

MP: Syrians in Kuwait 'brothers', not 'refugees'



Erdogan warns Moscow not to 'play with fire'



Cutler leads Bears to surprise win over Packers



ISRAEL TO OPEN FIRST MISSION IN ABU DHABI

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KUWAIT: Narcotics officials examine packets of hashish and pills retrieved from the bed of a truck yesterday. — KUNA

POLICE BUST DRUGS TRUCK

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's assistant undersecretary for criminal security affairs Maj Gen Abdul Hameed Al-Awadhi said narcotics detectives arrested an Egyptian truck driver arriving from Iraq with around 200 kg of hashish and 200,000 narcotic pills. Initial investigations showed that narcotics detectives had been tipped off over a man with a drug-related record planning to smuggle the drugs into Kuwait.

The suspect's plan involved having the driver drive the truck loaded with drugs to the Kuwaiti border from Iraq, then drive an empty one into Kuwait several times to gain custom inspectors' trust. The driver was to then drive the drug-laden truck into Kuwait and park it in a certain spot to be collected by others. The driver confessed and gave detectives the names of his accomplices, who are being sought for further investigations.



JERUSALEM: Israel plans to open a diplomatic-level mission to the International Renewable Energy Agency in Abu Dhabi, its first openly established representative office in the United Arab Emirates, Israeli diplomats said yesterday. The office will not be a full mission, but will consist of a diplomat assigned to the renewable energy agency. Nevertheless, it will be the first time an Israeli foreign ministry official is permanently stationed in the Gulf state.

Foreign ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon confirmed details first reported in Israeli daily Haaretz and three diplomatic officials told Reuters the move was underway. The mission has been the subject of years of top secret discussions, according to Haaretz. Israel does not have formal diplomatic ties with most states in the Middle East. But the nuclear deal between world powers and Iran has caused disquiet in Israel and Sunni Arab states alike. Common ground has emerged

between the two sides, even if they are cautious about drawing attention to the links.

In recent years, Israeli officials have met counterparts from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf at nuclear non-proliferation talks in Switzerland, gatherings that the Israelis say have helped melt the ice and lead to increased dialogue. A delegation from Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited IRENA's offices in Abu Dhabi and met its director-general earlier in the week, a spokesperson for IRENA said in a written statement.

The visit by director-general of Israel's foreign ministry Dore Gold was the first time someone of his diplomatic rank has publicly made such a trip. IRENA has been part of a rapprochement between Israel and the Emirates before. In 2010, then-Israeli National Infrastructure Minister Uzi Landau attended an IRENA conference in Abu Dhabi on behalf of his country, becoming the first Cabinet-level official to visit the Emirates. — Agencies

SAUDI WOMEN IN FIRST ELECTION BID

RIYADH: Segregated from male voters and unable to drive themselves to hustings, Saudi women begin their first-ever election campaign tomorrow, a tentative step towards better representation in the male-dominated kingdom. Around 900 female candidates are standing in next month's municipal election, a poll that also offers a chance for female voters to elect their officials for the first time.

"If we want to develop or reform our country we should put a woman in every decision-making level," says Nassima Al-Sadah, a candidate in the Gulf coast city of Qatif for the Dec 12 vote. Saudi Arabia, an Islamic absolute monarchy, has no female cabinet ministers and is the only country in the world where women are not allowed to drive. They have to cover themselves in black from head-to-toe in public, and require permission from a man in their families to travel, work or marry.

Restrictions remain in place despite a slow expansion of women's rights under the late king Abdullah, who introduced municipal elections in 2005 and said women would participate this time around. In 2013 he named women to the appointed Shura Council which advises the cab-

inet. Abdullah died in January and was succeeded by King Salman, who has stuck to the election timetable.

Unlike other Gulf states, where women have had voting rights for several years, this will be the first time Saudi women have had a say in who gains office. While Al-Sadah expressed satisfaction at the number of female candidates, she said "very few" women have registered to vote. Data cited by the Saudi electoral commission show about 7,000 candidates are vying for seats on the 284 councils. According to the intekhab.gov.sa elections website, just 130,600 women have signed up to vote, compared to around 10 times that number of male voters.



Nassima Al-Sadah

Electoral democracy is still a novel concept in a country where tribal loyalties remain strong and things traditionally get done through "wasta" - knowing the right people. Aside from transport problems, women say their voter registration was hindered by bureaucratic obstacles and a lack of awareness of the process and its significance. "I myself had a very difficult time to register", said Sahar Hassan Nasief, an activist in the Red Sea city of Jeddah who has many friends running as candidates. — AFP



SAN DIEGO: Kuwaitis Education Minister Dr Bader Al-Essa (fourth from left) is seen during the inauguration of the 23rd annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students. — KUNA

KUWAITI STUDENTS URGED TO FOLLOW FOREFATHERS' STEPS

SAN DIEGO: Kuwait's Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa has urged Kuwaiti students studying in the United States to follow steps of the forefathers carrying on with the process of developing Kuwait.

Addressing inauguration of the 23rd annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS-USA), themed "Kuwait's dream is fulfilled with us," Essa relayed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

He urged the students to be aware of "current circumstances" in the Middle East, alluding to crises gripping several regional nations. "Kuwait has opted as much as possible, to stay aloof from engagement in regional conflicts," Minister Al-Essa said, expressing gratitude to the top leader, His Highness the Amir, for adopting such a neutral policy, amid the regional turbulence.

The education minister expressed confidence that the Kuwaiti students would continue to be excellent and creative in their studies, also urging them to stay abreast of rapid scientific and technological innovations worldwide. He also urged them, particularly during the students' elections, to shun sectarianism and tribalism, due to their annihilating effects on Kuwait and its social fabric.

Kuwait's record

Meanwhile, Kuwait Ambassador to the United States Sheikh

Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah urged the students to re-portray Kuwait's record in the realm of humanitarian aid for people in need. He recalled the national unity, demonstrated by the people of Kuwait in aftermath of the bombing attack on Imam Al-Sadeq Mosque in Kuwait city in the summer, affirming that the terrorists' plot to terrorize the Kuwaitis failed.

Eman Al-Awadhi, Group Communications Director of Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO), addressed the occasion, saying youth constitute 70 percent of the Kuwaiti population, thus the Government and the public sector attach great concern to this segment of the society. KIPCO advocates the principle that "socio-economic development largely hinges on innovation and creativity and such traits distinguish the youngsters," she said.

Workshop

In the meantime, Kuwaiti MPs Abdullah Al-Maayouf and Dr Khalil Abul took part in a workshop on the sidelines of the conference. In their speeches to the workshop, they promised the students to convey all issues they might raise to the National Assembly in order to meet the aspirations of the people.

They listened to the views of students and briefed them on the Assembly's operating mechanism, ad hoc committees and the law making procedures. They also put the audience in the picture of the relationship between the parliament and the government and the efforts of the legislative and executive authorities to realize the aspirations of the Kuwaiti people. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Information and Youth Affairs Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah (center) attends Albania's Embassy's ceremony to celebrate the European country's national day.



Children dressed in traditional Albanian costume.
— Photos by Joseph Shagra

SHEIKH SALMAN REVEALS THOROUGH PLAN TO OVERHAUL KUWAITI SPORTS

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah has said that there is a comprehensive strategic plan to overhaul Kuwaiti sports and maintain good relations with international sports bodies.

