could afford in real life. And VR also removes the distractions surrounding you - such as Facebook. Repeat viewings sometimes turned up unexpected detail. Not until a second viewing of a Cirque du Soleil video did I notice performers to my left and right. In a horror video, I initially kept my eyes on a woman in distress; only later did I see scary creatures crawling out of a playground. You're no longer stuck with whatever the director chooses for you. —AP



SEOUL: This photo provided by Samsung shows Samsung Gear VR headset. There are the promises of virtual reality in the form of headsets that drop you into another world and offer 360-degree views that shift as you turn your head. — AP



KANSAS: In this Aug. 11, 2014, photo provided by EON Sports VR, sports performance manager and strength and conditioning coach Doran Lovan wears a virtual reality headset to view a 360-degree virtual simulation, in Overland, Kansas. College football teams have been using virtual reality as a training tool, putting players in an interactive 360-degree environment without having to be on the field. — AP

COLLEGE PROGRAMS TURNING TO VIRTUAL REALITY FOR RECRUITING

VIRTUAL REALITY IS A RELATIVELY NEW TACTIC

PHOENIX: College football teams have been using virtual reality as a training tool, putting players in an interactive 360-degree environment without having to be on the field.

A handful of programs are using it for a new purpose: Recruiting. By slipping on a headset, recruits can see what it's like to be in the team huddle, listen to a coach's speech, run down the tunnel before a game or tour the campus. It's like taking an official visit without ever leaving their homes. "Teams have all these hype videos that they push out. We are a hype video 2.0," said Brendan Reilly, CEO of EON Sports VR, one of few virtual reality companies working with college football programs. "It's the same exact content they're capturing in those videos, but now it's more compelling, more engaging and more interactive."

The training aspect of virtual reality has become a big hit across college football, with teams using it to game plan against specific opponents, work on specific plays or defensive looks, give players mental reps even when they're at home.

Now teams are working with software companies to design virtual reality environments that showcase the best elements of the school and the football program. The main goal is to use the virtual campus to entice recruits to visit the actual campus.

One of the biggest hurdles coaches face in recruiting is trying to convince targeted players to take official visits to their schools. Get them on campus coaches believe they can close the deal by showing off the campus and explaining their philosophies in depth. Fail to get them to visit and more than likely the

recruit will play somewhere else. "Kids are trying to get all over the world to go see universities, you've got to bring your university to them and give them a reason to come look closer," Kansas coach David Beaty said. "I'll be honest with you, before I came to KU, I didn't know it was like that. I was like, 'wow, this place is real.' And you don't know it until you come here. So that virtual reality piece I think is going to be helpful for us just to pique people's interest to go, 'I need to check that out, place is pretty nice.'" Virtual reality as a recruiting tool is a relatively new tactic. UNLV, UCLA, Kansas, Syracuse and Ole Miss are among the schools entering the virtual reality recruiting world, though it figures to catch on fast.

First, it's easy to use

All a recruit needs is a headset, a smartphone and to download an app. The environments can be viewed on their phones in two-dimension or in stereoscopic 3D with headset. With the headset, all it takes is a gaze at an icon at the bottom or in a certain direction and the viewer is off and touring.

And the views are incredible

Using a specialized 360-degree camera, virtual reality companies like EON - check out their YouTube page here <https://goo.gl/JeZaT0> - can capture every aspect of the environment, from front and behind the viewer to above and below them.

It can take a recruit inside a team huddle, down the tunnel before a game, around campus or through the weight room. "From a recruiting standpoint, you

can show them everything you want to show them, basically have an unofficial recruiting visit from anywhere in the country as long as they have a smartphone and they can access us on the app," said Drew Jennison, UNLV's assistant recruiting coordinator.

And the recruit can do it his own pace

Official visits can often be hectic, with coaches trying to jam as much in 48 hours as they possibly can. They create detailed itineraries for the recruits, which often don't allow for many deviations if, say, the recruit wants to spend extra time in the business building or student center.

"When you're on an on-campus visit, you're all over the place," Reilly said. "With virtual reality, kids can take it on their own pace, take in the scenery, have the experience what it will be like to be on that campus or what it's like on game day. If a recruit that they're truly trying get, he's going to know what that's like." Most schools like to show off the same things: tours of the campus, dorms, football facilities, weight room, game-day experience. All have unique aspects they like to showcase, too, whether it's a pregame ritual or a game-day tradition. And whatever the environment, the technology can make it seem even better than it actually is. "What's cool is that people can choose what they want to see," Jennison said. "Some kids might not really care about the library, but in virtual reality, everything kind of becomes cool. It shows things that aren't that cool in a really cool way. There's kid that are going to be excited about the library: 'Whoa, 360 library!' — AP

TASK FORCE WANTS EVEN SMALLER DRONES REGISTERED

WASHINGTON: An aviation industry task force is recommending that operators be required to register drones weighing as little as a half a pound, a threshold that could include some remote-controlled toys, industry officials said.

Federal Aviation Administration officials who convened the 25-member task force on drone registration have said they want to avoid requiring the registration of toys. But the consensus of the task force is that the weight threshold that triggers registration should be set at 250 grams or above, which is about a half-pound, said people familiar with its deliberations. The threshold is based on the potential impact a drone that size would have if it fell from the sky and struck a person or if it collided with a helicopter or plane, they said.

The recommendations were expected to be submitted to the FAA by Saturday. The FAA then can modify them, and hopes to issue the rules before Christmas to begin registering some of the thousands of drones expected to be purchased over the holidays. One industry official said the target date is Dec. 21.

Four people familiar with the advisory group's deliberations described the conclusions to The Associated Press, speaking on condition of

anonymity because the FAA asked that the discussions be kept private. The registration requirement would apply to drone operators rather than individual drones to avoid requiring operators who own multiple drones to register more than once. The operator would receive a single registration number, which would then be affixed to the body of each drone.

People who already own drones weighing more than a half-pound would have to register them. Registration could be done through an FAA website where an operator can provide name, address, phone number and other contact information and receive a registration number. The Consumer Technology Association estimates 700,000 drones will be sold in the U.S. this year, including 400,000 in the last quarter.

'Culture of accountability'

FAA officials said when they announced the formation of the task force last month that they hoped registration will help create a "culture of accountability" among drone operators and allow owners to be tracked down in the event of an accident. The FAA now receives about 100 reports a month from pilots who say they've seen drones flying near planes and airports, up dramatically from last

year. So far there've been no accidents, but agency officials have said they're concerned that even a small drone might cause serious damage if it is sucked into an engine, smashes into an airliner's windshield or collides with a helicopter's rotors.

Helicopters are the greatest concern because they frequently fly below 500 feet in the same airspace as small drones, said Jim Williams, the FAA's former top drone official now at

an international law firm with drone-industry clients. There are no studies on how much damage drones of different weight might cause to a helicopter or aircraft engine, he said. "I am not a fan of the weight limit because there's no science behind it," Williams said. The weight threshold for drone registration in Europe is about 2 pounds, while Canadian officials are leaning toward a threshold of about 1 pound, industry officials said. — AP



CORDOVA: This photo taken June 11, 2015, a hexacopter drone is flown during a demonstration in Cordova, Md. An aviation industry task force plans to recommend Friday that operators be required to register drones weighing as little as a half of a pound, a threshold that could capture some remote-controlled toys, industry officials said. — AP

EXPERTS FORESEE BIG PREMIUM RISE FOR MEDICARE DRUG PLAN

BENEFICIARIES HAVE UNTIL DEC 7 TO WEIGH A LOWER-COST PLAN

WASHINGTON: With time running out on open enrollment season, many seniors are facing sharply higher premiums for Medicare's popular prescription drug program. The reason: rising drug costs have overtaken a long stretch of stable premiums. Beneficiaries have until Dec 7 to see if there's a lower-cost plan that will cover their medications in 2016. Consumer advocates and experts say it will pay to shop around this sign-up season. "Premiums are going up. Deductibles are going up," said Tricia Neuman, a Medicare expert with the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. "There is some potential to save a lot of money by switching plans." Government spending on the program also has risen significantly, driven by pricey new drugs, notably for hepatitis C infection.

The cost for the hepatitis C drugs in the Medicare program is expected to be \$9.2 billion this year, a near doubling from 2014. Because of the prescription program's financial structure, taxpayers cover most of the cost for expensive medications. Three out of four adults infected with hepatitis C are baby boomers, the group now entering Medicare. Also known as "Part D," Medicare's prescription plan serves about 40 million older and disabled people. Benefits are provided through a variety of insurance arrangements. Stand-alone drug plans that work with traditional Medicare are the most popular, accounting for more than half of beneficiaries - about 24 million people. Sal Natale, a retired dentist who lives near Tampa, Florida, said prescription premiums for him and his wife are going up

about 30 percent next year, and he doesn't see a good alternative.

Drug costs

"I'm just going to grin and bear and hope it starts moderating," Natale said. The couple is signed up in the Humana Enhanced plan, one of the top 10. Nationally, premiums for that plan are going up by about \$13 a month, according to the Kaiser foundation. Indicators signal rising costs across the program. Among them: independent estimates by Kaiser and the consulting firm Avalere Health show increasing premiums for stand-alone drug plans. The average premium will rise from \$36.68 to \$41.46 per month next year, or 13 percent, according to Kaiser. Even if many beneficiaries switch to lower-cost options, it's likely to be the biggest increase since 2009. The maximum deductible for prescription coverage will rise by \$40, to \$360. That's the biggest increase in the deductible since the inception of Part D in 2006. The deductible is the amount of drug costs that beneficiaries must pay each year before their insurance kicks in.

Taxpayer expenditures for the "catastrophic" portion of the benefit - in which beneficiaries with high drug bills pay only 5 percent of the cost - will rise by \$4.5 billion in 2016, an increase of more than 14 percent. Spending for catastrophic coverage has doubled in just a short time, from \$15.5 billion in 2012 to an estimated \$31.2 billion this year. The analyses from Kaiser and Avalere are seemingly at odds with the message coming from the Obama administration, which estimates that drug



Sal Natale looks over a Medicare brochure at his home in Seminole, Fla. Rising drug costs are starting to hit Medicare's popular prescription drug program, with many senior citizens looking at double digit premium increases next year. — AP

premiums will remain stable in 2016, averaging \$32.50 a month. But the administration and the independent analysts measure differently. For example, the administration adjusts its number for the estimated impact of people assumed to be switching to lower-premium plans.

Breakthrough drugs

The outside analysts don't make similar assumptions. Instead, they focus on what's happening to premiums in the plans for

which people are currently signed up. Nationally, average premiums are going up by more than 15 percent in five of the top eight plans, according to the Kaiser study. Two plans will see single-digit increases. One plan - SilverScript Choice - will see a small reduction. The most popular plan - AARP MedicareRx Preferred - will go up from \$50.19 to \$60.79, a 21 percent increase.

Sean Cavanaugh, deputy administrator at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said the administration has a good

track record with its estimates. "We do think ours is more illustrative of what beneficiaries actually experience," he said. Cavanaugh did say the administration is concerned about the cost of new breakthrough drugs. The insurers who deliver Medicare's prescription benefit have limited options for bargaining down the prices of those medications, because usually there's no competing alternative. "The challenge in the Part D program is around high-cost specialty drugs," said Cavanaugh. "We certainly have to be concerned about anything that's driving that much cost in our program." With polls showing that drug costs are the top health care issue for the public, presidential candidates are weighing in. Options they propose range from giving Medicare direct authority to negotiate drug prices, backed by Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton, to speeding up approval of new drugs, advanced by Republican Jeb Bush.

Consumer advocates are skeptical that seniors shopping for better deals will be sufficient to blunt the cost increases. Finding a new plan can be overwhelming, said Bonnie Burns, a longtime Medicare counselor with nonprofit California Health Advocates. "People can't deal with the complexity of deductibles, coverage tiers, and prior approval," she said. Natale, the Florida retiree, says he's not sure what the right answer is. He's wary of government controls on private industry, but the relentless growth of costs worries him. "I really don't think I have much of an option for protecting me and my wife if I get some serious illness and I need big-time drugs," he said. — AP



MONROVIA: A unidentified family member, right, of a 10-year old boy that contracted Ebola, has her temperature measured by a health worker before entering the Ebola clinic where the child is being treated on the outskirts of Monrovia. — AP

LIBERIA MONITORS OVER 150 EBOLA CONTACTS

CAUSE OF THREE NEW EBOLA CASES UNKNOWN

MONROVIA: Liberia has placed 153 people under surveillance as it seeks to control a new Ebola outbreak in the capital more than two months after the country was declared free of the virus, health officials said. Three Ebola cases emerged in Liberia on Friday. The first of the new patients was a 15-year-old boy called Nathan Gbotoe from Paynesville, a suburb east of the capital Monrovia. Two other family members have since been confirmed as positive and they are all hospitalized.

"We have three confirmed cases and have listed 153 contacts, and we have labeled them as high, medium and low in terms of the risk," Liberia's Chief Medical Officer Dr Francis Kateh told Reuters late on Saturday. The West African country has suffered the highest death toll in the worst known Ebola outbreak in history, losing

more than 4,800 people. It has twice been declared Ebola-free by the World Health Organization, once in May and again on Sept 3, only for new cases to emerge. It is not known how Gbotoe was infected and Kateh did not offer any explanation, saying that investigations were ongoing. Cross-border transmission seems unlikely since neighboring Guinea has zero cases while Sierra Leone was declared Ebola-free this month after 42 days without a case.

In the Duport Road neighborhood of Paynesville, health officials went from house to house on Saturday delivering food and water to neighbors of the infected family, deemed at risk of catching the disease. Unlike in previous months, there were no barriers or soldiers to enforce quarantines. Neighbor Elizabeth Powell said she was

more worried about lost income than catching Ebola, which is transmitted through the bodily fluids of the sick.

"I am worried about food and my business," she said. The epidemic has crippled Liberia's economy and President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf says it will take two years to recover. The previous resurgence of Ebola in Liberia is thought to have been via sexual transmission since the virus can exist in the semen of male survivors for at least nine months after infection, much longer than its incubation period in blood. It is also theoretically possible for an infected animal to trigger a fresh chain of transmission. The index case in the West African outbreak that has killed around 11,300 people was a child believed to have been infected by a bat. — Reuters

INSURERS REASSURE INVESTORS ON ACA EXCHANGE BUSINESS

NEW YORK: Health insurers rallied Friday to ease investor and customer concerns about the Affordable Care Act's public insurance exchanges a day after the nation's biggest insurer questioned its future in that still-developing market. Blue Cross-Blue Shield insurer Anthem and Medicaid coverage provider Molina Healthcare both said they are making money off their exchange business, and Anthem joined Aetna, the nation's third-largest health insurer, in reaffirming its 2015 earnings forecast. "I think the (ACA) marketplace is going to be around for a while," said Molina CEO Dr Mario Molina.

Shares of Molina and other insurers plunged Thursday after UnitedHealth Group cut its 2015 forecast, reported deep losses from its exchange business and said it will decide next year whether it wants to continue in that market. That followed reports earlier this fall that several smaller, nonprofit insurance cooperatives would stop selling coverage on the state-based exchanges, which are a key element in the ACA's push to expand insurance coverage.

Insurers in many markets have struggled to find the right mix of healthy customers to balance the sicker ones since the exchanges opened for business in the fall of 2013. Even businesses that reaffirmed their commitment have had some growing pains. Aetna said last month that it lost money last year on the business, and it's in the red this year as well. But the insurer expects improvement, in part because it is learning more about the customers it serves through this business. That will help it set the right prices for future coverage.