Sheikh Salman made the statement Thursday night while attending a celebration of Albania's Embassy here marking its National Day. He stressed readiness of Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium to host sports events, referring to the visit of First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and some ministers to this sports

facility. Sheikh Salman lauded the depth of relations between Albania and Kuwait and their peoples in all domains, especially the investment one, affirming Kuwait's keenness on promoting these relations. Meanwhile, Albanian Ambassador in Kuwait Kutim Morina said that the two countries enjoy historic and strong bilateral relations. The special relations have great impact on the growth of Kuwaiti investments in Albania, he said.

He extolled the humanitarian role of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in supporting Albania in several fields and building education and healthcare centers to serve Albanians. — KUNA

KUWAIT HOSTS THOUSANDS OF SYRIANS AS 'BROTHERS, NOT REFUGEES': MP

FLORENCE: Kuwait is hosting 160,000 Syrians "whom we consider brothers and offer all means of a dignified life. We do not deal with them as refugees," a Kuwaiti MP said yesterday.

The lawmaker was referring to the number of Syrian nationals currently living in Kuwait, and who have mostly been residing in the Gulf state since before the Syrian crisis started in 2011. Kuwait has held an adamant stance against welcoming any new refugees fleeing from the conflicts in their home country, citing security reasons.

Yet, MP Dr Ouda Al-Ruwaie believes that hosting a large community of Syrians in Kuwait "and offering them all forms of humanitarian support" reflects the state's keenness on assisting victims of the conflict in Syria. "The figure may look small for some, but it is equal to 15 percent of the Kuwaiti population," Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) quoted Ruwaie in statement he said during a joint seminar for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (PA) Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) and the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations that kicked off in Florence, Italy, on Thursday.

Ruwaie is leading a Kuwaiti National Assembly delegation to a joint seminar for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (PA) Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) and the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations that kicked off in Florence, Italy, on Thursday. The GSM provides a forum for parliamentarians from NATO countries and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to discuss political and security issues and to enhance co-operation.

Donor conferences

Ruwaie appreciated all those offering support to the Syrian refugees, either Arab Muslims, or the international community. He said that the event highlighted the Gulf leading role in support to the humanitarian issues.

Ruwaie said that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was the first to pay attention to the Syrians' humanitarian issue since the eruption of the crisis, more than four years and a half ago. His Highness the Amir exerted efforts to muster assistance to the Syrians, hosting the First, Second and Third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, which managed to collect \$8 billion for the Syrian people.

Terror organization

On Thursday, Ruwaie stressed the importance of rejecting any links between the so-called Islamic State (IS) to Islam, calling for terming it as a terror organization. The message of IS runs thoroughly counter to the principles and teachings of Islam which call for tolerance, stopping the bloodshed of people and safeguarding their lives, he told a forum of NATO parliamentary group.

Ruwaie called on countries to scrutinize deeply and clearly the ideology of this organization, which calls for the destruction of institutions and homes, and the killing of people, and to expose its crimes against people regardless of their race, religion or sex.

He rejected also claims that IS destroys monuments and museums on a religious basis, saying the accumulated cultural heritage has been existing unharmed over the history of Islam and this proves also that IS is not linked to Islam.

The Kuwaiti MP underlined the urgency of drying up financial sources of IS in order to uproot the phenomenon, urging both Muslim and Arab nations to show to the world the true image of Islam and Muslims. He urged the Western media to uncover facts relating to the crimes of this organization to expose its ugly image to people.



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UNITY AMONGST ARAB RELIEF AID ORGANIZATIONS VITAL: KRCS OFFICIAL

KUWAIT/GAZA: Unity amongst Arab relief aid organizations "vital" to address regional and global challenges, Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Anwar Al-Hasawi said yesterday. The KRCS was keen on contributing to this cause of bolstering cooperation amongst Arab red crescent societies, he said.

The upcoming meetings for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the International Federation for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), to be held in Geneva from December 3-10, will be important venues to showcase Arab solidarity within the relief aid domain, said Hasawi who noted that KRCS will brief the meetings on the society's efforts worldwide.

Regarding important items to be discuss at the Geneva meetings, Hasawi said the Arab group will deliver its vision on improving a number of international humanitarian accords, adding that among the topic to be discuss was also the recent agreement signed between the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and the Red Star of David society regarding operation in the occupied Palestinian lands including East Jerusalem.



**KRCS Deputy Chairman
Anwar Al-Hasawi**

School supplies

Meanwhile, the KRCS distributed school bags and medical equipment to the Palestinian people in Gaza in light of the difficult living conditions imposed on them by the Israeli occupation. KRCS' representative in Palestine Redha Khadr said in a statement that the KRCS has distributed about 20,000 school bags and stationery to the poor, marginalized groups, orphans and students with special needs in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Khadr added that "This aid is in line with Kuwait's leading role in presenting humanitarian aid in the world." She pointed out that KRCS will provide within the next few weeks prostheses to a Palestinian child with special needs after taking all necessary medical measurements with the help of one of the Palestinian health centers.

She explained that the provision of the prostheses came to meet the urgent appeal made by the Palestinian child's family, which in turn thanked Kuwait for its efforts to support the Palestinian people. —KUNA



GAZA: KRCS staff distribute school bags to students in Gaza, Palestine. —KUNA



Mubarak Al-Kabeer is pictured with King Abdulaziz Bin Abdurrahman Al Saud

CENTENNIAL OF PASSING OF MUBARAK AL-KABEER, FOUNDER OF MODERN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, or Mubarak Al-Kabeer as he is commonly known, is always associated with Kuwait's modern development and progression. As the 100th anniversary of the seventh Amir's death is marked today, Kuwaitis remember Sheikh Mubarak, who ruled Kuwait from 1896 to 1915, as the person who founded and protected the foundation of the modern Kuwaiti state.

Peninsula Lion

Sheikh Mubarak was known for his bravery and diligence which earned him the title of 'Peninsula Lion.' Sheikh Mubarak's legacy was the subject of interest for many documentaries and researches. In his book (Mubarak Al-Sabah: founder of modern Kuwait), Dutch Authority B J Slot said that the Kuwaiti ruler managed to steer Kuwait clear from colonialism plans.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah managed to keep Kuwait independent from the Ottoman Empire's rule and his policies also led to the protection treaty with the British Empire on January 23rd, 1899 which many historians say was signed in secrecy.

Part of the deal involved Sheikh Mubarak's agreement on not offering land belonging to Kuwait to any other nation or empire without the consent of the British. By 1902 and after the WWI, Kuwait was considered as British protectorate.

Several attacks

As the new century began, Sheikh Mubarak ordered Kuwaiti troops to fend off several attacks from tribal groups threatening the country, sending armies led by Al-Sabah family members to defend the country from invaders.

In 1901, Sheikh Mubarak accompanied Abdulaziz bin Abdurrahman Al-Saud, soon to be the first Monarch of Saudi Arabia in 1932, on a

campaign against Al Rashid on March 17th. However, their forces were defeated.

In 1910, the battle of Hadiya occurred between the Kuwaiti troops led by Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak who was also aided by Abdulaziz Al-Saud. The Kuwaiti army faced the Ibn Sadoun army, losing in the process of the war; however, Sheikh Mubarak was triumphant in another campaign against Al-Dhufair tribe.



**Sheikh Mubarak Sabah
Al-Jaber Al-Sabah
(Mubarak Al-Kabeer)**

National flag

Acting in defiance to the Ottoman Empire, Sheikh Mubarak asserted Kuwait's unique independent status by issuing orders for a national flag in 1914. The first design consisted of a red flag with Kuwait written in Arabic in the middle with various versions of this flag used till 1961.

Speaking about Sheikh Mubarak's vital inputs, history teacher at the Kuwait University's (KU) College of Arts Hayat Al-Hajj said that the ruler had laid the cornerstones for the modern state of Kuwait, stressing that during his reign Kuwait rapidly developed within the commercial, economic, healthcare, and economic domains.

First school

During his rule, the first public school, Al-Mubarakiya, named after his namesake, was opened in 1912 and continued to operate till 1985, said Al-Hajji, adding that the American missionary hospital was also built in Kuwait.

The importance of Sheikh Mubarak to the history of Kuwait is undeniable with several locations in Kuwait named after him such as the Mubarakiya market, Mubarak Hospital which was opened in 1982, and also Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate which was established on November 27th, 1999. Boubyan Island will also be home for the Mubarak Al-Kabeer seaport, which is currently under construction. —KUNA

UNION CALLS FOR OBSTACLES-FREE INVESTMENTS

KUWAIT: Removing obstacles standing in the way of local investors will incentivize foreign investors to invest in the Kuwaiti marketplace, said Kuwait Industries Union President Hussein Al-Kharafi on Thursday.

What would attract foreign investors to Kuwait is their secure feeling that there are business laws protecting their investments aside from a viable infrastructure for their products and services, said Kharafi addressing The 15th Industrialists' Conference on "FDI in GCC and Its Impact on Industry," which kicked off Thursday. FDI is short for Foreign Direct Investment.

He said in the absence of attractive and lucrative investments locally in Kuwait, the Kuwaiti private sector has been setting its sights on overseas investments, so much so that it has become the largest FDI investor in the Gulf region.



Hussein Al-Kharafi

Kuwaiti FDI topped \$51 billion right up through 2010, mostly centered in the Gulf, he said, adding that Kuwaiti investments in the GCC region constitute about 50 percent of all foreign investments in the region.

The aggregate of total investments in Kuwait does not represent more than 16 percent of the nation's GDP, he pointed out, urging for ramping up the rate of these investments whose benefits would be seen eventually in the improvement of the country's infrastructure and sustainable development.

The two-day conference discussed several topics including: FDI reality, development and incentives in the GCC countries, FDI role and impacts on GCC economies, and the role the private sector and small and medium-sized enterprises in attracting FDI. The conference also discussed means of improving investment environments in the GCC countries.

The GCC General Secretariat, a number of GCC governmental bodies attended the conference including the GCC Commerce and Industry Ministries, investment promotion and protection institutions in the GCC Member States, the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting (GOIC) and representatives from the Kuwait Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Kuwait Public Authority for Industry, and the Kuwait Industrial Bank. — KUNA



NO INJURIES IN MANGAF BUILDING COLLAPSE

by Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A building collapsed Thursday night in Mangaf but no injuries were reported. Firefighters and rescue teams arrived to the scene shortly after the incident was reported, and they immediately launch operations in search for possible casualties who could have been buried under the rubble. No casualties were found, while no injuries were reported among civilians or firefighters. A case was filed to investigate the causes of the collapse.

KUWAIT INTERESTED IN TIGHTENING AIRPORT SECURITY IN COORDINATION WITH BRITAIN

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said on Thursday that Kuwaiti security authorities are keen to work with the British side for strengthening security measures in order to ensure the security and safety of airports and planes.

Speaking to reporters following the conclusion of the seventh session of the Kuwaiti-British Joint Steering Group held in Kuwait, Jarallah said Kuwaiti security authorities attach much attention to the issue of airport security and there is coordination with the British side and other friendly countries such as the US, along with some European countries, regarding the tightening of security measures.

There are security measuring being taken now and there will be more security steps in the future with a view to ensuring the security and safety of the Kuwait International Airport and Kuwaiti planes, he added.

On the initialing by Kuwait and Britain of two draft agreements on extradition and judicial assistance in criminal matters, he stressed the significance of the extradition agreement to the State of Kuwait, saying "we have long looked forward to signing it".

Efforts were exerted by the Kuwaiti side in this regard, the last of which was a visit by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem to Britain last September, where the agreement was mainly discussed, Al-Jarallah said.

Ghanem's visit was preceded by a tour by Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sane to Britain last February, during which he



KUWAIT: (From left) British Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office for the Middel East and North Africa Tobias Ellwood, Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and Foreign Minister's Assistant for Europe Affairs Waleed Al-Khubaizi. — KUNA

stressed Kuwait's eagerness to exert all legal efforts to redress relevant legal flaws.

"This agreement, once put in effect, would enable us to communicate with the British side in order to receive some defendants in Britain," the Kuwaiti official noted. On the extension of visas for Kuwaiti patients receiving medical treatment in Britain, he said: "The British side showed understanding and readiness to cooperate with the Kuwaiti side in this regard."

On military cooperation between both sides, he said: "Cooperation in this field is existing and old, and there is coordination and exchange of visits

between officials of the ministries of defense, along with training the Kuwaiti army and providing it with sophisticated equipment on part of the British side. This cooperation is on the right track, thus ensuring security and stability in the country."

On the seventh session of the Kuwaiti-British Joint Steering Group held in Kuwait, Jarallah said the meeting handled many subjects regarding economic, investment, military, security and health cooperation. He pointed to coordination between Kuwait and Britain over an international donor conference for Syria due in London in February. — KUNA

KUWAIT GRANTS FIRE ENGINES TO SENEGAL

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Embassy in Dakar has delivered first batch of 12 fire engines, granted to the Republic of Senegal as part of the good bilateral relations between Kuwait and Senegal. This was in line with a Cabinet decision to grant Senegal 12 fire engines, in line with the keenness on supporting friendly states. Acting Charge d'affaires Sami Al-Zamanan on Thursday supervised the delivery of six engines out of 12, pledged to be given by the State of Kuwait to the Republic. The delivery process took place during a ceremony held in the capital Dakar, and was attended by representatives of the Senegalese Ministry of Interior. — KUNA



DAKAR: Acting Charge d'affaires Sami Al-Zamanan oversees the delivery of 12 fire engines to the Republic of Senegal. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A number of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) officers underwent a course on reception skills and proper ways to deal with the public. The course was conducted at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

MAN ARRESTED WITH POLICE INSIGNIAS

KUWAIT: A citizen working for the education ministry was arrested with the possession of two police epaulettes and a police blue flasher, said security sources. Case papers indicate that a police patrol suspected a vehicle parked outside a Mahboula building with its engine running. On approaching to check it, policemen found the insignias and the flasher in it.

'Witchcraft'

An information ministry employee reported that he accidentally found a roll of papers hidden in a hole in a ministry wall and that on checking them, he found them full of strange symbols and figures that made him think they were related to witchcraft. However, as soon as news about these papers spread around various offices, a state of panic prevailed and everyone started looking for more possible items. Despite that fact that ministry security burnt the papers, it seems that the employees have grown skeptical about each other and whether the papers were meant to settle some scores.

Ranch keeper saves the day

A citizen reported that his Kabd ranch's guard succeeded in foiling an attempt to rob the place, said security sources, noting that the guard also managed to jot down the suspects' vehicles' license plate numbers. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Maid, sponsor dispute

A housemaid who escaped her sponsor's house in Qatar 10 years ago did the same in Kuwait, after she was escorted by her Kuwaiti sponsor to her country's embassy to renew her passport. On arriving at the embassy, the maid immediately told the labor attaché that her sponsor had been preventing her from going back to her country for years and that he had not paid her salary for two years. Informed sources said that the embassy confiscated the maid's passport and mandated the sponsor to pay her KD 600.