Anthem, the nation's second largest insurer, said its enrollment in the public exchanges fell by 69,000 people to 824,000 in the third quarter. Spokeswoman Jill Becher said the business has been less profitable than expected.

CEO Joseph Swedish said in a statement that the insurer remains committed to the business and "continuing our dialogue with policymakers and regulators regarding how we can improve the stability of the individual market." The not-for-profit insurer Kaiser Permanente also said late Thursday that it remained "strongly committed" to participating in the exchanges. Kaiser covers about 450,000 people in nine exchanges, and a spokeswoman said they are confident that the business is financially stable.

Molina said his company has been helped in the exchange business by expanding slowly and focusing on a customer base it already knows how to serve, low-income patients. "We're not trying to be all things to all people," he said. Even though some insurers have made money so far on the exchanges, industry analyst David Windley sees room for improvement. Insurers are still struggling to attract enough healthy patients, and the analyst said it's too easy for customers to manipulate the system by doing things like signing up for coverage, using health care, and then stopping premium payments. UnitedHealth said Thursday it has been hurt in particular by customers who signed up for coverage outside the annual open enrollment window and use more health care in general than those who bought coverage during open enrollment. —AP

NEVADA ISSUES HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR CRYOTHERAPY

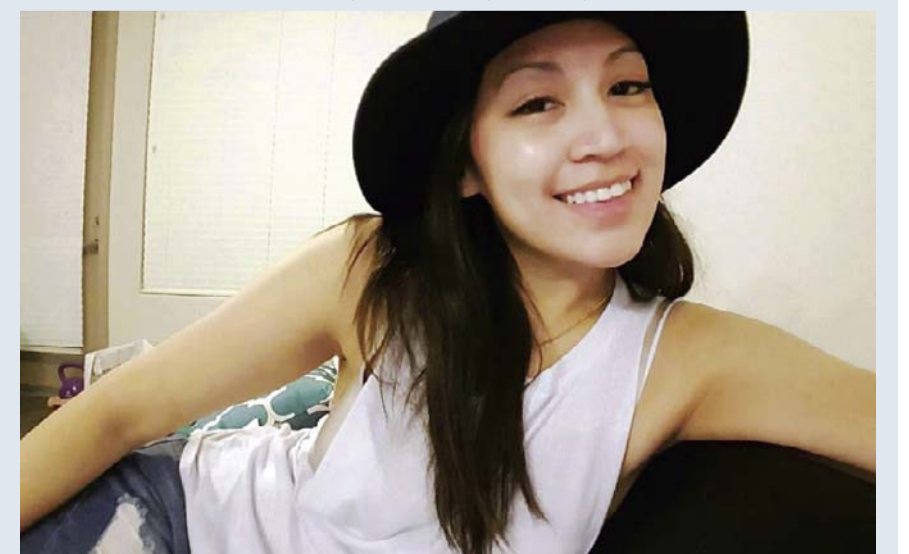
LAS VEGAS: Nevada has created health guidelines for cryotherapy after a Las Vegas spa worker was found dead in a tank that subjects users to subzero temperatures, a treatment that experts say has been growing in popularity but is largely unregulated and whose benefits are not proven. Dr Tracey Green, the state's chief medical officer, said Friday that the guidelines from the state health department recommend that the machines not be used by minors under 18, those under 5 feet tall and anyone with certain health conditions, such as a history of stroke, high blood pressure, seizures and infections, as well as people who are pregnant or have pacemakers or claustrophobia.

Users should only have one session per day for no more than three minutes and have their blood pressure taken before and after. "When things are available to individuals that don't have any medical basis, we try to assure that there are safe practices," Green said, likening it to the generally accepted guidelines for sauna use. "Any time we feel there's risk, these kinds of guidelines can be developed."

This comes exactly one month after Chelsea Patricia Ake-Salvacion, 24, accidentally died of

asphyxia caused by low oxygen levels while in a cryotherapy machine at the Rejuvenice spa where she worked, the Clark County coroner's office said. She was found dead on Oct 20 after apparently using the treatment on herself the night before. Her death drew scrutiny to the treatment that has been used worldwide but isn't quite mainstream.

Cryotherapy backers claim it can ease pain and inflammation, aid blood flow and weight loss, improve skin and even ward off aging and depression. It's been popularized by celebrities and sports stars who use it in lieu of a traditional ice bath. It can involve two- to four-minute-long exposures in a chamber the size of a phone booth to temperatures ranging from minus-166 to minus-319 degrees Fahrenheit. But the treatments haven't been approved for medical use by the US Food and Drug Administration. It also hasn't been embraced by the medical or science communities, who acknowledge that liquid nitrogen has long been used medically for things like wart removal but point to a lack of evidence that the full body exposure can actually benefit people physiologically. —AP



LAS VEGAS: This undated file photo provided by Albert Ake is a selfie of his niece Chelsea Patricia Ake-Salvacion. Nevada has created health guidelines for cryotherapy after Ake-Salvacion, a Las Vegas spa worker, was found dead in a tank that subjects users to subzero temperatures, a treatment that experts say has been growing in popularity but is largely unregulated and whose benefits are not proven. — AP

AIR POLLUTION LINKED TO ASTHMA IN CHILDREN AND TEENS

NEW YORK: Exposure to air pollution early in life may contribute to the development of asthma in childhood and adolescence, a European study suggests. Researchers followed more than 14,000 children from birth through ages 14 to 16 and found those born in communities with more polluted air were more likely to develop asthma than other kids, particularly after age 4.

While previous research has linked asthma to air pollution exposure in early childhood, the current study offers new evidence that this connection extends into adolescence, said lead author Dr. Ulrike Gehring, a researcher at Utrecht University in The Netherlands. "Exposure to air pollution is thought to cause asthma by affecting the size and structure of the developing lung as well as the developing immune system," Gehring said by email. "The exact mechanisms behind the association between air pollution exposure and asthma in children, however, are not clear."

To look at the link between asthma and air pollution, Gehring and colleagues examined

concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, a byproduct of fossil fuels that can contribute to smog, and so-called particulate matter, a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets that can include dust, dirt, soot and smoke. Then, they examined questionnaire data about the children's respiratory health that was collected several times during childhood. Parents were asked if kids were diagnosed with asthma, prescribed asthma drugs or experienced wheezing. Parents were also asked if kids had sneezing, congestion or itchy, watery eyes when they didn't have colds.

The study included kids from Germany, Sweden and The Netherlands. Overall, the risk of asthma by ages 14 to 16 increased with increasing exposure to nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter at the birth address, but not with exposure levels for the address at the end of the study. Researchers didn't find a link between air pollution exposure and allergies. One limitation of the study is that researchers used air pollution measurements from 2008 to 2010 for the entire duration of follow-up, the

researchers acknowledge in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine. Researchers also didn't look at air quality at school or daycare centers, which might differ from where the children lived.

It's also possible that children growing up near major, heavily trafficked roadways, who are at the greatest risk for exposure to air pollution, may differ from kids who grow up in other locations like suburbs in other respects, such as lower socioeconomic status, that also increase asthma risk, said Steve Georas, a researcher at the University of Rochester Medical Center who wrote an accompanying editorial.

Even so, the findings add to a growing body of research linking asthma to pollution, Georas said by email. "It is probably time to doubt no more that early life air pollution exposure is a risk factor for asthma for some children," Georas said. "What we need now are more studies to understand (why) some children are particularly susceptible to these adverse effects." — AP

ARE PETS IN THE BEDROOM A PROBLEM FOR SLEEP?

NEW YORK: There are many potential health benefits to pet ownership, but a good night's sleep may not necessarily be one of them, a small study suggests. Among pet owners surveyed at a sleep clinic, more than half said their non-human friends slept in their bedroom. One in five pet owners described their animals as disruptive, but two in five perceived the pets as unobtrusive or even beneficial to sleep, the survey found.

Even though pets have the potential to jostle their humans or make noise that keeps people awake, the question of whether pets might contribute to sleeping problems isn't one doctors regularly ask patients, said lead study author Dr Lois Krahn, a specialist in sleep medicine and psychiatry at the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Arizona. "Since commonly people with

pets dismiss placing their pet outside of their bedroom at night, the question of whether having the pet on the floor, on the bed or curled up next to them becomes important in realizing the goal of helping them to sleep as well as possible with their pet," Krahn said by email.

Sounds, movements, crowding, temperature, odors and allergens are all aspects of the home environment that can interfere with sleep, Krahn and colleagues note in Mayo Clinic Proceedings. To see how pets might influence sleep, the researchers surveyed 150 people treated at the Center for Sleep Medicine at the Mayo Clinic in Arizona, asking about pets and other environmental factors. Almost half the participants, 74 people, had pets, and 31 pet owners had multiple animals in their homes.

One married 35-year-old man had a cat, four Chihuahuas and a basset hound, for example. A married 43-year-old woman had two dogs and five cats. Fifteen people reported pet-related sleep disturbances in the bedroom. Problematic animal behaviors included wandering, snoring, voiding needs, whimpering and seizures. But 31 people described the animals as beneficial in the bedroom, whether they provided comfort and companionship or served as bed warmers.

People sleeping alone, whether they were single or had a partner who wasn't always there at night, more often spoke of pets as beneficial evening companions. Beyond its small size, the study's limitations include the lack of data on whether patients being treated for sleep disorders experienced different challenges with a

pet in the bedroom than people without sleep disorders. Even so, the findings suggest that it's worthwhile for doctors to discuss pets when patients bring up sleep difficulties, the authors conclude.

Breed size, bedroom size and bed size could all contribute to how people and pets interact at night and how well people sleep, said Navy Captain Dr Mark Stephens of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland. "A retriever or a mastiff would occupy significant space and be physically prone to interrupt sleep," Stephens, who wasn't involved in the study, said by email. "A yorkie, not so much." Beyond sleep concerns, it's possible pets - especially dogs - can offer health benefits by encouraging people to get more exercise, noted Bruno Chomel, a veterinary medicine researcher

at the University of California, Davis who wasn't involved in the study. The downsides, other than sleep disruption, might include the potential for pets to transmit diseases to their owners, Chomel said by email.

The study's findings shouldn't cause doctors to warn insomniacs against owning cats or dogs, cautioned Allen McConnell, a psychology researcher at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, who wasn't involved in the study. "People's perception that pets cause disruptive sleep is not great evidence that they do cause sleep disruption," McConnell said by email. "Self-reported beliefs about pets being the cause of people's sleep difficulties is pretty limited without a more comprehensive, experimental study design" — Reuters



BELMONT: Justin Balido, peer health coordinator and senior health educator with Health Connected, speaks to a ninth-grade Teen Talk High School class at Carlmont High School in Belmont, California. Sex education in some American high schools is evolving beyond pregnancy and disease prevention to include lessons aimed at curbing sexual assaults. — AP

'RESURRECTION PLANTS' OFFER HOPE AS CLIMATE TURNS HOSTILE

JOHANNESBURG: As the race to adapt to climate change quickens, a South African scientist is leading global research into developing crops that mimic the extraordinary survival skills of "resurrection plants". Jill Farrant, a professor of molecular and cell biology at the University of Cape Town, hopes that unlocking the genetic codes of drought-tolerant plants could help farmers toiling in increasingly hot and dry conditions. With more than 130 known varieties in the world, resurrection plants are a unique group of flora that can survive extreme water shortages for years. During a drought, the plant acts like a seed, becoming so dry it appears dead.

But when the skies finally open and the rain pours down, the shriveled plant bursts "back to life", turning green and robust in just a few hours. "I want to cater to the subsistence farmer, the person who wants to make enough food to live," Farrant, 55, told AFP. "Farmers are becoming more and more dispirited, and droughts are killing them." Perhaps the most well-known resurrection plant is *Myrothamnus flabellifolius*, which makes antioxidant chemicals to protect it during dry spells and is used in fashion designer Giorgio Armani's cosmetics line.

A life passion

A farmer's daughter, Farrant recalls stumbling across a resurrection plant as a nine-year-old and being amazed at its seemingly immortal properties. "I wrote in my diary about a plant that had died and came back after the rain," she said. She returned to the subject professionally in 1994, and has since become the world's leading expert in her field. Environmentalists fear that more and more of Africa will be reduced to a dust bowl by global warming, with higher temperatures, reduced water supplies and population growth threatening to trigger worsening famines. Climate change could reduce maize yields across southern Africa by as much as 30 percent by 2030, according to the UN Environment Program.

Ahead of the United Nations conference in Paris at the end of November, countries are facing growing pressure to

keep global warming below two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-Industrial Revolution levels by weaning their carbon-hungry societies off fossil fuels. But, scientists say it is just as important to adapt to the new reality. "Soil, cropping systems, farming systems—they all must have the capacity to recover from a drastic change in climate," said Rattan Lal, professor of soil science at Ohio State University.

"We should make agriculture part of the solution to our issues... the climate change problem is so huge everything should be on the table." If successful, Farrant will follow in the venerable footsteps of earlier scientists who have saved crops from devastation by exploiting plants with specific strengths. In the 1970s, US maize was rescued from southern leaf blight disease by incorporating resistant genes found in other varieties of maize.

Adapt to survive

Farrant has recently focused her research on teff, a grass native to Ethiopia whose seed has been used as a staple food in the region for centuries. She hopes to make it more resilient by activating genes she discovered by studying resurrection plants. "My main aim all along is to make crops that can improve drought tolerance," Farrant told AFP. "If we get the money, I would say in 10 to 15 years we've got a product." Experts warn that drought-tolerant crops are not a one-stop solution to the world's climate problems or even a safeguard against hunger. "Food security doesn't only depend on climate, it depends on markets and trade, prices and access by households to food," said Jim Verdin, a drought scientist with the US Geological Survey based in Boulder, Colorado.

Still, Farrant—who won a UNESCO Awards for Women in Science in 2012 — believes her work is a step in the right direction. If she can harness the power of resurrection plants, farmers themselves may have a better chance of survival. "If it doesn't rain, it doesn't matter, at least your plants won't die," she said. "The moment they get rain, they're ready to go." — AFP

NEARLY 2 MILLION CHILDREN IN SUDAN MALNOURISHED: UNICEF



KHARTOUM: UNICEF's representative to Sudan, Geert Cappelaere, speaks with an AFP journalist yesterday in the capital Khartoum. — AFP

KHARTOUM: Some two million Sudanese children under five suffer from malnutrition every year, UNICEF's representative said yesterday, urging the international community to boost funding to tackle the problem. Of those two million, nearly 550,000 children have life-threatening severe acute malnutrition, with many of those affected living in the underdeveloped east and conflict-hit Darfur region. "Over 38 percent of children under the age of five are chronically malnourished across Sudan," said Geert Cappelaere, the representative of the UN children's agency to Sudan. The number of children under five affected by chronic malnutrition works out at around two million, he told AFP in an interview. This figure includes 550,000 with severe acute malnutrition.

"In terms of numbers, it is an incredibly huge number of children who are affected by malnutrition in Sudan," he said. The worst affected areas are Red Sea State in eastern Sudan and North Darfur State in the west. Ethnic insurgents have been battling the

Arab-dominated Khartoum government in the western Darfur region since 2003, displacing millions and leaving some 300,000 people dead according to the UN. Eastern Sudan has suffered from severe underdevelopment and is one of the country's poorest regions.

Mothers stopping breastfeeding too early and high rates of diarrhoea among children because of poor sanitation were behind the high malnutrition rates in the east. Every year, UNICEF in Sudan treats some 150,000 of the most severely malnourished children. Cappelaere urged the government and international community to contribute more funds, saying that "billions, not millions" of dollars (euros) are needed to reduce child malnutrition levels. "We need to continue encouraging the government to invest more in malnutrition but at the same time it will have to be a collective responsibility, the international community will have to step up if it is serious in its commitment to help the Sudanese people," Cappelaere said. — AFP

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LULU HYPERMARKET PICKS WINNERS OF 'FORTUNE DRIVE' PROMO DRAW

Lulu Hypermarket, Kuwait's most preferred retailer, held a prize distribution ceremony at their Al-Rai outlet on 19 November, for winners of the 'Fortune Drive' promotion. Winners were picked from among

those who spent KD5 or more at any of the Lulu Hypermarket branches during the promotion period from 2 September to 7 November.

The four lucky winners who each received a

Nissan Pathfinder SUV were: Rafiqul Islam Hazarat (Al Rai branch), Manal Mahmoud Saleem (Qurain branch), Taya Batva (Dhajej branch) and Haisam Jawad Abdhu (Salmiya branch). In addition, 60 winners were each giv-

en gift vouchers worth KD100. A special performance by Jazz Club Band entertained the crowd.

As part of their interaction with customers, LuLu Hypermarket has organized many suc-

cessful promotions that rewarded lucky customers with valuable. The 'Fortune Drive' promotion is yet another instance where the retailer adds extra value to the entire shopping experience at LuLu Hypermarket.



FUTURE EYE THEATRE TO PRESENT NEW PLAY 'BLACK GOLD' IN MOTION THEATRE STYLE

Setting a new trend in contemporary theatre, Future Eye Theatre, Kuwait is gearing up to present its new drama 'Black Gold' in the second week of December in Kuwait. Moving away from the

traditional stage concepts like proscenium or arena, the plays' director Shemejkumar KK here explores the possibility of motion theatre technique.

'Black Gold' unfolds the gripping story of a group of

oil rig workers and their bizarre mission to find oil in a desert land. The play is staged in three spaces including a moving bus.

As the play is being staged, the audience will also move along with the characters in the bus. As the play advances, it will progress in total synch with the nature, weather and the time. The bus winds up its travel in a desert where the climax scene of the drama will be performed. Addressing a press conference, Future Eye Theatre office-bearers acknowledged the challenges involved in the production of 'Black Gold' especially in mixing lights and combining movements and sound.

The play is written by Deepak L B Nair. Future Eye Theatre president Sajeey K Peter, General Secretary Vattiyoorakavu Krishnakumar, Jitheshkumar, Aneeshkumar, Sandeep and Sunil Shivanand play the main characters in the drama in addition to a host of other actors. Future Eye Theatre General Convener A R Subbaraman and Ladies Wing Coordinator Rajeshwari also attended the press conference.



Prominent Indian Medical Oncologist Dr V P Gangadharan visits the Shifa Center on Saturday during his visit to Kuwait for a special cancer awareness program. It was a privileged moment for entire workforce at Shifa Al Jazeera Medical Center, Farwaniya. He was received by Shifa Al Jazeera officials including Executive Director Siddeeqe Valiyakath, Dr Sridhar CEO, GM Zubair along with doctors and staff.

BHAVAN ORGANIZES CHROMA 2015 CEREMONY



Indian Educational School (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) held the Prize Distribution Ceremony of Chroma 2015 (the sixth edition of the Ruth Memorial Interschool Art Competition) in the school hall last week. Ruth Prince Chacko, a prodigious painter par excellence and a student of Indian Educational School left for her heavenly abode in the year 2009 leaving a trail of poignant memories in the hearts of her friends, family and relatives. During her little time on the earth, she amazed everyone with her finest flairs for drawing and painting. Ruth Memorial Art Competition is held annually in memoriam of this phenomenal painter. The Interschool Art Competition was organized on Saturday, November 7 in the IES auditorium. 98 gifted painters representing 7 Indian Schools in Kuwait partook in the interschool art competition organized by the Department of Art, IES under

the patronage of and Mrs. Prince Chacko, the parents of late Ruth Prince Chacko.

The contest was held in 5 categories. A maximum of three contestants from a participating school was allowed to represent each category. Awarded artists Mahendran and John Mavelikkara adjudged the competition. The first, the second, and the third place winners were presented cash awards and mementos by Prince Chacko, the sponsor of Chroma 2015.

The chosen medium of painting for the junior 1 (grades 1 and 2) was color pencils/crayons. The medium of painting for categories 2 (grades 3 and 4) and 3 (grades 5 and 6) was oil pastels/color pencils. 'Water color' was the medium chosen for the senior category (grades 7, 8 and 9). The sub-junior (LKG and UKG) category contestants were given the privilege to pick the medium of their choice.

Prince Chacko, the father of late Ruth Chacko addressed the audience. He thanked the school management, the principal and the Art department, IES for conducting the Ruth Memorial Art competition every year utmost devotedly in his beloved daughter's memory. Many eyes grew misty when Chacko said that even during the agonizing reminiscence about his late daughter, he found a few moments of solace in the aesthetic expressions of the young contestants. He also thanked all the little painters brimful of artistic flairs for having taken part in Chroma 2015.

T Premkumar, the principal, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Kuwait also lauded the winners. He appreciated the efforts of the Department of Arts, IES for organizing the contest in a truly professional manner. He thanked the sponsors of the contest and Mrs. Prince Chacko, the parents

of late Ruth Chacko. He also thanked his counterparts for the encouragement extended to the sprouting painters of the participating schools.

The following are the results of the competition.

Group 1 (LKG and UKG)
First Place: Samara Nabeel Khan (Bhavan's Pearl Nursery School)
Second Place: Alia Chandru Jaidevan (Bhavan's Pearl Nursery School)
Third Place: Anaika P Shibu (Bhavan's Jack and Jill Nursery School)
Group 2 (Grades 1 and 2)
First Place: Anna Mary Viljo (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan)
Second Place: Syed Affan Albeez (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan)
Third Place: Rashida Chikhli Wala (United

Indian School)
Group 3 (Grades 3 and 4)
First Place: Trisha Banerjee (FAIPS DPS)
Second Place: Najidah Abdul Nayaf (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan)
Third Place: Mridula P Ravindran (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan)
Group 4 (Grades 5 and 6)
First Place: Shreya Nath (FAIPS DPS)
Second Place: Chelsea Maria Sunny (Carmel School)
Third Place: Geethika Jayakumar (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan)
Group 5 (Grades 7, 8 and 9)
First Place: Aarathy Mohandas (United Indian School)
Second Place: Esha Banerjee (FAIPS DPS)
Third Place: Nandhakrishnan Mukundhan (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan).

ALGHANIM INDUSTRIES STRATEGIC PARTNER FOR NUQAT CONFERENCE

Alghanim Industries, one of the largest private companies in the region, announced the conclusion of the 6th annual Nuqat conference, which began on the 12th of November, and lasted the entire week. Aimed at celebrating and encouraging creativity in the Arab world, Nuqat offered lectures and workshops in on a variety of creative topics. Alghanim Industries is a Strategic Partner of the conference.

The theme for this year's conference was entitled "The Copy/Paste Syndrome". In addition to its strategic partnership, Alghanim Industries sponsored Dr Amar Behbehani's workshop "Innovative Entrepreneurship: A Creative Process", which focused on helping entrepreneurs undergo a process of art and creative psychotherapy, to help ignite their executive functioning skills

and learn how to execute and produce projects.

Dari Al-Reshaid Al-Bader, Senior Director - Corporate Strategy, BD and M&A at Alghanim Industries said "At our company, we do our best to support entrepreneurs and small businesses by helping in their education and providing them with the tools they need to succeed. Nuqat is a great venue and opportunity because it gathers some of the Gulf region's most creative artists, influencers, and educators. The conference pushes participants to think outside of the box and find creative and innovative solutions, which is then reflected in the success of their businesses and in turn, the economy as a whole."

Nuqat first started in 2009 as a youth initiative led by Hussa Al-Humaidhi, the founding member,

who had this to say, "We thank Alghanim Industries for their Strategic Partnership with Nuqat this year and for their continuous support to entrepreneurship and youth development. As a non-profit organization that is dedicated to the development of creativity in the Arab world, we appreciate all the support we can get which greatly helps improve the quality and the number of activities at Nuqat. This is the first year we are sponsored by Alghanim Industries which is exciting, and we're certain there is going to be more collaboration in the future."

Alghanim Industries also offered its employees; working in different creative fields the opportunity to attend the 4 day workshops hosted by Nuqat. One such person is Sumaiya Al-Sharhan from Impact & Echo, one of Alghanim Industries companies, "It was an

amazing experience for me to participate in the workshop entitled "Social design/Fi Al Wajha". I work in graphic design and art direction so this workshop was a great opportunity to learn new ways in designing attractive store fronts, making them more appealing to the customer. I would like to thank Nuqat for hosting such creative workshops, and I would love to attend more in the future"

The support for entrepreneurship falls under Alghanim Industries corporate social responsibilities initiatives. The company has goals towards youth empowerment, supporting education, and helping entrepreneurs grow. Alghanim Industries was also the platinum sponsor of Start-up Weekend Kuwait, and has the highest employee volunteers in the country for Injaz-Kuwait organization.



The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) visited the media sector at the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) recently, during which bank officers gave a demonstration regarding the nature of the banking media's work.

AL-TIJARI LAUNCHES ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LEADING 'AGODA.COM' WEBSITE

Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced launch of its exclusive partnership with Agoda.com in cooperation with Visa International to offer a direct discount off hotel stays, where customers can use their CBK Visa credit and prepaid card to book their accommodation choices around the world, and enjoy discounts from the offer when using CBK visa credit and prepaid cards.

Paul Daoud GM - Retail Banking Division at the Bank explained that customers can book directly on <http://www.agoda.com/cbk> by using their CBK Visa credit and prepaid cards and avail 5 percent discount on bookings using CBK Prepaid, Classic, and Gold Visa credit cards,

Save at more than 750,000 hotels worldwide with agoda.com and CBK

Use your VISA Credit and Prepaid cards exclusively from Al-Tijari and get from 5 to 7% discount on your hotel booking through agoda.com/cbk

agoda.com VISA Al-Tijari 1 888 225

and a 7 percent discount by using CBK Platinum and Infinite Visa credit cards. Paul Daoud added that on occasion of the launch of this partnership, there will be an exclusive discount of 8 percent when using Al-Tijari Visa credit and prepaid cards for the first two weeks of the offer. Customers can start booking from today until December 5, 2015 to take advantage of this exclusive offer.

Paul Daoud stated that Agoda.com is a leading hotel booking website that provides a wide selection of accommodation and room types, and offers its services in almost 38 languages. With a 24/7 customer service agoda.com gives customers the best convenience when booking a hotel anywhere in the world.

It is known that Commercial Bank of Kuwait has always collaborated with Visa on creating the most innovative, and dynamic campaigns to ensure their customers are always satisfied. CBK urges its customer to take advantage of this special offer, and enjoy their stays worldwide. Commercial Bank of Kuwait also reminds its customers that all credit cardholders enjoy complimentary travel insurance, in addition to a safe online shopping feature called "Al-Tijari 3d secure" an authenticated payment system to improve online transaction security.



BSK LEADS ISACK CHAMPIONSHIPS

The British School of Kuwait (BSK) and their fantastic student athletes have dominated season 1 of the ISACK championships. All 6 squads made the semi-finals, with four making the final. After some thrilling finals, BSK took gold in three of the four finals making them the most successful school in Kuwait in the opening season.

In the boys' football, the BSK Under13 side took the title for the first time in 5 years, beating The English Academy

4-2 on penalties. It had been a tightly contested battle, but Captain Hamad Aladwani and coaches Michael Crawshaw and Hannah Glendinning will be delighted with the way the group conducted themselves to take gold.

The BSK Open Age side had also been without the title for 5 years, but went through the season undefeated before beating Kuwait English School 1-0 in a highly entertaining final. Long serving player and Captain George Ibrahim and coach Calum Erskine could not have

been happier to see this young team continue to impress as they move through the ISACK age categories.

In the girls' netball, the BSK Under15 team lost narrowly in the final after a fantastic start to the season. However, it was the BSK Open Age netball side who took gold, putting in an impressive final 5 minutes to shift the momentum of the game and beat New English School 26-24 to retain their title. Captain Meral Al-Shair and coach Stephanie Jones can be incredibly proud of this all conquering side.

WHAT'S ON - SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All photos submitted for What's On should be minimum 200dpi. Articles must be in plain text and should include name and phone numbers. Articles and photos that fail to meet these requirements will not be published.

Please send them to news@kuwaittimes.net



The Life Sciences Academy (LSA) sponsored a blood donation campaign that was carried out recently in coordination with the 'Pharaoh Bikers' club.



- 00:20 Snake Sheila
- 00:50 Ten Deadliest Snakes
- 01:45 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster
- 02:40 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 03:35 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster
- 04:25 In Search Of The Giant Anaconda
- 05:15 Ten Deadliest Snakes
- 06:02 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster
- 06:49 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Dog Rescuers
- 09:15 In Search Of The Giant Anaconda
- 10:10 Treehouse Masters
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Dog Rescuers
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 River Monsters
- 14:45 In Search Of The Giant Anaconda
- 15:40 Treehouse Masters
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Roaring With Pride
- 18:25 China's Deadliest Snakes
- 19:20 Bondi Vet
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Gangland Killers
- 22:05 Treehouse Masters
- 23:00 Bondi Vet
- 23:55 China's Deadliest Snakes



- 00:20 Fast N' Loud
- 01:10 Lions Of Sabi Sand: Brothers In Blood
- 02:50 Wheeler Dealers
- 03:40 Auction Hunters
- 04:05 Garage Gold
- 04:30 Baggage Battles
- 05:00 Backyard Oil
- 05:30 How It's Made
- 06:00 Alaskan Bush People
- 06:50 Classic Car Rescue
- 07:40 Fast N' Loud
- 08:30 Auction Hunters
- 08:55 Garage Gold
- 09:20 Baggage Battles
- 09:45 Backyard Oil
- 10:10 How It's Made
- 10:35 Misfit Garage
- 11:25 Wheeler Dealers
- 12:15 Cuban Chrome
- 13:05 Auction Hunters
- 13:30 Garage Gold
- 13:55 Baggage Battles
- 14:20 Alaskan Bush People
- 15:10 Classic Car Rescue
- 16:00 Fast N' Loud
- 16:50 Backyard Oil
- 17:15 How It's Made
- 17:40 Deadliest Catch
- 18:30 Outback Truckers
- 19:20 Kings Of The Wild
- 20:10 Garage Gold
- 20:35 Baggage Battles
- 21:00 Deadliest Catch
- 21:50 Outback Truckers
- 22:40 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
- 23:30 Classic Car Rescue



- 00:40 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
- 01:05 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
- 01:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 02:20 Race To Escape
- 03:10 Joe Rogan Questions
- 04:00 Home Factory
- 04:23 Home Factory
- 04:48 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 08:00 Storm Chasers
- 08:50 Food Factory
- 09:40 How It's Made
- 10:30 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 11:20 Joe Rogan Questions
- 12:10 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 13:00 Mythbusters
- 13:50 How It's Made
- 14:40 Food Factory
- 15:30 Joe Rogan Questions
- 16:20 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 17:10 You Have Been Warned
- 18:00 How It's Made
- 18:50 Food Factory
- 19:40 Home Factory
- 20:30 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 21:20 Mythbusters
- 22:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 23:00 Home Factory
- 23:25 Home Factory
- 23:50 NASA's Greatest Missions