Fugitive arrested

A citizen in his forties who had been wanted for a KD 15,000 financial claim was arrested along Gulf Road, said security sources, noting that on seeing a police patrol, the man looked confused, and on checking on him, he was found wanted by authorities. Another 35-year-old citizen was also arrested in Sharq for KD 46,000 worth of financial claims.

Baby abandoned

A citizen informed Rumaithiya police station that he found a 3-month-old baby outside a mosque. The baby was taken to the nearest medical facility where his condition was said to be stable. A case was filed for investigations.

Man escapes death

An Asian man escaped death when he jumped out of a fourth floor Farwaniya apartment where he had been reportedly held captive for five days by three persons. The man, who sustained various fractures, told the police that his 'kidnappers' had been brutally beating him during detention. A case was filed and the three suspects are being summoned for further investigations.

Bus accident

A public transport bus driver broke his leg when his bus rammed into a truck along

Mutlaa highway, said security sources noting, that the man was rushed to Jahra Hospital for treatment.

Illegal camps

Ahmadi security forces removed a number of illegal camps that were pitched near a military site in Julaiia.

Hit-and-run

A citizen reported that a motorist hit his vehicle from behind along Gulf Road in Sharq and fled. The citizen provided the police with the hit-and-run vehicle's license plate number. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Reckless driving

Five citizens were arrested for reckless driving in Saad Al-Abdullah, where they endangered their lives and those of others. The suspects' vehicles were also impounded pending further legal measures.

Fight under control

Ahmadi police brought a bloody fight between four citizens under control. The fight was in Fahaheel, and two of the fighters sustained injuries. The four are being questioned prior to legal action.

Ex-soldier arrested

Hawally police arrested a former soldier for driving while intoxicated, and was found wanted for selling drugs. Police noticed a car parked on the side of the road, and when they checked the driver's ID, they found out he is an ex-soldier wanted to serve a two-year jail sentence on drugs charges. He was sent to the drugs control general department.

Medical error

A woman accused a doctor of committing a medical error and lodged a complaint at Nugra police station. The 45-year-old woman told police she went to a private medical center for a plastic surgery, but the doctor made an error that caused her harm. The case was registered as a medical error misdemeanor. Detectives were asked to bring in the doctor for questioning.

Drug possession

Three drug users were arrested in Riggaa with 12 joints of heroin and paraphernalia. They and the contraband were sent to the drugs control general department. Police patrols had stopped a car, and the suspects seemed to be in an abnormal condition. They were found to be citizens under the influence of drugs.

Human remains found

A security source said a gravedigger called police and told them while he was digging new graves, he found remains of a person in a grave that was dug for the first time. Police, detectives and criminal evidence went to the grave, and the remains were referred to the coroner.

Solider assaulted

A Kuwaiti soldier accused an Arab of beating him severely in Waha as he stated in a complaint he lodged at the area's police station. The soldier submitted a medical report stating the injuries he sustained. He said that there were previous disputes with the man, who threatened to harm him before escaping. Detectives are looking for him.

—Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa



EXPATS WITH NO JOBS HAVE NO PLACE IN KUWAIT: SHEIKH MAZEN

KUWAIT: A senior Interior Minister official defended himself from accusations of being antagonistic towards expatriates in Kuwait, saying that he has full respect for foreigners working legally in the country.

"We can never forget the favors of expatriates who contributed in the development of Kuwait and have taught us in schools and

often go to wedding halls uninvited in order to eat there for free. He also pointed out privileges he said expatriates enjoy in Kuwait but do not necessarily have access to in their home countries. "I am not racist... I am talking about unemployed workers. I am against their presence in this situation, and hope that it is rectified," he clarified in statements made last Thursday.

The senior official said that the large number of marginal expatriate workers who do not legally have a job in Kuwait - estimated between 70,000 and 100,000 - is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. "Kuwait cannot handle the large number of expatriate workers," he said. "Whoever has a job is welcomed, but there are expatriates who do not have a job. This is clear to everybody, and I am willing to lead an inspection tour around the country in order to reveal the number of marginal labor living here."

"As a country of law, we protect expatriates and their rights. However, those who do not have a job do not have a place among us. This is how it should be, and that is what we believe should be done," Sheikh Mazen told reports.

Regarding news about increasing visa fees for expatriates, Sheikh Mazen said that a study on that regard has already been finished and sent to the office of Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. "We are waiting for the legal opinion before putting the new fees into practice," he said without providing a specific date. —Al-Rai



Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah

educated us," said Major General Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, the Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Citizenship and Residency Affairs. "I am talking about marginal labor forces who are subjected to injustice."

Sheikh Mazen made controversial remarks in a televised interview last month, in which he claimed that some expatriates

DNA TO BE CONDITIONED FOR DOING TRANSACTIONS

KUWAIT: A committee headed by General Investigation Department's Director Major General Fahad Al-Doussary is currently working on the final copy of the executive chart of the DNA profiling law number 78/2015 pending its referral to the cabinet for approval, informed sources said.

The ongoing discussions on the law's regulations included linking all citizens and expatriates' transactions with their

DNA profile, the sources added. However, the sources remarked that more flexible regulations were being considered in order to encourage citizens and expats to have their DNA data filed, knowing that this data will only be used for security reasons and with utmost confidentiality with the sole purpose of protecting national security. The sources also noted that visitors' DNA data would be taken immediately on entry to Kuwait. —Al-Anbaa

International

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ISTANBUL: Protesters wave free Syrian flags as they shout slogans during a demonstration against Russia yesterday in the Fatih district. — AFP

RUSSIA-TURKEY WAR OF WORDS ESCALATES

ERDOGAN WARNS MOSCOW NOT TO 'PLAY WITH FIRE', SEEKS PUTIN MEETING

MOSCOW: Moscow slapped sanctions on Ankara yesterday as the war of words over a downed Russian warplane escalated, with Turkish strongman Recep Tayyip Erdogan warning Russia not to "play with fire". Russia announced it was halting a visa-free regime for Turkish visitors, after threatening a raft of retaliatory economic measures to punish the NATO member state. Tuesday's incident has sent recriminations flying between two rival players in the Syrian war just as countries such as France are pushing for a broader coalition to try to defeat the Islamic State group.

"We advise Russia not to play with fire," Erdogan said in a speech in Ankara, lashing out at Russia's response to the downing as well as its support of the regime of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. Erdogan nevertheless said he wanted a direct meeting with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin when the two leaders are in Paris next week for the UN climate summit. But Moscow responded coolly, saying Turkey has yet to apologize for shooting down the jet on the Syrian border. Turkey says the Su-24 warplane strayed into its airspace and ignored repeated warnings but Russia insisted it did not cross from Syria.

'Crossed the Line'

It is thought to be the first downing of a Russian plane by a NATO member in more than half a century. One of the pilots was shot dead in Syria after parachuting out of the burning plane while the second was found safe and sound, but one Russian soldier was killed in a rescue operation. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Turkey had "crossed the

line of what is acceptable" and warned the incident could severely undermine both its national and regional interests.