- 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 Jessie
- 08:05 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 08:30 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 08:55 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 09:20 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 09:45 Austin & Ally
- 10:10 Austin & Ally
- 10:35 H2O: Just Add Water
- 11:00 H2O: Just Add Water
- 11:25 Jessie
- 11:50 Jessie
- 12:20 Hank Zipzer
- 12:45 Gravity Falls
- 13:10 Good Luck Charlie
- 13:35 I Didn't Do It
- 14:00 Dog With A Blog
- 14:30 H2O: Just Add Water
- 14:55 Lolirock
- 15:20 Austin & Ally
- 15:45 Girl Meets World
- 16:10 Violetta
- 17:00 The Next Step
- 17:25 Mako Mermaids
- 17:50 Girl Meets World
- 18:15 Dog With A Blog
- 18:40 Gravity Falls
- 19:05 H2O: Just Add Water
- 19:30 Violetta
- 20:20 The Next Step
- 20:45 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

- 00:00 The Soup
- 00:30 WAGs
- 01:30 Sex With Brody
- 02:00 Live From The Red Carpet: The 2015...
- 04:00 E! Entertainment Special
- 05:00 E! Entertainment Special
- 06:00 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
- 07:00 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
- 08:00 Live From The Red Carpet: The 2015...
- 10:00 Live From The Red Carpet: The 2015...
- 12:00 Live From The Red Carpet: The 2015...
- 14:00 Live From The Red Carpet: The 2015...
- 16:00 Live From The Red Carpet: The 2015...
- 18:00 E! News
- 19:00 Live From The Red Carpet: The 2015...
- 21:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
- 22:00 WAGs
- 23:00 Sex With Brody
- 23:30 Fashion Bloggers



- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:00 Iron Chef America
- 02:00 Australian Food Adventures With Matt Moran
- 03:00 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera
- 03:30 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera
- 04:00 Mystery Diners
- 04:30 Mystery Diners
- 05:00 Chopped
- 06:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 06:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 07:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 07:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 08:00 Chopped
- 09:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 10:00 The Kitchen
- 11:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 11:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 12:00 Chopped
- 13:00 Guy's Big Bite
- 13:30 Guy's Big Bite
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 16:00 Chopped
- 17:00 The Dying Of The Light-PG15
- 18:00 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy

- 18:30 Trisha's Southern Kitchen
- 19:00 Chopped
- 20:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 21:00 Food Court Wars
- 22:00 Mystery Diners
- 23:00 Ching's Restaurant Redemption



- 01:05 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
- 02:00 Emmerdale
- 02:55 Coronation Street
- 03:25 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
- 04:20 Seven Days With Afif
- 05:15 Take On The Twisters
- 06:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
- 07:05 Coronation Street
- 07:30 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
- 08:25 Seven Days With Afif
- 09:20 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover
- 10:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
- 11:05 Dancing On Ice
- 12:30 Take On The Twisters
- 13:25 Emmerdale
- 13:50 Eggheads
- 14:20 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover
- 15:35 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
- 16:30 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
- 17:25 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 18:20 Take On The Twisters
- 19:10 Coronation Street
- 19:35 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
- 20:30 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
- 21:25 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 22:20 Eggheads
- 22:50 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover
- 23:40 Dancing On Ice



- 02:00 Silicon Valley
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 09:30 Benched
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 14:30 Benched
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 19:00 Hot In Cleveland
- 20:00 Community
- 23:30 Community



- 00:00 Downton Abbey
- 01:00 Salem
- 02:00 How To Get Away With Murder
- 12:00 Emmerdale
- 12:30 Coronation Street
- 16:00 Emmerdale
- 16:30 Coronation Street
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 Scandal
- 20:00 How To Get Away With Murder
- 21:00 Quantico
- 22:00 Homeland
- 23:00 The Leftovers



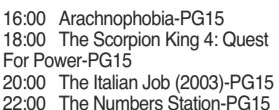
- 07:00 Emmerdale
- 07:30 Coronation Street
- 10:00 Emmerdale
- 10:30 Coronation Street
- 12:00 Castle



- 00:00 Dying Of The Light
- 02:00 Dark Water
- 04:00 Last Passenger
- 06:00 Special ID
- 08:00 The Legend Of Hercules
- 10:00 Rage
- 12:00 Dying Of The Light
- 14:00 King Arthur
- 16:15 The Legend Of Hercules
- 18:00 Arachnophobia
- 20:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power
- 22:00 The Italian Job (2003)



- 00:00 Dark Water-PG15
- 02:00 Last Passenger-PG15
- 04:00 Special ID-PG15
- 06:00 The Legend Of Hercules-PG15
- 08:00 Rage-PG15
- 10:00 Dying Of The Light-PG15
- 12:00 King Arthur-PG15
- 14:15 The Legend Of Hercules-



- 00:00 Cadillac Man
- 02:00 Planes, Trains And Automobiles
- 04:00 Foodfight!
- 06:00 Simon Birch
- 08:00 Mr. Wonderful
- 10:00 Foodfight!
- 12:00 Planes, Trains And Automobiles
- 14:00 For Better Or For Worse
- 16:00 Mr. Wonderful
- 18:00 The Comebacks
- 20:00 Stand Up Guys
- 22:00 Neighbors



- 01:00 Wrath-PG15
- 03:00 Zulu-PG15
- 05:00 My Piece Of The Pie-PG15
- 07:00 Penthouse North-PG15
- 09:00 Still Mine-PG15
- 11:00 My Piece Of The Pie-PG15
- 13:00 The Dependables-PG15
- 15:00 Paranoia-PG15
- 17:00 Still Mine-PG15
- 19:00 Out Of The Furnace-PG15
- 21:00 A Thousand Times Good Night-PG15
- 23:00 Plus One-PG15



- 01:00 Safe Haven
- 03:00 Hateship Loveship
- 04:45 The Magic Of Belle Isle
- 06:45 Till Human Voices Wake Us
- 08:30 Far And Away
- 11:00 The Magic Of Belle Isle
- 13:00 1911
- 15:00 Mr. Pip
- 17:00 Far And Away
- 19:30 Seeking A Friend For The End Of The World
- 21:15 The Double
- 23:00 Enemy



- 01:00 Lords Of London-PG15
- 03:00 Philomena-PG15
- 05:00 How To Train Your Dragon 2-PG
- 07:00 Blended-PG15
- 09:00 The Book Of Life-PG
- 10:45 The Fault In Our Stars-PG15
- 13:00 Parkland-PG15
- 14:45 The Hundred-Foot Journey-PG15
- 17:00 The Book Of Life-PG
- 19:00 Winter's Tale-PG15
- 21:00 Anna-PG15
- 23:00 Sin City: A Dame To Kill For



- 01:00 Memory Loss
- 02:45 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
- 04:30 Hatching
- 06:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 08:00 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventures
- 11:30 Columbus In The Last Journey
- 13:15 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
- 15:00 Scooby-Doo! Ghastly Goals!
- 16:00 Curious George: Back To The Jungle
- 20:00 From Up On Poppy Hill
- 22:00 Scooby-Doo! Ghastly Goals!
- 23:00 Curious George: Back To The Jungle



- 00:00 Haunter-PG15
- 02:00 Big Hero 6-PG
- 03:45 House Of Versace-PG15
- 05:30 The Past-PG15
- 08:00 Vamps-PG15
- 10:00 Tales Of The Night-PG
- 12:00 Brick Mansions-PG15
- 14:00 Good Deeds-PG15
- 16:00 Vamps-PG15
- 18:00 A Common Man-PG15
- 20:00 St. Vincent-PG15
- 22:00 End Of Watch-18



- 03:14 Grojband
- 03:35 Johnny Test
- 05:05 Total Drama: Revenge Of The Island
- 05:27 Total Drama: Revenge Of The Island
- 05:50 Regular Show
- 06:00 The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 07:00 Uncle Grandpa



CADILLAC MAN ON OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 07:25 Adventure Time
- 07:50 Teen Titans Go!
- 08:35 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
- 09:00 Ben 10 Omniverse
- 09:45 Regular Show
- 10:30 Clarence
- 10:55 Dreamworks Dragons: Defenders Of Berk
- 11:20 Total Drama World Tour
- 11:40 Total Drama World Tour
- 12:05 Johnny Test
- 12:50 Steven Universe
- 13:02 Steven Universe
- 13:15 Uncle Grandpa
- 13:40 Regular Show
- 14:25 Adventure Time
- 15:10 New The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 15:21 The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 15:35 The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 16:00 Ben 10 Omniverse
- 16:45 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
- 17:10 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
- 17:30 Teen Titans Go!
- 18:20 Regular Show
- 19:05 New The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 19:16 The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 19:30 The Amazing World Of Gumball
- 19:51 Adventure Time
- 20:15 Steven Universe
- 20:27 Steven Universe
- 20:40 Uncle Grandpa
- 21:00 Teen Titans Go!
- 21:50 Ben 10 Omniverse
- 22:40 Adventure Time
- 00:10 Regular Show
- 01:40 Total Drama: All Stars
- 02:03 Total Drama: All Stars

- 02:26 Total Drama Action
 - 02:51 Grojband
-
- 03:10 California Investigator
 - 03:35 California Investigator
 - 04:00 Blood Relatives
 - 04:45 Whitey Bulger: The Making Of A Monster
 - 05:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
 - 06:20 The Will
 - 07:10 The Will
 - 08:00 Nightmare Next Door
 - 08:50 On The Case With Paula Zahn
 - 09:40 Fatal Encounters
 - 10:30 Murder Shift
 - 11:20 Forensic Detectives
 - 12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
 - 13:00 The Will
 - 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
 - 14:40 California Investigator
 - 15:05 Nightmare Next Door
 - 15:55 Fatal Encounters
 - 16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn
 - 17:35 Murder Shift
 - 18:25 I Almost Got Away With It
 - 19:15 Forensic Detectives
 - 20:05 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
 - 20:55 California Investigator
 - 21:20 The Will
 - 22:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 - 22:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 - 23:00 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
 - 23:50 California Investigator
 - 00:15 California Investigator
 - 00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 - 01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 - 01:30 The Haunted



- 03:05 Calmero
- 03:20 Zou
- 03:50 Loopedoo
- 03:45 Art Attack
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:20 Calmero
- 04:45 Loopedoo
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:35 Calmero
- 05:50 Zou
- 06:00 Loopedoo
- 06:15 Art Attack
- 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:50 Calmero
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:20 Loopedoo
- 07:35 Art Attack
- 08:00 Calmero
- 08:10 Zou
- 08:25 Limon And Oli
- 08:35 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 Doc McStuffins
- 12:55 Loopedoo
- 13:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 13:35 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 14:00 Sofia The First
- 14:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 14:45 Calmero
- 15:00 Doc McStuffins

- 15:30 Zou
- 15:45 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 16:15 Sofia The First
- 16:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 17:10 Aladdin
- 17:40 Adventures Of The Gummi Bears
- 18:10 Chip N Dale Rescue Rangers
- 18:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 18:55 Cars Toons
- 19:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 19:30 Sofia The First
- 19:55 Doc McStuffins
- 20:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 21:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 21:35 Sofia The First
- 22:00 Aladdin
- 22:30 Adventures Of The Gummi Bears
- 23:00 Chip N Dale Rescue Rangers
- 23:30 Lilo & Stitch
- 00:00 Nina Needs To Go
- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:20 Calmero
- 00:35 Zou
- 00:50 Loopedoo
- 01:05 Art Attack
- 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:45 Calmero
- 02:00 Zou
- 02:15 Loopedoo
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster



- 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 Phineas And Ferb
- 10:55 Rocket Monkeys
- 11:20 Boyster
- 11:45 Super Matrak
- 12:10 Super Matrak
- 12:40 Mighty Med
- 13:05 Marvel Avengers Assemble
- 13:30 Supa Strikas
- 14:00 Kickin' It
- 14:25 Pokemon: XY
- 14:50 Phineas And Ferb
- 15:15 Rocket Monkeys
- 15:40 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 16:10 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 16:35 Kirby Buckets
- 17:00 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 17:25 K.C Undercover
- 17:55 Supa Strikas
- 18:20 Lab Rats
- 18:45 Mighty Med
- 19:10 Annedroids
- 19:40 Kickin' It
- 20:05 K.C Undercover
- 20:30 Supa Strikas
- 20:55 Lab Rats
- 21:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 21:50 Kickin' It
- 22:15 Mighty Med
- 22:40 Phineas And Ferb
- 23:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 23:30 Phineas And Ferb

- 06:30 Animals Gone Wild
- 07:25 Caught In The Act
- 08:20 Wild Survivor
- 09:15 Evolutions
- 10:10 Night Stalkers
- 11:05 World's Weirdest Pets
- 12:00 Monster Fish
- 12:55 Lion Gangland
- 13:50 Catching Giants
- 14:45 Caught In The Act
- 15:40 Wild Survivor
- 16:35 Hunter Hunted
- 17:30 Night Stalkers
- 18:25 World's Weirdest Pets
- 19:20 Caught In The Act
- 20:10 Wild Survivor
- 21:00 Hunter Hunted
- 21:50 Night Stalkers
- 22:40 World's Weirdest Pets
- 23:30 Monster Fish
- 00:20 Lion Gangland
- 01:10 Catching Giants
- 02:00 World's Deadliest Animals
- 02:50 Dangerous Encounters



- 03:15 Sister Wives
- 03:40 Ultimate Shopper
- 04:30 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 05:00 Little People, Big World
- 05:30 Cake Boss
- 06:00 Say Yes To The Dress
- 06:25 Bakery Boss
- 07:15 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 08:05 Say Yes To The Dress - Bridesmaids
- 08:30 Say Yes To The Dress - Bridesmaids
- 08:55 Nida'a
- 09:45 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 10:10 Little People, Big World
- 10:35 Sister Wives
- 11:00 Sister Wives
- 11:25 Cake Boss
- 11:50 Cake Boss
- 12:15 Cake Boss
- 12:40 Bakery Boss
- 13:30 Perfect Look
- 14:20 Our Little Family
- 14:45 Our Little Family
- 15:10 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 15:35 Little People, Big World
- 16:00 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 16:50 Sister Wives
- 17:40 Cake Boss
- 18:05 Say Yes To The Dress
- 18:30 Ultimate Shopper
- 19:20 Perfect Look
- 20:10 Bakery Boss
- 21:00 Nida'a
- 21:50 My 600lb Life
- 22:40 Psychic Matchmaker
- 23:05 90 Days To Wed
- 23:55 Nida'a
- 00:45 My 600lb Life
- 01:35 Psychic Matchmaker
- 02:00 90 Days To Wed
- 02:50 Sister Wives

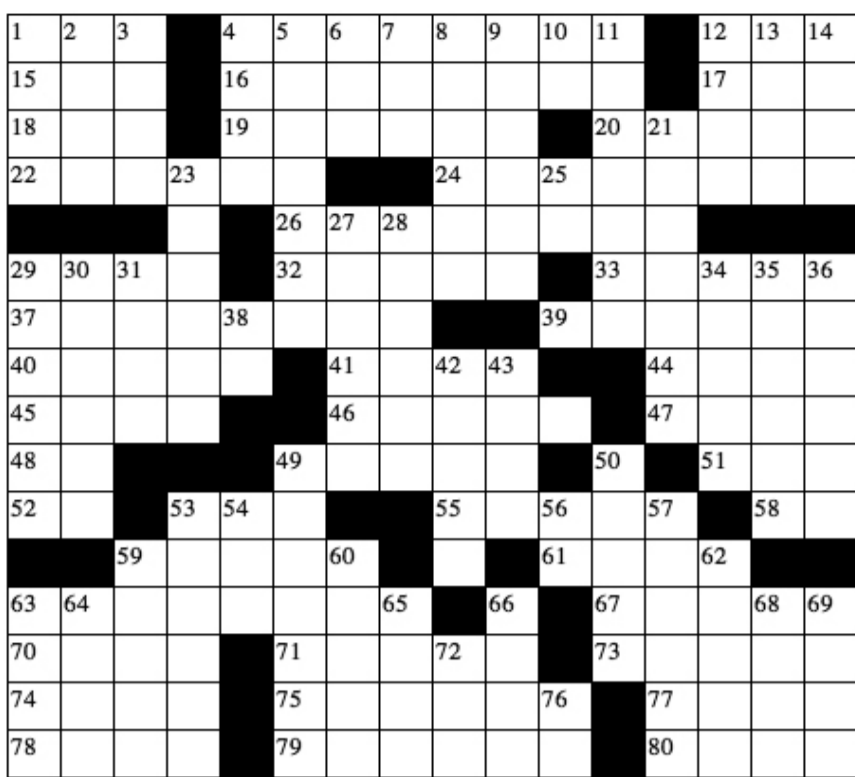


- 00:05 Phil Spencer: Secret Agent - Specials
- 00:55 Rachel Khoo's Kitchen Notebook: Cosmo Cook
- 01:45 A Taste Of Greenland
- 03:30 The Planners
- 04:20 The Planners
- 05:10 Come Dine With Me
- 07:10 The Planners
- 08:00 Come Dine With Me
- 10:05 Fat & Fatter
- 10:55 Building Dream Homes
- 12:25 Rachel Khoo's Kitchen Notebook: Cosmo Cook
- 12:50 Michela's Classic Italian
- 13:15 Rachel Khoo's Kitchen Notebook:



HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2 ON OSN MOVIES HD

CROSSWORD 1088



ACROSS

- The seventh and last day of the week.
- A painter who stipples (creates a stippled effect).
- A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- Electronic equipment that provides visual images of varying electrical quantities.
- Small East Indian shrubby mint.
- A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
- The month following July and preceding September.
- An ancient Greek colony on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles.
- A cloth having a crisscross design.
- An unwholesome atmosphere.
- (British) Liable to payment of rates or taxes.
- Marked by quiet and caution and secrecy.
- At a specific prior time.
- Genus of large deciduous nut-bearing trees.
- The dialect of Ancient Greek spoken in Thessaly and Boeotia and Aeolis.
- Undergo resorption.
- Somewhat strange.
- The cardinal number that is the sum of seven and one.
- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- A member of the Siouan people inhabiting the valleys of the Platte and Missouri rivers in Nebraska.
- An anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as guilt about surviving or reliving the trauma in dreams or numbness and lack of involvement with reality or recurrent thoughts and images.
- Not elegant or graceful in expression.
- The compass point that is one point east of northeast.
- Being one more than one.
- The network in the reticular formation that serves an alerting or arousal function.
- Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
- An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
- A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- Hours or days of work in a calendar week.
- A unit of elastance equal to the reciprocal of a farad.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- Type genus of the Bramidae.
- Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
- The act of scanning.
- Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
- (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
- Exhibiting or restored to vigorous good health.
- Grandson of Amaterasu and first ruler of Japan.
- Immediately following in time or order.

DOWN

- A fraudulent business scheme.
- Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- A one-piece cloak worn by men in ancient Rome.
- (trademark) A tinned luncheon meat made largely from pork.
- Very spicy sauce made from tabasco peppers.
- Devoid of warmth and cordiality.
- An American doctorate usually based on at least 3 years graduate study and a dissertation.
- Somewhat ill or prone to illness.
- The capital and largest city of Zambia.
- Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
- Of wines, fruit, cheeses.
- Decapod having eyes on short stalks and a broad flattened carapace with a small abdomen folded under the thorax and pincers.
- A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
- A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
- A genus of Sparidae.
- In the Arabian Nights a hero who tells of the fantastic adventures he had in his voyages.
- A light strong gray lustrous corrosion-resistant metallic element used in strong lightweight alloys (as for airplane parts).
- The eighth month of the Hindu calendar.
- A university town in east central Illinois adjoining Champaign.
- Marked by intense agitation or emotion.
- Informal terms for a meal.
- A metric unit of capacity equal to the volume of 1 kilogram of pure water at 4 degrees centigrade and 760 mm of mercury (or approximately 1.76 pints).
- An isogram connecting points having equal barometric pressure at a given time.
- A solid food prepared from the pressed curd of milk.
- A state in north central United States.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
- Pertaining to or resembling amoebae.
- Avoid or try to avoid, as of duties, questions and issues.
- A non-aromatic saturated hydrocarbon with the general formula C_nH_(2n+2).
- Pertaining to the forward part of a vessel.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- A port city in southwestern Iran.
- Of or relating to or involving an area.
- A metric unit of length equal to one quadrillionth of a meter.
- Large west African tree having large palmately lobed leaves and axillary cymose panicles of small white flowers and one-winged seeds.
- Predatory black-and-white toothed whale with large dorsal fin.
- An unstable meson produced as the result of a high-energy particle collision.
- Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
- A stock exchange in New York.
- Acting or moving or capable of acting or moving quickly.
- Japanese ornamental tree with fragrant white or pink blossoms and small yellow fruits.
- The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.

Yesterday's Solution

S	C	D	A	D	L	U	M	I	A	F	A	C	T	
P	H	I	M	A	I	L	I	N	G	A	G	H	A	
E	A	R	L	N	I	L	T	A	L	I	N	U	M	
A	R	A	T	A	I	C	A	T	E	N	A	T	E	
K	I	C	H	A	I	F	C	H	A	T	T	E	R	
A	U	D	A	D	T	I	T	L	E					
S	C	A	D	C	A	B	S	H	Y	M	P			
P	A	N	J	A	B	I	A	C	E	B	E	E		
E	R	T	D	A	D	A	O	A	R	L	O	C	K	
C	R	U	R	A	L	D	H	B	A	L	C	A		
S	Y	M	O	N	D	S	S	O	Y	A	B	E	A	N
C	A	H	S	E	E	M	L	Y						
L	E	A	K	E	I	R	E	H	A	N	O	I		
A	L	B	L	I	L	O	A	H	A	B	K	A		
M	A	C	C	R	O	S	S	B	A	R	A	R	E	
A	N	S	M	A	H	A	R	A	J	A	B	A	A	

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It's not unusual for you to react quickly in an emotionally volatile situation. Unfortunately, your goals may not be fully clear yet, so giving them time to develop works to your advantage. You have an opportunity to open your horizons and move in an entirely new direction if you don't rush the process. Although you might be eager to run the race, wait until you hear the shot of the starting gun before you take off. Life is a marathon, not a sprint.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You can imagine a wide variety of potential pleasures today, although you might not be able to manifest what you see in your mind's eye. Your intuition may unexpectedly distract you from your chosen course of action, leaving you slightly apprehensive and uncertain about what to do next. However, making a choice is only difficult if you believe you must decide now. Stop trying so hard to fix on one particular path while the obvious cosmic message is to enjoy the endless parade of possibilities.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Lightning is striking everywhere you look and everything seems to be in transition now. Luckily, you're more than ready for change, but the grip that relationship commitments have on your life isn't loosening as fast as you prefer. You are itching to go somewhere today, but your feet seem to be stuck in mud. However, there's no need to panic since you're about to be set free. Make the most of this cosmic storm by mapping out your next move in advance.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Increased freedom of movement comes with a price now, for it might not sit right with your idea of emotional security. Circumstances seem out of whack as relationship tension drives you closer to the edge of your tolerance. Trust your sense of self-restraint even if others are encouraging you to take initiative today. You're the only one who truly knows what will serve your heart best.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Maintaining your position among your peers can be tricky business today, even if it feels like resistance to change is a good idea. Although you might try to remain quiet as long as possible, something must give because the pressure continues to build. Nothing will be gained by slipping into denial, so let your heart do the talking now. Instead of resorting to blame or threats, just state your truth and prepare to quickly back up your plan with concrete action.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may be at the end of your rope with little left to try that you haven't already done. The good news is that you carry a bit of metaphysical magic up your sleeve today, if only you can trust the unknown enough to take a risk. You could happily surprise yourself once you stop struggling. Relax and you might just escape in the nick of time. Believing in your own power completely changes the rules of the game.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your destination appears to slip out of sight but you still may feel so close that the anticipation drives you crazy today. You might have to wait on pins and needles, yet you understand you're part of a bigger picture that you can't control. Rest assured you are being asked to slow down for a significant reason now — even if you don't yet know what it is. Be patient; the energy is about to break loose and you will likely reach your goal sooner than you think.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You might worry that your plans are being thwarted by someone who means well, yet doesn't understand your dreams for the future. But don't lose faith now because something big is about to happen. An unexpected shift could blast you into a new universe, but you must initiate the change by realizing your own power. Oddly enough, if you allow your perspective to transform organically, the world around you will respond faster than you can imagine.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your confidence is on the rebound, but you still may struggle regulating how much energy you spend. You could vacillate between unbridled enthusiasm and cautious pessimism today. Your mood swings might make people nervous unless you can temper your extreme feelings. Thankfully, your emotional reactions are neither as negative nor as positive as it seems in the moment. Whenever in doubt, standing on middle ground is your safest bet.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You feel like an Olympic sprinter at the starting gate before the big race. You have completed so many practice runs that you know every inch of the track and you could do it with your eyes closed today. But your impatience can get the best of you before the contest even begins, throwing you off stride. Take a few deep breaths and visualize crossing the finish line with the cheers of the crowd ringing in your ears. Learn to play the waiting game now and victory will be yours in due time.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Your plans for the future grow more nebulous now, and no matter how clever your tactics, your path won't clear for a while. Allow yourself to step beyond logic, even if you're not totally comfortable in the subjective realm of feelings. Remember that the emotional world is safer than you might think and can even be nurturing if you have the courage to let down your guard. If you're still feeling disoriented today, keep in mind that your confusion will fade once you surrender to your heart.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You don't know which way the shifting tides will ultimately carry you, since their current direction is misleading. Your relationships may not be changing as you thought they would and you're unsure where to turn. However, your inner world is transforming now while your imagination grows richer with new ideas. Let your thoughts flow and enjoy the fruits of your fantasies instead of worrying about the restrictions of reality.

Wordsearch Puzzle

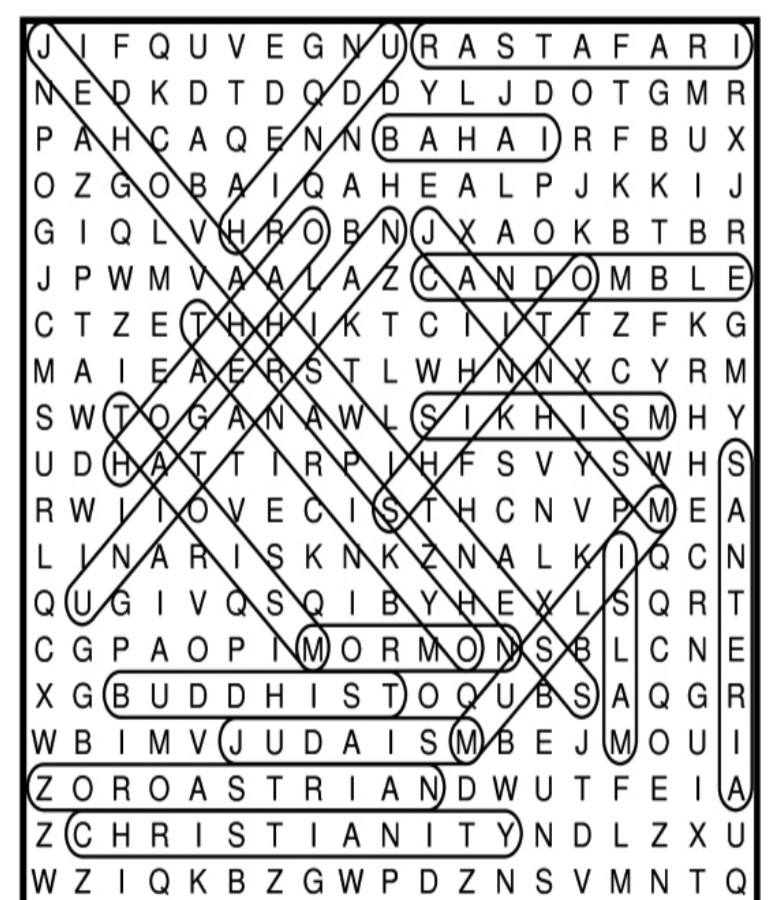
WOODSTOCK WORD SEARCH PUZZLE



- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| ARLO GUTHRIE | JIMI HENDRIX | MUSIC | SANTANA |
| CANNED HEAT | JOAN BAEZ | NEW YORK | SHA NA NA |
| FESTIVAL | JOE COCKER | QUILL | SWEETWATER |
| GRATEFUL DEAD | JOHNNY WINTER | RICHIE HAVENS | THE BAND |
| JANIS JOPLIN | MOUNTAIN | ROCK AND ROLL | THE WHO |

Yesterday's Solution

SOLUTION TO WORLD RELIGIONS PUZZLE



Daily SuDoku

4			9					
8	3	7	2					4
		2		4		6		
2			3					
	5		1	7			2	
			9					1
		8		1	7			
	2			4	8	9	5	
				3				6

Yesterday's Solution

3	8	9	5	6	4	7	1	2
5	7	1	3	9	2	8	6	4
4	6	2	8	7	1	3	5	9
6	9	5	4	1	3	2	7	8
2	3	7	6	8	9	1	4	5
8	1	4	7	2	5	9	3	6
7	5	3	9	4	8	6	2	1
1	4	8	2	3	6	5	9	7
9	2	6	1	5	7	4	8	3

For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Hospitals

Table listing hospitals: Sabah Hospital, Amiri Hospital, Maternity Hospital, Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital, Chest Hospital, Farwaniya Hospital, Adan Hospital, Ibn Sina Hospital, Al-Razi Hospital, Physiotherapy Hospital.

Clinics

Table listing clinics: Kaizen center, Rawda, Adaliya, Khaldiya, Kaifan, Shamiya, Shuwaikh, Abdullah Salem, Nuzha, Industrial Shuwaikh, Qadsiya, Dasmah, Bneid Al-Gar, Shaab, Qibla, Ayoun Al-Qibla, Mirqab, Sharq, Salmiya, Jabriya, Maidan Hawally, Bayan, Mishref, W Hawally, Sabah, Jahra, New Jahra, West Jahra, South Jahra, North Jahra, North Jleeb, Ardiya, Firdous, Omariya, N Khaitan, Fintas.

Table listing pharmacies: Ahmadi, Jahra, Capital, Farwaniya, Hawally. Columns include Governorate, Pharmacy, Address, and Phone.

Table listing international calls with country names and phone codes.

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

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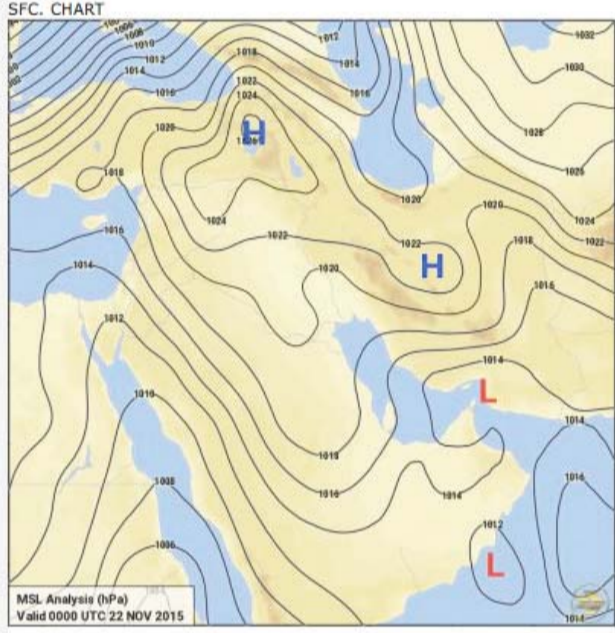


Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 22/11/2015-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

MAX Temperature 21 °C

By Day : Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate north westerly to northerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered rain later on
By Night : Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered rain



Four-Day Forecast table with columns for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and weather icons/conditions.