Moscow has ruled out any military response, but has pledged broad measures targeting entire sectors of the Turkish economy including tourism, agriculture and possibly key energy projects. Lavrov said Turkish nationals would require visas from Jan 1, after Putin this week warned citizens not to travel to Turkey - a hugely popular destination for Russians. "Russia is quite concerned with increasing terrorist threats in the Republic of Turkey," Lavrov added, after a spate of bloody attacks blamed on Islamic State extremists there.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on Thursday gave ministers two days to work out a plan to curb cooperation with Turkish companies after Russia said it would tighten checks on food imports over alleged safety standard violations. Moscow has also hinted the reprisals could hit two major projects with Turkey - a planned gas pipeline and a nuclear power plant. The two countries have built trade ties in recent years and Russia is already energy-poor Turkey's biggest oil and gas supplier.

But they are on opposing sides in the Syrian conflict, with Ankara backing rebels fighting to topple Assad while Moscow is one of his last remaining allies. Erdogan, whose ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) won a landslide election victory earlier this month, said Turkey did not "deliberately" shoot down the plane. He dismissed Putin's criticism of the incident as "unacceptable", noting that Russian planes had twice violated Turkish air space in October.

He also attacked the Kremlin's policy in Syria after it

launched air strikes in September, saying it was backing the "murderer" Assad and not targeting IS jihadists. Erdogan has already accused Putin of snubbing a phone call after the incident, but has refused to bow to Russian demands for an apology.

'Common Enemy'

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters the Turks had asked for a meeting between the two leaders but said: "The president has been told about this request... That's all I can say." The heightened rhetoric came after Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu had sought to ease the tensions and appealed for the world to unite against IS, in an editorial published in The Times newspaper. "While the measures to defend our territory will remain in place, Turkey will work with Russia and our allies to calm tensions," Davutoglu wrote.

The downing of the plane has highlighted the difficulty of forging consensus on Syria but Davutoglu said the world should unite against a "common enemy". "The focus should be to tackle, head-on, the international threat that Daesh (IS) poses, securing the future of Syria and seeking a solution to the current refugee crisis."

But the Kremlin said Western powers were not ready to line up with Russia to fight the IS group. "At the moment, unfortunately, our partners are not ready to work within the format of a single coalition," Peskov told reporters. His comments came a day after Putin and French President Francois Hollande agreed to coordinate strikes against IS, although differences remained over the future of Assad. — AFP

IRAN SAYS TESTS WILL SHOW HOW DIPLOMAT DIED

TEHRAN: Iran expects medical tests to establish within 48 hours if a high-ranking diplomat died on pilgrimage in the stampede at the hajj in Saudi Arabia, following contrasting accounts about his demise. Ghazanfar Roknabadi, 49, a former ambassador to Lebanon, was initially reported as being among 464 Iranian pilgrims killed in the hajj's worst-ever tragedy in September. At least 2,236 worshippers perished in the giant crush at Mina, near the Muslim holy city of Makkah in western Saudi Arabia.

But suspicion has surrounded the circumstances of Roknabadi's death, with senior officials suggesting as late as two weeks ago that he was alive and being held hostage. Iran finally confirmed Thursday that Roknabadi's corpse had been identified in Saudi Arabia. His body arrived back in Tehran on Friday with his coffin draped in the Iranian flag for a funeral ceremony.

Confusion over his death added to already heavy strain between Tehran and Riyadh, the Middle East's strongest Shiite and Sunni powers, who back opposing sides in conflicts in Syria and Yemen. Roknabadi was Tehran's envoy to Beirut, a highly sensitive post, until last year. Lebanon is home to the Iranian-backed Shiite movement Hezbollah, allied with President Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian civil war, who Riyadh has



TEHRAN: An Iranian honor guard carries the coffin of Iran's former ambassador to Lebanon Ghazanfar Roknabadi, who was killed in Saudi Arabia, during a repatriation ceremony upon the arrival of his body at Mehrabad Airport yesterday. — AFP

repeatedly urged to stand down.

Roknabadi's body was identified by DNA in Saudi Arabia but secondary testing will be used to determine if he died in the stampede, the ISNA news agency quoted his brother as saying. "If the result of examina-

tions in Tehran contradicts the Saudis' claim that my brother died in the Mina incident we will complain via international forums," Morteza Roknabadi said. Giving a 48-hour timeframe for test results, he acknowledged the rumours about his brother's death,

which included recent remarks by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian. "Our intelligence indicates that he is still alive, and we ask Saudi Arabia to return him alive," Abdollahian said on Nov 11.

When Roknabadi was initially reported as being among the hajj victims, Iran's foreign ministry denied claims by some Arab media that he had travelled to Saudi Arabia under a false name. Yesterday, ministry spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari confirmed further testing would take place to establish how the diplomat died. Top Iranian officials including supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei accused Saudi Arabia of incompetence at this year's hajj and said the handling of the aftermath and repatriation of bodies was far too slow. However state media reported Friday that Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held a bilateral meeting with his Saudi counterpart Adel Al-Jubeir on Nov 14 in Vienna.

The meeting, on the sidelines of international peace talks over Syria, is thought to be the highest direct engagement between Iran and Saudi since King Salman came to power in January. ISNA and other news agencies said the ministers discussed the Mina stampede, the pilgrims still missing and legal aspects of the incident. — AFP

IRAN HARDLINERS INTENSIFY CRACKDOWN BEFORE POLLS

DOZENS OF JOURNALISTS, ACTIVISTS ARRESTED

ANKARA: Ahead of two key elections in Iran in February, the Supreme Leader's hard-line allies have cracked down on activists, journalists and artists to try to tighten their grip on the country's faction-ridden politics, officials and analysts say. Rights groups and opposition websites said dozens were summoned by the intelligence ministry for interrogation and had been detained. The Iranian government has denied there has been a wave of arrests, describing the reports as "baseless".

Some officials and analysts believe that the aim is to limit pragmatist President Hassan Rouhani's influence and popularity after his success in reaching a historic nuclear deal with the six major powers in July that ended over a decade-old stand-off. "The hard-liners are wary of Rouhani's influence at home and abroad. They fear it may harm the balance of power in Iran," a senior official close to Rouhani told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

Human rights groups and the United Nations have criticised Iran for what they say is a crackdown on freedom of expression and the media. There were no precise numbers of just how many people had been detained, no details of what charges if any were brought or whether there had been any trials. Analysts say that suppressing dissenting voices has been stepped up since September when the country's most powerful figure Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned of "infiltration" by Iran's enemies.

The judiciary has sentenced Iranian-American Washington Post journalist Jason Rezaian to jail after being arrested in July 2014 on espionage charges. The US government and the journalist's family rejected the charges. The sentencing was followed by the arrest of Iranian-American businessman

Siamak Namazi when visiting his relatives in Tehran.

Grip on Power

Iran's economic hardships persuaded Khamenei to support Rouhani's efforts to reach the nuclear deal, under which Tehran agreed to curb its nuclear program in exchange for an easing of sanctions on its flagging economy. The analysts say the hard-liners hope that the wave of arrests will help to tighten their grip on power and protect Khamenei's authority from being challenged by the president with the elections just weeks away. Analysts and officials close to the government believe the arrests will also show the limits of the president's power internally and demoralize Iranians who could support pro-reform candidates in the next elections.

An election win in Iran's parliament and the Assembly of Experts, a clerical body with nominal power over the supreme leader, would give Rouhani's faction too much power and influence in the country, hard-liners believe. "It has always been the situation in Iran before the elections," said Iran-based analyst Saeed Leylaz. "Of course the nuclear deal and efforts to end Iran's isolation have increased Rouhani's popularity," he said, adding: "Rouhani's opponents are worried about its impact on the vote results." Rouhani and his centrist and moderate backers could well be rewarded at the ballot box with their election promises of delivering a freer society.

Khamenei's 'Red Line'

"Growing prestige at home and abroad for Rouhani means less authority for Khamenei and it has always been Khamenei's red line," said political analyst Hamid Farahvashian. "More flexibility in foreign policy, has always

led to more pressure at home in Iran," he said. The United Nations has called on Iran to stop arresting, harassing and prosecuting journalists and other activists. "It is likely to continue, at least until the upcoming votes and possibly beyond ... the hard-liners are worried about Rouhani's comparatively higher popularity ... because of the nuclear deal," said Meir Javedanfar, politics lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Centre in Herzliya. "By arresting reporters and activists, they are trying to make Rouhani look weak and incompetent."

Rouhani, who won a landslide election in 2013 on a progressive platform, has occasionally criticised the crackdown but has done little to stop it. Some supporters of Rouhani are losing patience, fearing now that he might lack the authority to create a freer society. "Rouhani blames hard-liners for the limitations but words are not enough. I still support him because there is no other option," said a journalist in Tehran, who asked not to be named. "His only concern is the economy and keeping his position." Analysts say Rouhani lacks the constitutional power to take practical steps to stop the suppression. Under Iran's constitution, Khamenei has the final say on all state matters and he has made sure that no group, even hard-liners, gain enough power to challenge the supreme leader's authority since taking over the position in 1989.

Rouhani Under Scrutiny

However, some doubt that Rouhani, who represented Khamenei on the Supreme National Security Council for more than two decades, has the stomach to confront the leader and his hard-line supporters to improve Iran's human rights record. "He is part of the establishment. He has gained this status because of the Islamic republic of Iran.— Reuters

SCORES DEMAND RELEASE OF DEATH ROW ACTIVISTS

DUBAI: About 1,000 members of Saudi Arabia's Shiite minority gathered at a mosque yesterday to demand the release of activists on death row, including one aged 17 when he was arrested, a resident said. He said the prayers and sermons at Imam Hussein Mosque in the Eastern Province town of Awamiya drew Shiites from nearby Qatif and the Al-Ahsa region. "They gathered to demand their freedom," said the resident who asked for anonymity. Their call came as the family of one Shiite activist, sentenced to death after protesting, voiced concern over his fate and a rights group warned of his imminent execution. The sentence against Ali Al-Nimr, only 17 when he was arrested in February 2012, has drawn international condemnation over his young age and allegations he was tortured.

Ali Al-Nimr's uncle told AFP yesterday his family fears "the government is serious, very serious" about carrying out the sentence. Jaffar Al-Nimr said his nephew reported that he had undergone a medical check when his family last spoke to him two weeks ago. Amnesty International warned Thursday that Ali Al-Nimr was among more than 50 people, including other Shiite activists, at increased risk of soon being put to death in a single day.

His mother and the mothers of other detainees implored King Salman for clemency after learning of preparations possibly associated with impending executions, the London-based rights group said. Ali Al-Nimr's case has provoked a call for clemency from France, while the United States expressed "deep concern". Activists say Ali Al-Nimr is one of three Shiite protesters who were minors at the time of their arrest and have been sentenced to death. They have exhausted all appeals. "International law prohibits the use of the death penalty against anyone under the age of 18," Amnesty said. It added that there were "credible allegations" the three youths had been tortured.

'Peaceful People'

Their fate rests with Salman who, activists say, must give final approval before death sentences are carried out. The case of Jaffar Al-Nimr's brother, Shiite cleric Nimr Al-Nimr, also rests with Salman after the Supreme Court last month upheld his death sentence for sedition. "They are peaceful people," Jaffar al-Nimr said. "They are not criminals." The cleric - based at Imam Hussein Mosque in Awamiya - was a driving force behind the protests that erupted in 2011 in eastern Saudi Arabia, where most of the country's Shiites live. — AFP

DOWNING OF RUSSIAN JET OFFERS BOOST TO ASSAD

DAMASCUS: Turkey's downing of a Russian jet has played into the hands of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad by bringing Moscow on board with his bitter opposition to Ankara, experts say. On Thursday, Moscow announced it was preparing economic measures against Ankara two days after Turkish forces shot down a Russian plane that crashed in Syrian territory. Russia has already warned its nationals against visiting Turkey and stepped up controls of Turkish agricultural imports in the wake of the incident.

And Russia's leaders have had harsh words for Ankara, with President Vladimir Putin deeming the plane's downing a "stab in the back committed by accomplices of terrorists". "President Assad ought to send Turkish President (Recep Tayyip) Erdogan a telegram of thanks because he has pushed Moscow's position in his favour," joked one Syrian politician close to the regime. "Assad and Putin already agreed that the fight against terrorism comes before a political solution. Now Moscow is going further and considers, like Damascus, that Turkey supports terrorism," he added.

Assad has long accused Ankara of "terrorism" for its backing of Syria's opposition. "The only winner from these latest developments is Assad," wrote Henri Barkey and William Pomeranz of the Woodrow Wilson International Centre think tank in an article for CNN. "After all, one of his regime's primary antagonists (Turkey) is now starkly at odds with his most important backer (Russia)," the experts said.

'Significant Escalation'

Moscow is a long-standing ally of Assad and has staunchly backed him throughout the conflict that erupted with demonstrations against his rule in March 2011. In late September, it upped its commitment, launching air strikes in support of Assad's forces for the first time. Its policies have put it at odds with Turkey from early in the Syrian conflict, with Ankara regularly calling for Assad's departure and incurring the wrath of Damascus in return. "This escalation is significant, because until now, despite major differences over Syria, Russian-Turkish relations remained very cordial, and economic and tourism ties very solid," said Karim Bitar of the



MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (left) and Syria's Foreign Minister Walid Al-Moallem shake hands after their news conference following talks yesterday. — AP

Institute for International and Strategic Affairs. "Putin and Erdogan have a lot in common: authoritarianism, nationalism, oversensitivity and a taste for grandstanding and

strokes of brilliance, but Putin seems to have more control of his nerves, while Erdogan seems often to be carried away by his emotions," Bitar told AFP. — AFP



AL-ARUB: Palestinian mourners carry the body of Khaled Jawabreh, 19, who was killed in clashes with Israeli security forces, during his funeral in this West Bank refugee camp yesterday. — AFP

ISRAELI SOLDIERS KILL TWO PALESTINIANS IN W BANK

PALESTINIANS GROUPS CALL FOR 'DAY OF RAGE'

JERUSALEM: Two Palestinians rammed their cars into Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank yesterday, injuring seven, before being killed, raising this week's death toll from Palestinian-Israeli violence to 11. In the first attack, a Palestinian drove into two soldiers at a bus station near Kfar Adumim settlement, northeast of Jerusalem, and was shot dead, police said. Police identified him as Fadi Hassib, from Ramallah, whose brother was shot dead on Sunday after ramming his car into Israelis before charging at them with a knife.

Israel's Magen David Adom emergency medical service said the two soldiers hit yesterday were taken to hospital in Jerusalem with light to moderate injuries. A senior police

officer said the assailant got out of his car and started to run before he was shot dead by a civilian. Several hours later, another Palestinian was shot dead after driving his car into a group of soldiers, injuring five close to Beit Ummar settlement near Hebron in the southern West Bank, an army spokesman said. He identified the attacker as 20-year-old Omar Zaatik. Yesterday's incidents are the latest in a wave of unrest that has shaken Israel and the Palestinian territories since early October. They raise the number of Palestinians killed since Oct 1 to nearly 100, including an Israeli Arab. Over half of them have been alleged perpetrators of stabbing, shooting and car ramming attacks aimed at Israeli civilians and security forces. Others have died in clashes

with security forces. The violence has also left 17 Israelis, an American and an Eritrean dead. Ten Palestinians and one Israeli soldier have been killed since the start of this week.