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings NO CURRENT WARNINGS

Kuwait Forecast table listing stations like KUWAIT CITY, KUWAIT AIRPORT, ABDALY, etc. with min, max temperatures and other data.

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport table listing Max Temp, Min Temp, Max Rel Hum, Min Rel Hum, Max Wind Speed, and TOTAL RAINFALL.

Prayer Times table listing sunrise and sunset times for various locations.

PRIVATE CLINICS

Table listing private clinics and their staff: Ophthalmologists, Plastic Surgeons, Paediatricians, Endocrinologist, Family Doctor, Psychiatrists, Gynaecologists & Obstetricians, Dermatologists, Dentists, Neurologists, Gastrologists, Internists, Chest & Heart, Physiotherapists & VD, Rheumatologists, Consultant Cardiologist.



Jennifer Garner has no desire to start dating

The 43-year-old actress, who announced her split from Ben Affleck in June after 10 years of marriage, is feeling "more relaxed lately" but isn't ready to find love again. A source close to the 'Dallas Buyers Club' star said: "It will be a long time before she even cares to focus on dating." The brunette beauty is eager to spend as much time with her children, Violet, nine, Seraphina, six, and three-year-old Samuel, when she's not working. The insider added: "[She's] focusing on what makes her happy." Meanwhile, the actress and

Oscar winner Ben, 43, are planning to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas together, but don't want people to think they are rekindling their relationship. The source told PEOPLE: "They are trying to figure out how they can best spend them together." Ben is currently shooting in the upcoming film 'Live By Night' in Boston, but has been making regular trips back to Los Angeles to see their children. The source said: "[He] has spent every possible hour of the day working. He's the first to arrive and the last to leave."



Chenoweth adoption is a blessing

Kristin Chenoweth thinks adoption is a "full-circle blessing." The 'Boy Next Door' actress was adopted as a young girl and is glad her birth mother gave her a "better life." She shared: "I've always known that I was adopted. It was never a secret or held from me. I knew that my birth mother loved me so much that she wanted to give me a better life. And my parents, Jerry and Junie Chenoweth, were looking to adopt a baby and found me - literally less than one week after I was born." Growing up, my parents explained my adoption by telling me, 'We chose you.' It was a wonderful way to put it to an adopted child. And I think it's true. An adoption is a full-circle blessing." The 47-year-old actress and singer also admitted she would consider adopting herself if she was to ever have a baby but is content being a mentor to her young fans at the moment. Writing about adoption for WhoSay, she added: "In fact, I've always felt this deep desire: that if I were to have a baby, I would adopt. That's the way I would do it, 100%." "But I have a lot of kids in my life who I love and mentor. So, in a way, I feel like I've done it, even though I don't have a child who lives with me."

Ferry's reveals son's injury

Bryan Ferry's son has lost the use of one of his hands following a serious car crash last December. 24-year-old Merlin was hurt when a car overtook a lorry and smashed into the vehicle he was travelling in near the Welsh border last year and his father has now revealed the full extent of his injuries. He said: "It was awful. I don't know what to say because he has basically lost his hand. It is there but he can't use it. "He has a long way to go in terms of fixing it. He had a stent put into his aorta, the main bloodline to the heart, and that was done to save his life. "There was a difficulty with the flow of blood and they had to cut the tendons on his arm and he couldn't



turn it. "He has got some movement but there is nothing to make the hand work. Since he wanted to be a guitar player, and that's what was his passion, it's pretty tragic. It's all difficult - even tying your shoelaces." While the crash has stopped Merlin fulfilling his dreams of playing guitar, Bryan, 70, hopes he will still carve out a career in the music business. He told Event magazine: "The thing is, he's incredibly knowledgeable about music and he's very much into vinyl and blues singers I've never heard of... 'Is that an original pressing?' he asks, and all that. "He's a great reader and has got a brilliant ear; it would be great if he became a producer or something like that."

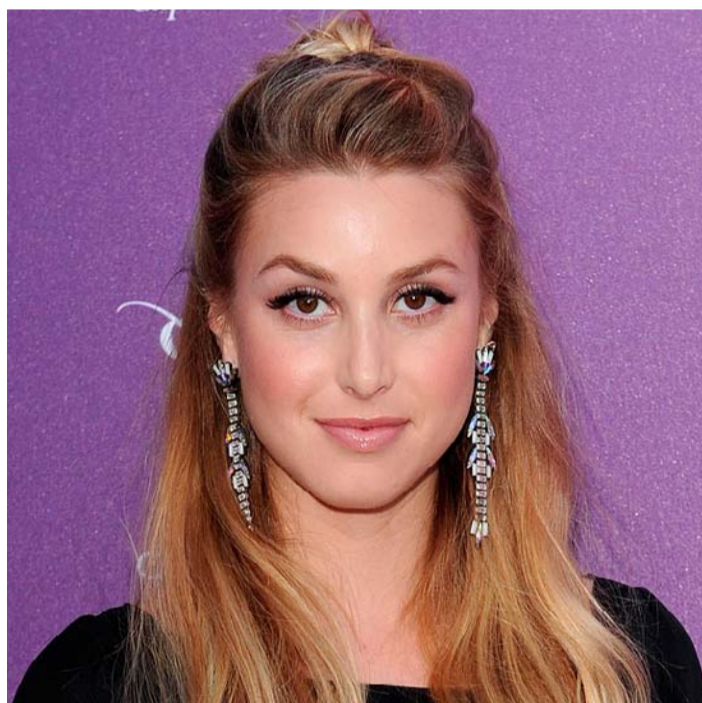
David Beckham

My kids laughed at Sexiest Man Alive award

David Beckham's children "laughed at him" when he told them he had won the Sexiest Man Alive award. The former soccer star was given the honour by PEOPLE magazine but has joked that his kids - sons Brooklyn, 16, Romeo, 13, Cruz, 10 and daughter Harper, four - were less than impressed by the title. He explained: "We kind of laughed about it with the boys and the boys kind of laughed at me and said, 'Really?! Sexiest man alive? Really?' "My oldest son, Brooklyn was the one who was like, 'Are you sure it's not me that's meant to be there today?' "And it is not the first time the children have felt embarrassed by their dad as David's wife Victoria Beckham revealed their eldest son Brooklyn won't let the 40-year-old star drop him off outside the school gates. She shared to PEOPLE magazine: "When David takes Brooklyn to school, Brooklyn makes him drop him down at the end of the street, because he thinks it's embarrassing. "I'm like, if you're embarrassed by your dad and he's David Beckham, what chance does any other father at the school have?"



Whitney Port rings' addiction



Whitney Port looks at her ring nearly 500 times a day. The 'Hills' star tied the knot with longtime fiance Tim Rosenman earlier this month and admits she can't get enough of the rings, which she designed herself. She explained: "I remember when he put the ring on my finger at the ceremony I visibly jumped, I was like, 'Oh my god!' Because I hadn't seen them in person and we had worked on them for so long, it was more than I could have ever expected. I love it! I look down at it like every three minutes." The 30-year-old television personality opted for personal elements to her jewellery

for the big day, also wearing a pearl earring owned by her mother-in-law. She shared to PEOPLE magazine: "I was lucky enough that I was able to design three of them - one that was bigger that I could wear on its own, and the other two that I could wear on either side of the engagement ring," she says of the designs, which all featured pavé stones set along the band and from a top view... "I wanted something old and something new [so] I wore one earring from Delfina Delettrez, who doesn't make pairs - so I wore, on my right ear, this cool rose pearl earring and on my left ear I wore a pearl of Tim's mom's."

Hawke's family drama

Ethan Hawke admits raising children after divorce can be tough. The 45-year-old actor has daughter Maya, 17 and 13-year-old son Levon with ex-wife Uma Thurman, along with daughters Clementine, seven and Indiana, four with current spouse Ryan Shawayhughes - who was previously their nanny. And Ethan said they came up with rules to ensure that Maya and Levon had consistency while living between their parents' houses. He told the Sunday Times magazine: "What's hard for people raising children who have two homes is that you are meant to have the same set of rules, to create consistency. "We worked out that both houses don't need to be the same as long as there are rules for the kids in both. The trick is not to pass judgement on the other house's set of rules. You just have to worry about yours. So we set out the question, what are the rules for this house?" Ethan and Ryan have put these rules into a new book, 'Rules for a Knight', which Ethan wrote and Ryan illustrated.



Paltrow to launch pop-up GOOP store in New York



Gwyneth Paltrow is set to launch her first pop-up GOOP store in New York City. The 41-year-old actress, who has held mini markets in Dallas, Chicago and Los Angeles in the past, will set up her temporary shop at the Time Warner Center from November 23 until December 24, during which time she'll sell her well-known products such as her Chia Oils and scented candles. Speaking to WWD.com, she said: "One would think New York City would be the first location for a pop-up, and that is precisely why we waited. What started as an experiment has become a viable business for us. We wanted to get the New York City location operating at another level, which it will be, from a design and merchandising standpoint." But that's not all as Gwyneth has teamed up with Valentino - the first time the brand has collaborated on a celebrity line - to launch a 25-piece collection of apparel and accessories, which have been inspired by the idea of Wonder Woman. She added to the New York Times newspaper: "To me, it's a fantastic and resonant idea because everybody is working, having kids, trying not to miss a soccer game while at the same time being on a conference call. The modern woman is a wonder woman." The items will also be available to purchase on her lifestyle website GOOP.com, which she founded in 2008 and has expanded over the years, from next Monday.

Joel Edgerton: I 'wasn't pretty enough' to be a soap star



Joel Edgerton "wasn't pretty enough" for to be a soap star. Unlike many of his peers, the Australian actor didn't start his career on a soap and he jokes it is because he didn't have the right look. He told the Sunday Telegraph: "I just wasn't that pretty, to be honest! They didn't want me on a surfboard. And back then I was a little bit judgemental about the soapy stuff. I was working happily in the theatre, but I was losing the occasional really cool job to actors who'd been in those shows, because they sold tickets and I didn't. I remember

thinking, 'I've got to go out and get myself a profile! So I cut that lifeline off.' However, Joel's big break finally came along when he was cast in a small role in 'Star Wars' as Luke Skywalker's future uncle, Owen Lars, in Episodes II and III. He said: "Star Wars' was the canoe that took me across the river, really. There was this 18-month period after I shot it, when no one knew that I was only in the movie for five minutes. I wasn't being deceptive, but it meant that people were interested enough to go, oh, you're in Star Wars, show us your wares."

One Direction got 'very emotional' at the end of their tour

The 'Steal My Girl' hitmakers are preparing to embark on a two-year hiatus and found it "bromantic" bonding together as they said goodbye to their fans at their 'On the Road Again' shows. Liam Payne said: "We did get very emotional, obviously a lot of the songs that will be the last time we'll sing them for a while. "It was a great night with the fans, it was bromantic." The quartet's new album is called 'Made in the AM', which Liam explained is due to their preference for working "very late at night". Speaking on 'Good Morning America', he said: "We make a lot of our music very late at night, never very early, we're lazy people." During their appearance on the show, the band performed new track 'Love You Goodbye', with Louis Tomlinson - who wrote the track - admitting it had a cheeky meaning. He said: "It's kind of about you know when you get to the end of a relationship and you want to meet up one last time, you know what I'm saying." Harry Styles explained the rest of the group - which also includes Niall Horan - don't have too much input into a track once it has been written by one of their bandmates. He said: "I think sometimes when someone's written a personal song, you kind of want to leave that alone, you don't want to change it too much."



Scott Disick is looking for a new home

The 32-year-old reality star only moved into a Beverly Hills house in July after splitting from long-term partner Kourtney Kardashian - the mother of his children Mason, five, Penelope, three, and 11-month-old Reign - but was seen looking at properties with 'Million Dollar Listing' star Josh Altman yesterday and also shared pictures of some lavish home interiors on Instagram. He wrote on one picture: "Early morning motivation." Scott is currently undergoing outpatient treatment at Cliffside Malibu, after checking into the luxury rehab clinic last month, and is said to be doing better than ever. A source told People magazine: "Something has clicked in his head. He's in a very healthy place, and he's being a lot more authentic than before. "He used to give everyone what I call 'rehab speak', where he was just repeating phrases that you know he heard in counseling somewhere. These days, he's being a lot more clear in what he's saying. "He used to always talk about 'taking responsibility'; but now it seems like he's actually taking responsibility by trying to spend time with his kids." And his relationship with Kourtney, 36, is better than it has been in a long time. The source added: "He's also talking to Kourtney in a more productive manner. They are talking to each other, not past each other. "Will he ultimately end up with her? I'm not sure about that. But at least they're being healthy as they interact, which is a lot of progress."

Hayek's daughter does her makeup

Salma Hayek's eight-year-old daughter does her makeup. The 49-year-old actress, who always looks done up to perfection when she's out and about in public, has admitted little Valentina is the secret to her flawless complexion. She explained: "[Valentina] is so good with makeup. So, so good that I have an assistant that sometimes asks her to do her makeup before she goes out. "She's done my makeup, and she's really, really good! I have the opportunity to work with great makeup artists and she's watching them like a hawk." But it's not just makeup Valentina has mastered over her short eight years of life as the youngster also has a knack for manicures and has put her talent to good use by creating her own little in-house store in order to rake in some cash. Salma explained to E! News: "She's developed a stand outside of her room where you can get manicures and she charges you. It's permanently there so anybody that comes to the house to visit or for a fitting she asks, do you want a manicure? She's actually quite good!"



Tisdale creates makeup line

Ashley Tisdale has created her own makeup collection. The 30-year-old actress is keen to share her love of beauty with her fans and has teamed up with the global brand BH Cosmetics to launch 'Illuminate by Ashley Tisdale' next year. Speaking of the collaboration, she said: "Beauty has always been one of my passions. Partnering with BH Cosmetics is a perfect opportunity to bring my audience beautiful makeup products at affordable prices." The line includes two day-to-night eye-shadows, six lip glosses, two blush palettes and six cheek-and-lip tints. The collection has been pulled together using signature pigment-rich formulas made to complement multiple skin tones and create the perfect sun-kissed glow. Director of Product Development Reed Cromwell IV added: "Ashley has been hands-on every step of the way, choosing colors, textures, and packaging that reflect her laid-back yet sophisticated style. "Working with her has been a breeze, because we share the same philosophy: A BELIEF in high-quality makeup at affordable prices, with the goal of creating luxurious cosmetics that let customers express their individuality." Meanwhile, the blonde beauty has recently just launched her new lifestyle blog TheHauteMess.com, which will celebrate imperfections and "empower women." — Bang Showbiz



Odom was given only four hours to live

Khloe Kardashian was warned Lamar Odom only had four hours to live. The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star flew to her estranged husband's hospital bedside last month after he was found unconscious in a Las Vegas brothel and she found the dash to be with him "terrifying". She recalled: "It's a horrible call to get. "Getting to the hospital and knowing he's in a coma and having to run these tests or make medical decisions - it's terrifying." The 36-year-old sportsman woke from his coma after three days and Khloe - who recently put her divorce from Lamar on hold - found it very "stressful" being in charge of making decisions on his medical treatment. Speaking on the 'Today' show, she said: "You have to make risk-and-reward decisions. "Like, OK, well, there's an 80 percent chance if we do this operation, he might pass away. But also if we don't do it, there's a 90 percent chance he'll pass away. "Just having to make these executive decisions is really hard, I think on anybody. So it was definitely probably one of the most emotionally stressful times ever in my life." Though Lamar is slowly getting back to health, the 31-year-old beauty admitted it will be some time before he is fully recovered. She said: "He is learning how to walk again and learning ... cognitive therapy and speech therapy. "They think, like, within a year and a half to two years that, mentally, he might be fully recovered. But they don't know."

Hadid was taught to catwalk by Campbell

Naomi Campbell taught Gigi Hadid how to walk the runway. The 20-year-old model recently strutted her stuff down the catwalk at the annual Victoria's Secret Fashion Show in New York City and has admitted the 45-year-old supermodel dished out her top tips on how to be a success at the event. Speaking to Grazia magazine, she said: "Naomi gave me some pointers so that was really exciting. We were just hanging out at her hotel and I was talking about the show and she said, 'Let's practice walking in the hallway.' "Being cast in the show was nerve-wracking but Naomi told me, 'Take your own time. Don't go to the pace of the girl in front of behind. Have your own movement and remember it.'" The blonde beauty - who made her debut alongside models Adriana Lima, Alessandra Ambrosio, and Lily Aldridge at the star-studded event - had to work really hard to earn her spot on the catwalk after being rejected twice in the past. Gigi's mother Yolanda Foster, 54, said previously: "She has worked really hard; this didn't just fall into her lap. She's missed it twice, this was her third try and she pulled it off and got a spot that millions and millions of beautiful women deserve as much as she does."



Sarah-Jane Crawford wants own clothing line

Sarah-Jane Crawford wants her own clothing line. The former 'Xtra Factor' presenter, 34, is keen to carve out a name for herself in the fashion industry and create her own little collection as she feels she's able to pick out pieces that work perfectly for different body shapes and sizes. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, she said: "I would love to have my own clothing line because I've got a very distinct idea of the types of things that work for me. "When I go shopping, I naturally pick out the same sorts of thing. Not that I won't move from it. But I pick stuff that suits my body shape so I wear a lot of A-line skirts. I like to have my arms out, like 50s style. So I think I'd have quite a specific idea of what sort of collection I'd like to design." And the brunette beauty has already decided she'd like to incorporate a big brand collaboration into her future line. She explained: "I'd either collaborate with a brand who I love already like Cos, Joseph or Whistles that sort of thing then put my own thing on it. I would love to do that." Meanwhile, Sarah-Jane will be in her element next week when she fronts the glamorous 'Beyond the Red Carpet: British Fashion Awards' on November 24 at 8pm on E!



A review of holiday albums released this year

1- Kenny Rogers, "Once Again It's Christmas" (Warner)

If country legend Kenny Rogers sticks to his guns, "Once Again It's Christmas" will be his sixth and final holiday album, and bittersweet nostalgia infuses all 11 tracks. The 77-year-old crooner recently announced his retirement and farewell tour, so this mix of mostly classic carols with traditional arrangements is one fans will savor. Highlights include "Some Children See Him," with Alison Krauss adding angelic accompaniment, and "Children, Go Where I Send Thee," featuring country a cappella band Home Free and a rousing clap-your-hands gospel beat. Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles adds heat to "Baby It's Cold Outside"; Rogers is backed by a choral arrangement on "Little Drummer Boy," and soaring strings on "I'll Be Home for Christmas." His voice is a little softer and raspier than on his first Christmas album 34 years ago, but it fits with selections that make you want to curl up by the fire with a bourbon eggnog and the ones you love.

2- Kylie Minogue, "Kylie Christmas" (Warner/Parlophone)

Kylie Minogue's first Christmas album is a very mixed bag of big band arrangements, awkward duets, better-than-expected novelty originals and evergreens hardly suited to her vocal limits. Frank Sinatra is back for a shared "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" and his input really does sound recorded in the great beyond. Iggy Pop croaks through The Waitresses' "Christmas Wrapping," a very British-sounding, quality American pop tune, while James Corden lifts Yazoo's "Only You," hardly a holiday song. "Every Day is Like Christmas" echoes "Viva La Vida"



This CD cover image released by Warner Bros./Parlophone shows Kylie Minogue's holiday album, "Kylie Christmas."

era Coldplay, no surprise as it's by the consciously uncoupled Chris Martin. The Pretenders' stirring "2000 Miles" gets a lush arrangement but Minogue's no match for Chrissie Hynde. It would have made more sense to include the tunes Minogue helped write, "White December" and "Christmas Isn't Christmas 'Til You Get Here," and maybe a couple more as bonus tracks on her next pop album because under the glossy gift wrap that's all "Kylie Christmas" has worth keeping.

3- The Braxtons, "Braxton Family Christmas" (Def Jam)

The Christmas album from Toni Braxton and her sisters will only make you wish they were working on a proper, full-length R&B project. "Braxton Family Christmas" is soulful and warm and the sisters' harmonies are the album's highlight. They sound like angels on "O Holy Night (A cappella)" and "This Christmas," which opens the 8-track album. And Tamar Braxton, the youngest of the family clan, hits a high note so beautifully on "Mary, Did You Know?" you'll have to reply it again and again. Even on the original songs like "Every Day is Christmas" and "Under My Christmas Tree," Toni, Tamar, Towanda, Trina and Traci sound epic and classic. The sisters' voices are so similar sometimes it's hard to tell who's who. But it doesn't matter because though there are five of them, they sound united, like a real group should.

4- Various Artists, "A Pony Kind of Christmas" (Sony Legacy)

To the delight of Fluttershy fans everywhere, the "My Little Pony" Christmas album, "A Pony Kind of Christmas," has arrived. The mythical land of Equestria can now be filled with whimsical yuletide songs of yore, sung by cartoon ponies that essentially burp rainbows and chase each other on cable for a living. It's all in good fun as Rainbow Dash handles a decidedly rock-tinged rendition of "Jingle Bells." The



This CD cover image released by Legacy Recordings shows, My Little Pony's "It's a Pony Kind of Christmas."

ponies punctuate the hook with a few well-placed yelps and go off the grid from the traditional lyrics just enough to keep the listener guessing. A fair warning for parents: You probably won't know which pony is singing which song without a cheat sheet or help from your kids, which is probably half the fun. Your little ones may have to give you a heads up to remind you that is Fluttershy singing "Silent Night," and not Pinkie Pie. There's some original material here as well. The Phoenix Chamber Carol does a nice job backing the ponies on "The Heart Carol," which is all about friendship, glowing hearts and the loyalty creed by which the ponies of Equestria all live. Fathers everywhere moonlighting as Bronies may get a little choked up as the ponies sing out valuable life lessons under the guise of a Christmas song. "A Pony Kind of Christmas" is about as syrupy sweet a holiday album as you'll find. It's clean fun.



This CD cover image released by Sunken Forest Records shows "Christmas in Tahoe," by Train.

5- Train, "Christmas in Tahoe" (Sunken Forest)

Train's 15-track holiday album jauntily careens through six-plus decades of sometimes obscure Christmassy songs, from covers of Elvis' "Santa Bring My Baby Back (to Me)" to British pop singer Tracey Thorn's "Tinsel and Lights." In between are a soaring version of the classic "O Holy Night," with frontman Pat Monahan sharing vocals with a background chorus, and three Train originals, all with a contemporary Top 40 feel. On Joni Mitchell's "River," surely the most beautifully melancholy holiday tune, Monahan's voice soars almost as high as hers; the opening keyboard is also reminiscent. Less well-known holiday fare includes The Band's "Christmas Must Be Tonight" and Slade's "Merry Christmas Everybody," with arrangements sticking close to the originals, punctuated by Monahan's distinctive croon. Train's own "Christmas Island" has a calypso beat and catchy vocals "Give me Christmas on an island, see me smile," and will be the one fans can't stop humming. The album's digital version is an Amazon exclusive; Amazon and Walmart are selling the CDs.



This CD cover image released by Sony Legacy shows "The Classic 80s Album," performed by various artists.

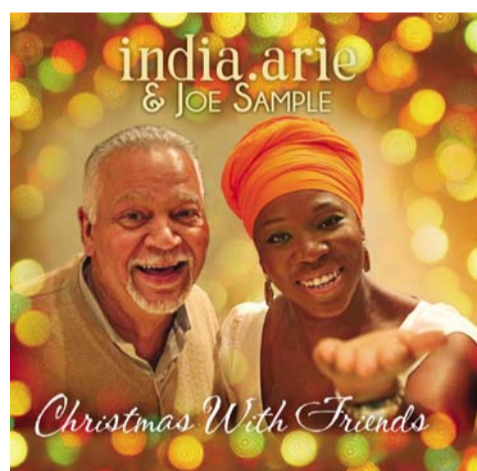
6- Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, "Big Band Holidays" (Blue Engine)

Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra open and close "Big Band Holidays" with two songs from the Count Basie repertoire Ernie Wilkins' arrangement of "Jingle Bells" and Basie's original "Good Morning Blues" with its holiday-themed lyrics sung by breakout star Cecile McLorin Salvant.



This CD cover image released by Killingsworth shows "Christmas Queens," an irreverent - and sometimes pretty rude - take on holiday classics, from drag queens with names like Ginger Mini and Sharon Needles. — AP photos

Salvant displays her vocal artistry on three other tracks, including the winter-themed "It's Easy to Blame the Weather," on which she channels Billie Holiday and scats smoothly with the JLCO playing in a swing style. Grammy-winner Gregory Porter belts out the R&B holiday standard "Merry Christmas Baby," while Rene Marie goes from soft to growly on the Louis Armstrong-associated "Zat You, Santa Claus?" with its New Orleans spices. JLCO's first-ever holiday CD, culled from its festive annual holiday concerts, offers familiar and unfamiliar songs arranged by band members in a variety of jazz styles with a rich palette of instrumental colors, including Ted Nash's modernistic Coltrane-style arrangement of "We Three Kings" and Victor Goines' more up-tempo version of "White Christmas."



This CD cover image released by Motown shows "Christmas With Friends" by India Arie and Joe Sample.

7- India Arie, "Christmas With Friends" (Soulbird/Motown)

India Arie shows a smooth maturity on her first Christmas album, which benefits greatly from the jazz expertise of the late pianist and Crusaders founder Joe Sample. Every track has one or more well-fitting guest artists, from Brandy on "Silent Night" and Take 6 baritone Christian Dentley on "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" to instrumental backing from the likes of Trombone Shorty and Dave Koz. Sample, who passed away in September, features on four tracks, including "Favorite Time of Year," an India Arie original with family-centric lyrics by her mom and a supportive vocal by Tori Kelly. A bluesy take on "Merry Christmas Baby" is a great showcase for India Arie and she warmly echoes how her grandmother sang the song, ably assisted by Michael McDonald, even if he ends up going over the top. The album closes with an intimate take on "Auld Lang Syne" with saxophonist Kirk Whalum, which rises and falls perfectly. India Arie has put together a winner with "Christmas With Friends," choosing her relations wisely.

8- Brian Setzer Orchestra, "Rockin' Rudolph" (Surfdog)

At this point, it takes some doing to stand out in the world of Christmas rock albums (particularly when this is your second one), but the Brian Setzer Orchestra succeeds with a remake of the "Flintstones" cartoon TV show theme, with Christmas lyrics substituted. "Yabba-Dabba Yuletide" is as quirky, bizarre and just plain out-there as anything you'll hear in December, and it features the former Stray Cats leader's fast-picking guitar solos, backed by a kicking horn section. "Joy to the World" shows up here as "Swingin' Joy," a rollicking big band instrumental that defies you not to dance to it, followed by a guitar-heavy "Carol of the Bells." For the Flintstones-themed song alone, this is worth getting. But there's enough alongside it to keep this album in your annual go-to holiday playlist.

9- Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings, "It's A Holiday Soul Party" (Daptone)

Every day can be a holiday if you allow Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings' jubilant new album past your threshold. Poignant, funny and able to create the perfect holiday mood in their own inimitable style, Jones and the band stay true to the soul sounds which they have helped rejuvenate over the past 15 years. They even make "Little Drummer Boy," one of the most tiresome Christmas songs ever, into a delicious funky workout. James Brown would have endorsed "8 Days (of Hanukkah)," the Jones-penned "Ain't No Chimneys in the Project" proves that moth-

ers know best, while instrumental closer "God Rest Ye Merry Gents" adds a classical touch by quoting from Edvard Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King." Another original, the stripped down, mischievous "Big Bulbs," has a sprinkling of naughtiness without forgetting to be nice. With barely a dash of sleigh bells, this rhythmic soul party is recommended not just for Christmas but Groundhog Day, Mardi Gras, the 4th of July or just about any other celebration.



This CD cover image released by Sony Legacy shows "The Classic 80s Album," performed by various artists.

10- Various Artists, "The Classic Christmas '80s Album" (Sony Legacy)

This compilation brings together some of the most memorable Christmas rock songs from the 1980s, including some you can't get enough of, and some you'll probably be able to tolerate again only after hitting the egg nog hard (I'll leave it up to you to decide which is which). No Christmas compilation, particularly one from the '80s, would be complete without The Waitresses' "Christmas Wrapping" and Wham's "Last Christmas," and both show up early here. Run-DMC's crossover holiday hit "Christmas in Hollis" was one of the first seasonal songs to be embraced by both rock and rap fans, and "Christmas Is the Time to Say I Love You" remains one of the better songs Billy Squier ever recorded. Whitney Houston ("Do You Hear What I Hear?"), Hall & Oates ("Jingle Bell Rock") and Dave Edmunds ("Run Rudolph Run") are part of every pop-rock Christmas, as is

the comedic "Twelve Days of Christmas" by Bob & Doug McKenzie, with the notable refrain, "On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me... a drink."

11- Various Artists, "Christmas Queens" (Killingsworth)

If you're the kind of person who thinks the holiday season is a lot of bunk and rolls your eyes at the very mention of Santa Claus, this is likely the album for you. "Christmas Queens" is an irreverent, and sometimes pretty rude take on holiday classics, from drag queens with names like Ginger Minj, Sharon Needles and one that is not fit to print in a family publication. Minj, calling herself a "cross-dresser for Christ," sings a song about the amalgamation of holidays like Christmas and Kwanzaa with derision; Detox sings "This Is How We Jew It" about Hanukkah; "A Very Cozy Christmas" skewers the sex assault allegations against the embattled Bill Cosby, putting a very druggy spin on "Baby, It's Cold Outside." For some, "Christmas Queens" will likely be a riot. But save this one for your friends with that warped sense of humor otherwise, be prepared for some holiday jeer instead of cheer.

12- Count Basie Orchestra, "A Very Swingin' Basie Christmas" (Concord)

The 80-year-old Count Basie Orchestra is out with its first holiday album, although the band was prominently featured on Tony Bennett's "A



This CD cover image released by Concord Jazz shows "A Very Swingin' Basie Christmas," by The Count Basie Orchestra.

Swingin' Christmas," released in 2008. Director and trumpeter Scotty Barnhart has kept the signature feel-good, blues-based Basie sound, but this is no mere ghost band. Barnhart, Basie veteran Sammy Nestico and Big Phat Band leader Gordon Goodwin have penned new arrangements for such holiday classics as "Jingle Bells," "Silent Night," "Sleigh Ride" and "Little Drummer Boy" on which drummer Clayton Cameron contributes some masterful brushwork. Johnny Mathis smoothly swings through "It's the Holiday Season," Ledisi mixes jazz and R&B on "The Christmas Song" and longtime Basie vocalist Carmen Bradford gracefully swings on "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." New Orleans family patriarch Ellis Marsalis channels Basie's understated piano solos on "Let It Snow" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas," which features tenor saxophonist Plas Johnson, best known for his "Pink Panther Theme" solo.