Each Friday, Palestinian movements headed by Islamist movement Hamas call for a "day of rage", which escalates into clashes between Palestinian youths throwing stones and Molotov cocktails and Israeli security forces who respond by shooting real or rubber-coated bullets and tear gas. Yesterday, clashes were reported across the occupied territories, wounding several people, according to the Red Cross which had yet to compile a full tally. The international community has regularly urged Israelis and Palestinians to take measures to ease the unrest. — AFP

TOP THEATRE IN JERUSALEM RISKS CLOSURE

JERUSALEM: The Palestinian National Theatre, for three decades the leading performing arts and cultural centre for Arabs in Jerusalem, is facing potential closure after running up large municipal debts, its director said yesterday. Known as "Al Hakawati" (The Storyteller), the theatre has amassed unpaid bills of \$150,000 over the past five years, with money owed to city hall, to the national insurance fund and to the local Israeli electricity company.

Opened in 1984 in predominantly Arab East Jerusalem, Al Hakawati has received international acclaim for its performances and its training of young actors. It often puts on productions with groups from the United States, Britain and France. "We are the only professional theatre in East Jerusalem," director Amer Khalil told Reuters. "I hope we can manage to get at least half the money we owe by Sunday or Monday, otherwise we will be closed down."

Adnan Al-Husseini, the Palestinian Authority governor of Jerusalem told Reuters he expected Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas would step in and prevent the theatre's closure. "The President has given orders and the money needed will be given. On Monday the issue will be resolved and over," he said. The theatre operates as an NGO and has received donations from Europe, the United States and others in the past. Khalil said donors and friends had been calling and he hoped they would pledge enough to pay off the debts.

There has been friction between Al Hakawati and Israel in the past. In 2008, Israeli police deployed at the theatre to stop it holding a festival entitled "Jerusalem, the Arab Cultural Capital for 2009". Israel refers to Jerusalem as its "eternal and indivisible" capital and regards the city as a leading centre of Jewish culture and tradition. Palestinians want East Jerusalem - captured and occupied by Israel in 1967 - as the capital of an independent Palestinian state.

Some Palestinian commentators described the squeeze on Al Hakawati as part of a wider push by Israel to marginalize Arabic cultural and arts institutions. But Khalil said he didn't think that was the case in this instance. "In this case, we are just facing the problem of debts," he said. "In general, there has been a problem with us using this building in the past and having a Palestinian cultural centre in Jerusalem, but now it is just about the money."

In June this year, Israel's culture minister froze funding to an Arab theatre after it performed a play about Palestinians jailed by Israel. She also threatened to cut funding to an Arab-Israeli theatre that refused to perform in a Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank. Israeli artists have even protested against the culture minister, Miri Regev, a former army spokeswoman from the rightwing Likud party, saying she has no understanding or appreciation for the arts. — Reuters

BOKO HARAM UNBOWED DESPITE SUCCESS CLAIMS

KANO: Nigeria repeatedly claims to have severely weakened Boko Haram and is eyeing an end to the conflict by year-end, yet the Islamists still show a capacity to launch deadly attacks. Most of the nearly 1,500 people killed in Nigeria since President Muhammadu Buhari came to power in May have died in suicide and bomb attacks on northeastern towns and cities. Simultaneously, remote areas of Cameroon, Chad and Niger have been targeted, underlining the Islamic State affiliate's threat to regional security.

Eighteen people were killed and 100 homes torched in a dead-of-night attack in southeastern Niger on Thursday. But Maiduguri, where Boko Haram was formed in 2002, has borne the brunt of the carnage despite heavy security and the presence since May of Nigeria's military high command. Last Sunday, eight people were killed when a female suicide bomber detonated her explosives among women and children arriving in the city. And the Borno state capital was hit six times in October, killing at least 54, while on Sept 20, at least 117 were killed, prompting calls for better intelligence and security on the ground.

Kinship and Corruption

Boko Haram's fight for a hardline Islamic state in northeast Nigeria has left at least 17,000 dead and made some 2.6 million homeless since 2009. For Dauda

Mande, a local chief from the northeast, kinship bonds in the Kanuri ethnic group which forms the bulk of Boko Haram's membership has played its part in prolonging the conflict. Most towns and villages along the borders of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and to some extent Chad are populated by Kanuris, providing at least a cultural and linguistic link with the rebels.

"It provides Boko Haram with some protection because of the ethnic sentiment that plays out with the Kanuri population not willing to expose their kindred who move across the borders with ease," he told AFP. Suicide bombers have sneaked into Maiduguri from nearby villages where they are provided sanctuary, according to Babakura Kolo, a member of the civilian vigilantes assisting the military. "The attackers usually enter the city on foot, evading military checkpoints with the assistance of their accomplices who live not far from the city," he added.

Claims that Boko Haram is effectively "sponsored" by some powerful individuals in the northeast have been made periodically throughout the conflict. The Nigerian army in September accused "some prominent individuals and political groups" from Borno and the northeast of working to sabotage the counter-insurgency for "personal interests". No names were mentioned or details given about how the alleged sabotage was carried out and for what purpose but as attacks

continue, such talk looks unlikely to stop.

Corruption has long been suspected as having hampered the fight against Boko Haram, particularly in 2014, when the group seized swathes of territory and the military appeared powerless to act. Last week, Buhari said troops were denied weapons to fight and thousands of lives were lost because of rampant fraud in the procurement process. As well as allegedly "fictitious and phantom contracts" for fighter jets, helicopters, arms and ammunition that never materialised, there have also been claims of complicity. Abudullahi Wase, a security analyst who tracks the conflict, said it was "obvious" some elements in the military had been or were still in cahoots with Boko Haram for financial gain.

Weapons and Manpower

Nigeria has in recent months claimed to have destroyed Boko Haram camps in the northeast, seizing ammunition and weapons, as well as uncovering so-called "bomb factories". Access to weaponry, however, is clearly still an issue, making it a priority for better surveillance with the militants still able to get arms as well as replenish fallen frontline fighters. Nigeria's porous borders have long contributed to the supply of arms via lawless Libya and the established smuggling routes through the sparsely populated Sahel region. —AFP

POPE SLAMS RICH OVER INJUSTICE TO THE POOR

PONTIFF WARNS AGAINST 'SUGAR OF CORRUPTION'

NAIROBI: Pope Francis lashed out at wealthy minorities who hoard resources at the expense of the poor as he visited a crowded Nairobi slum yesterday, wrapping up the first leg of a three nation tour. The 78-year-old pontiff was given a rapturous welcome as he arrived in Kangemi, which is home to more than 100,000 people who live in shacks without sewerage, including 20,000 who belong to the local Catholic parish.

"These are wounds inflicted by minorities who cling to power and wealth, who selfishly squander while a growing majority is forced to flee to abandoned, filthy and run-down peripheries," he told crowds in the slum on the outskirts of the Kenyan capital. Wild singing and ululating erupted as Francis arrived in Kangemi, his popemobile weaving through a sea of tin-roofed homes in one of the most anticipated parts of his three-day visit to Kenya.