13- LeAnn Rimes, "Today Is Christmas" (Kobalt)

LeAnn Rimes mixes spirited songs that showcase the holiday cheer with more serene, thoughtful songs of the season on "Today Is Christmas." The album features fun takes on family carols like "Must Be Santa" and "Frosty the Snowman" with original songs "I Still Believe In Santa Claus" and the title track. There's also a beautifully classic rendition of "Little Drummer Boy" and Rimes sings a cappella on "Auld Lang Syne," a decision she says she made because she wanted to bring out the song's heartbreaking sadness and loneliness. Rimes duets with singer-songwriter Gavin DeGraw on "Celebrate Me Home" and R&B singer Aloe Blacc on "That Spirit of Christmas." The latter just makes you want to dance. — AP



This CD cover image released by Surfdog Records shows "Rockin' Rudolph," by the Brian Setzer Orchestra.

I'm too sexy for my dress

Barely there gowns hit bridal

Sexy in bridal gowns isn't new, but barely there looks have leaped off the backs of Beyonce, Kim Kardashian and Jennifer Lopez and made their way from red carpet to wedding. What about scandalizing your grandmother, priest or old Uncle Harry? Can you look good on your big day while quenching your thirst for ooh-la-la trends and appeasing the more demure gathered for your wedding?

Absolutely, designers and bridal experts said. Others are more pointed: Be yourself and to heck with what anybody else thinks. Of course, we don't all have the bodies - and



This photo provided by Monique Lhuillier shows a Spring Summer 2016 bridal gown.

lifestyles - of Bey, Kim and J Lo at a time when attention to the body in bridal as opposed to the dress has increased. "It's more about the body now," said Vera Wang, whose spring 2016 bridal lookbook is filled with sexy sheers that show all. "What we're trying to do more is really capture a certain sense of intimacy in body language." So how do we adapt sexy illusion looks, sheers and cutouts to our shapes, as well as to any outside pressures for a more modest approach?

More coverage

There's strapless, for instance, and then there's plunging in necklines and backs. If you're looking to make a statement up top but need a bit more coverage for certain relatives, or the church, mosque or synagogue, add-on pieces are plentiful and a lot more stylish than they used to be, said Anja Winikka, site director for the bridal world's TheKnot.com.



"The idea that 'it's my rite of passage and I'll translate a trend the way I want' includes some pretty sexy styles," she said. "You can add a stole or a cardigan without spoiling your look." Elle Strauss, fashion director for Brides maga-

zine, urged brides who plan to plunge to pull back elsewhere. "If you're going to do a plunging neckline, keep everything else really simple and chic," she suggested. "The hair and makeup. You're not necessarily going to do a full lip or too much eye makeup. The plunging component is your statement."

Designer Monique Lhuillier's advice to brides in need of a little modesty is to think tulle. "For a modern bride with a traditional ceremony, I would recommend a tulle wrap. It will keep her a bit more covered during the



This photo provided by Marchesa shows a Spring Summer 2016 bridal gown.

ceremony, but it's sheer, so guests will still have a sense of the dress underneath and it can be removed for the reception," she said.

Backless or barely there backs are also part of the new sexy in bridal. Winikka has a solution for that, too, if showing too much skin is a problem. "Put on a long veil for the church to cover it up," she said. "Veils can provide a lot of coverage." Keren Craig, co-founder with Georgina Chapman of Marchesa, said backs are just as important as fronts nowadays.

More daring

"It's what your guests will see throughout the ceremony," Craig said. "An illusion back with delicate buttons and vintage-inspired lace is a beautiful way to add interest to your dress." Chapman agreed that flourishes can help with more risque styles. "Brides are

becoming more daring for their wedding-day looks and opting for seductive silhouettes," she said. "Keren and I like to balance these bold shapes with romantic details such as soft tulle, floral appliques and embroidered lace."

Some brides now buy two dresses or more. Those who worry about wearing barely-there during the ceremony may want to consider a more modest look for the "I Dos" and then change for fun, fun, fun at the reception. Convertible gowns are more plentiful. They include "infinity" looks with attached wraps and sashes that can be tied and twisted in different ways, offering more coverage for church and sexier scenarios for later. Other convertibles have detachable trains and transform into minis.

Body type

Since Kate Middleton's grand nuptials with Prince William in 2011, sleeves on bridal gowns have picked up steam. A gown with sleeves can offer options for sexy without revealing anything at all. "Try sheer sleeves if you want to be a little risque but worry about going over the top," Winikka said. "Sheer with lace, that's sexy." Strauss suggested going sheer at the bottom if legs are your best asset and you're uncomfortable with reveals elsewhere. Cutouts are also happening in bridal gowns.

Winikka said placement is everything for body type when it comes to those little slices. "Cutouts can create that hourglass shape if you don't have it," she said. "Make sure they're placed at the natural waist if you want to achieve that." Sexy is one thing, Winikka said,



In this May 4, 2015 file photo, Kim Kardashian and Kanye West arrive at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute benefit gala celebrating 'China: Through the Looking Glass' in New York.

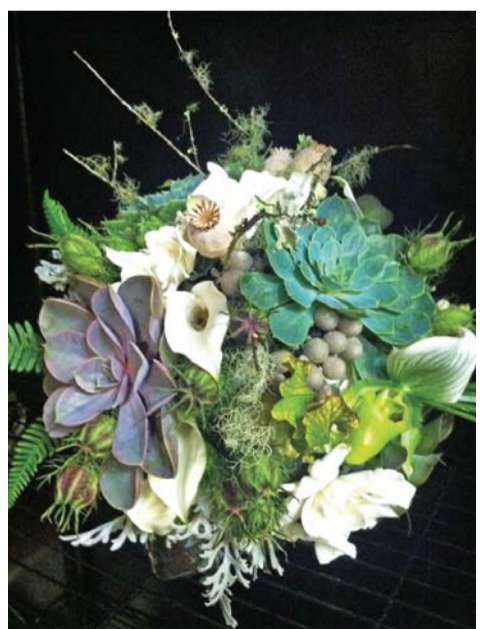


This photo provided by Brides shows an embroidered couture gown by Reem Acra featured on the August/September 2015 cover of 'Brides' magazine. — AP photos

but surveys done by TheKnot.com show that more brides respond to questions about their dresses with: "I just want to look like me." Ultimately, Strauss said, a bride has to be true to herself when choosing a gown. "You should dress for yourself," she added. "You shouldn't be worrying about Uncle Harry. This is your red carpet day." — AP

Succulents lend rustic, elegant chic to modern weddings

Succulents are showing up everywhere in the world of weddings, from bouquets and boutonnieres to centerpieces and even take-home favors. They're dainty yet hardy, and come in a surprising array of colors and textures. Best of all, they're eco-friendly and can be replanted at home after your nuptials as a reminder of the special day. "Succulents add a modern look," says Viva Max Kaley, a New York-based wedding planner. "Instead of pretty petals, it's a cool geometric use of lines.



This photo provided by Erica Knowles of Botany 101 shows a succulent bridal bouquet in Seattle, Wash.

My clients tend to gravitate toward that aesthetic, so it's been a really popular choice."

Robbin Watson, a 27-year-old living in Boston who is getting married in Connecticut next July, is using succulents to add a pop of dusty blue and mint green to her cream-colored bridal and bridesmaid bouquets. But while she loves their aesthetic, succulents are more of a sentimental choice for her. "I lived on the West Coast for a few years with my fiancé, where succulents are very prevalent. Not so much in the New England region, where I

live now," Watson says. "To bring a little West Coast into my wedding ceremony, I thought succulents would be a great way to incorporate my memories of living in San Diego."

Bridal bouquets

Bouquets like Watson's are the most obvious and popular way to use succulents in weddings. Debra Prinzing, Seattle-based author and founder of the eco-conscious floral directory site SlowFlowers.com, says the trend has been popular among California brides for years but has really taken off thanks to social media sites like Pinterest and Instagram. Demand for drought-hardy succulents in the gardening world has also made these once hard-to-find plants readily available year-round across the US, and at a cheaper price than more traditional wedding flowers like roses and peonies.

Taylor Cassard, a 27-year-old nursing student in Montana, used a variety of light green rosette-shaped succulents from the Echeveria family in her bouquet for a rustic yet modern look when she got married at a guest ranch in Big Sky this summer. "They were absolutely gorgeous and mixed so nicely with the other flowers to create a

soft natural look," says Cassard, who planted some of the succulents post-ceremony in metal buckets used by her flower children. Many wedding florists recommend sprinkling succulents among traditional flowers rather than creating an all-succulent bouquet, which can get heavy and bulky-looking. The plants' vibrant green and sometimes purple colors pair especially well with jewel tones, burgundy and apricot shades. According to Prinzing, succulents are a particularly nice complement to dahlias, hydrangeas, lilies, orchids, roses and spring bulb flowers.

Boutonnieres and centerpieces

Succulents can feel like a more "masculine" floral accent and have become a popular choice for boutonnieres as a result, says Anastasia Stevenson, a wedding planner and founder of the website How to DIY Wedding. They're sturdy and can stand up to the rigors of being pinned to a jacket that's tossed about all day. Succulents make good corsages for the same reason. Cassard used a mix of small, rosette-shaped succulents and wild grasses for rustic-yet-elegant boutonnieres, sprinkling the plants throughout her reception area that night as table centerpieces and cake accents. Rosette-



This photo provided by Malcolmweddings.com shows a centerpiece with flowers and succulents designed by Kelly Sullivan of Botanique on a table at a wedding.



This photo provided by Hollychappleflowers.com shows a bridal bouquet comprised entirely of different succulents, designed by Holly Chapple.

shaped Echeverias like those Cassard used work well as centerpieces because they can grow up to a foot in diameter, according to Prinzing.

Other uses

How about succulents as jewelry? Wiring and flower glue are keys to this recent bridal trend, which includes everything from rings and necklaces to bracelets and headpieces, says Prinzing. Other couples have said their vows before a wall of succulents or used them as eco-friendly wedding favors - a parting gift that's "unlikely to be tossed in the trash when the guests arrive home," says New York-based wedding-trends expert and editor Anne Chertoff. And succulents aren't just for people. "I know of one creative designer who offers floral dog collars for her wedding parties," Prinzing says. "Succulents are ideal for this situation because they withstand canine activities that are probably more lively than a groom or bride's movements during a ceremony." — AP



This photo provided by Hollychappleflowers.com shows a bouquet focused around a large, rosette-shaped echeveria succulent and secured with plant leaves, designed by Holly Chapple.



This photo provided by How To DIY Wedding shows a tea cup wedding favor designed by Laurie and Heather Comeaux of Unique Floral Designs.

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A Pakistani art student decorates a wall along a street in Lahore yesterday. — AFP

Designers take on the evolving home office

Lord's Prayer Christmas ad banned in UK cinemas

A pre-Christmas advert featuring solely the Lord's Prayer has been banned from Britain's biggest cinema chains for fear of causing offence, to the bewilderment Sunday of the Church of England. The 56-second advertisement features believers from various walks of life, including the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, a weightlifter, a farmer, a couple getting married, refugees and a gospel choir, saying the main Christian prayer. The Church of England (CofE) is the state church in England and the ad was cleared by the British Board of Film Classification and the Cinema Advertising Authority.

However, the Digital Cinema Media (DCM) agency, which handles adverts for Odeon, Cineworld and Vue cinemas, has refused to show it. The CofE hoped the advert would be played before screenings of blockbuster "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" from December 18. Welby, the leader of the world's Anglicans and the spiritual head of the church, said: "I find it extraordinary that cinemas rule that it is inappropriate for an advert on prayer to be shown in the week before Christmas when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ." Billions of people across the world pray this prayer on a daily basis. I think they would be astonished and deeply saddened by this decision, especially in

the light of the terrorist attack in Paris where many people have found comfort and solace in prayer.

"This advert is about as 'offensive' as a carol service on Christmas Day," he told The Mail on Sunday newspaper. DCM said it had a policy of "not accepting political or religious advertising content for use in its cinemas." "Some advertisements-unintentionally or otherwise-could cause offence to those of differing political persuasions, as well as to those of differing faiths and indeed of no faith," it said. "In this regard, DCM treats all political or religious beliefs equally."

CofE spokesman Reverend Arun Arora, said the decision raised questions about freedom of speech in Britain. "The prospect of a multi-generational cultural event offered by the release of Star Wars: The Force Awakens' on December 18 — a week before Christmas Day was too good an opportunity to miss and we are bewildered by the decision," he said. Arora said the Lord's Prayer had been part of everyday life in Britain for centuries. "In one way, the decision of the cinemas is just plain silly but the fact that they have insisted upon it makes it rather chilling in terms of limiting free speech." People should be allowed to "make up their own minds as to whether they are upset or offended by it," he said. — AFP

Maybe you dash off work e-mails while making dinner, or you squeeze in a half-hour of work on a spreadsheet before bedtime. The line between "at work" and "at home" has become a blurry one for many people, and for others it has disappeared entirely. That makes a home workspace more necessary than ever.

Not every home includes a spare room available for use as an office, but design experts say that's not a problem: Today's streamlined technology means that just about any space can be transformed into an appealing and organized area for working.



"Walk into any creative corporation and you'll find the CEO sitting right smack in the middle of a large, open space along with almost every other key player," says designer Brian Patrick Flynn of Flynnside Out Productions. "This relaxed, informal atmosphere has become the norm, not just in corporate settings but also in the home."

Here, Flynn and two other interior designers - New York City-based Young Huh and Danielle Colding - offer advice on creating a home work area that's both practical and inspiring.

Part of a room is perfect

With today's smaller computers and wireless connections, there's less need for a boxy desktop and connecting cables. A desk built into a wall of shelving and cabinets can often serve as a fully functioning home office. So unless your work requires total concentration and silence, don't give up an entire room even if you have one available. And built-in pieces don't have to be expensive.

"I turned dead space into a mini-home office by configuring Ikea kitchen cabinets and a laminate countertop as a tall workstation," Flynn says. "You can assemble it all yourself and have the counter cut to size at a local home improvement store." Once the pieces are installed, "it looks architectural, almost like it's always been part of the home."

Or installing these items in a bedroom closet



allows you to work, and drawers for storing things," Huh says, "but then you can close everything up when you are entertaining or want to hide your work mess."

Go bold

Offices outside the home are often decorated in neutral or drab colors. But Flynn recommends bold or bright hues and fun patterns for home workspaces. "There's something inviting that draws you in and even excites you about getting some work done if the overall look is fun," he says. In a small space, white walls can help. "All white can make any cramped 'bonus room' instantly feel like a light and bright home workspace," says Flynn. — AP



US artist Shepard Fairey poses with his "Earth Crisis" globe displayed on the Eiffel tower in Paris on November 20, 2015 as part of the organization of the Conference on Climate Change COP21-CMP11. — AFP

creates a mini-office that can easily be closed off for privacy. In a New York City apartment, Colding opened up the wall between the living room and a small bedroom that had been used as an office. She filled one wall with built-in shelving, cabinetry and a desk, so the now-larger living room still offered a complete workspace. And she added a Murphy bed along that wall so the room could still accommodate an overnight visitor.

Another option: Buy a "secretary," a large piece of furniture with doors that conceal shelves and drawers. "I love using secretaries because they have a drop-down tabletop that