"I am here because I want you to know that I am not indifferent to your joys and hopes, your troubles and your sorrows," Francis told the packed congregation at the Church of St Joseph the Worker, denouncing the "dreadful injustice of urban exclusion". "I realise the difficulties which you experience daily. How can I not denounce the injustices which you suffer?"

People arrived long before dawn in the hope of catching a glimpse of the pope, who has made humility and help for the impoverished a hallmark of his tenure. He went on to meet young people at Kasarani national stadium, where US President Barack Obama gave a keynote speech in July. There, thousands of smiling youngsters whooped, cheered and danced as the tiny white-clad figure entered the stadium setting



NAIROBI: Pope Francis arrives in his "Popemobile" at the Kasarani Sport Stadium yesterday. —AFP

off lively celebrations. Even politicians joined in, with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta leading a group of black-and-magenta clad priests an impromptu "conga" line as grinning spectators gawped from the stands.

'Corruption like Sugar'

The pope delivered another hard-hitting address focusing on corruption and the radicalisation of young people. "Corruption is something which eats (you) inside. It is like sugar. Sweet. We like it. It is easy," he said of an issue which is of widespread concern in this east African country that has come in for sharp international criticism over runaway graft. After, we finish up in a bad way... So much sugar that we either end

up being diabetic, or our country ends up diabetic," he warned. "Please don't develop that taste for that sugar which is called corruption."

He also spoke of the dangers of young people being drawn into radical extremism, saying "education and work" was the key to stopping it. "They leave their friends, their tribes, their countries. They leave their lives behind in order to kill," he told the crowd. "The first thing we have to do to stop a young person being recruited is education and work. If a young person has no work, then what future awaits him? It is a social danger, which is beyond us... because it depends on an unjust international system that which is not centred on the person but on the god of money." —AFP

BURKINA FASO FOILS BIG ATTACK AHEAD OF VOTE

OUAGADOUGOU: Security forces disrupted a "large-scale attack" in Burkina Faso, arresting 13 suspects and seizing weapons and bomb-making materials in the west near Mali's border, the security minister said yesterday. News of the arrests comes two days before the West African nation holds elections, capping a turbulent year that began with a popular uprising in Oct 2014 and a brief, failed coup in September. The arrests were linked to the investigation of an attack on a military police post last month in Samoroguan near the Malian border, Alain Zagre told state radio. In that attack, 50 assailants stormed the post, killing three military police officers and burning vehicles before retreating back to Mali. The 13 suspects are from Burkina Faso and Mali, Zagre said, raising the possibility of the involvement of extremist groups active in the neighboring country. "It was a large-scale attack that they were staging," he said.

Burkina Faso has largely been spared extremist violence. However, gunmen attacked another police post near Mali's border in August, and in April a Romanian security officer was kidnapped from the northern Tambao mining site. The al-Qaida linked Al-Mourabitoun group claimed responsibility - the same group that said it carried out last week's hotel attack in Mali that killed 19. Burkina Faso has set up checkpoints at the entrances to cities and plans to close its borders for Sunday's vote. —AP

MALI ARRESTS 2 OVER ATTACK ON HOTEL

BAMAKO: Malian special forces have arrested two men over last week's attack on a luxury hotel in the capital that killed 19 people, according to a statement distributed yesterday morning. The statement identified the two Malians, both arrested in Bamako, but provided no other details on their background or their potential roles in the attack. "Questioning of these suspects will shed more light on the motivations of the perpetrators of the sordid terrorist attack perpetrated" at the Radisson Blu hotel on Nov. 20, said the statement sent by army Maj. Modibo Naman Traore.

Two gunmen armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles and explosives stormed the hotel before 7 a.m., striking just as security guards were about to change shifts. After shooting four of the five guards, killing one, they fired wildly in the lobby and breakfast dining area before heading to the hotel's upper floors. Malian troops, backed by French and American special forces, swarmed in to retake the building and free terrified guests and hotel staff during a siege that lasted more than seven hours. —AP

SWEDEN'S LOFTY AIM OF 'EQUALITY FOR ALL' TESTED

MALMO, Sweden: Aneta Moura, who emigrated to Sweden from Greece 43 years ago, says the last ethnic Swede has moved off her street in Malmo's Rosengard neighbourhood and youths with nothing to do hang out on the streets at all hours. "I no longer know any of my neighbours," laments 81-year-old Moura. Growing segregation between ethnic Swedes and immigrants is emerging as a major concern in Sweden, a country that has for decades prided itself on its egalitarian ideals and where most low-skilled jobs have been eliminated in a bid to do away with much of the "class society" that went with them.

The country's inability to integrate immigrants is preoccupying the Swedish public and policymakers now that Sweden is taking in record numbers of refugees who will eventually need to find work to become fully-fledged active members of society. Many wonder what kind of jobs these new immigrants - many of whom are uneducated, some even illiterate - will be able to hold down in Sweden's knowledge-intensive labour market.

Moura, who came to Sweden to work in its booming factories half a century ago, says the loss of manufacturing jobs has made it harder for newcomers to integrate. "We have a lot of youths standing on the streets all night right where I live," she said. The Scandinavian country has long been Europe's top destination for asylum seekers per capita, with a record 190,000 applications expect-

ed this year. As the country's public services strain to cope with the influx, Prime Minister Stefan Lofven this week announced a drastic tightening of Swedish asylum rules to stem the flow of migrants.

Many Obstacles to Integration

In addition to job woes, immigrants trying to rebuild their lives here face a slew of obstacles to their integration. They include learning the language, finding housing amid shortages in big cities and rising anti-immigration sentiment with the far-right Sweden Democrats garnering up to 27 percent of voter sympathies in recent polls. Half of all refugees in Sweden are unemployed after seven years and only 60 percent find work after 15 years, according to Statistics Sweden.

"What we previously thought was a good thing about Sweden - eliminating simple jobs... is now our biggest challenge when people from other countries arrive," said Andreas Bergh, an associate professor of economics at Lund University. "Unfortunately those types of jobs are exactly what you need for immigrants from poorer countries with less education to quickly enter the job market," he said. Unemployed immigrants on the margins of society run counter to Sweden's aim to provide equal opportunities for everyone to belong to the educated, professional sector.

In Sweden, for instance, daycare is heavily subsidized

to enable all women to hold down jobs, which eight out of 10 do; child allowances are the same for everyone regardless of need; rent control is widespread; university education is free; and the country has a narrow gap between the highest and lowest wages. In Malmo, Sweden's third largest city, 43 percent of the population comes from an immigrant background.

With growing numbers of refugees from countries like Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan, dozens of neighbourhoods like Rosengard have seen relative poverty levels rise and housing conditions deteriorate. In 38 immigrant-heavy suburbs, the average disposable income dropped from 83.8 percent of the national average in 1997 to 69.7 percent in 2014, the left-leaning Verdandi group said in a recent report.

Is Tolerance Detrimental?

Sweden is often rated in global surveys as one of the most tolerant countries on earth, but some say that tolerance for other cultures could actually be one of the causes of segregation. Aje Carlbom, an anthropologist at Malmo University who lived in Rosengard as part of a project, criticised the country's policy of multiculturalism, which he said had encouraged immigrants "not just to keep, but even develop their own cultures". "People get stuck in a type of ethnic network that makes it very hard to get contacts within the rest of society," he said. —AFP

QUEEN ELIZABETH OPENS COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT

FOCUS ON CLIMATE AT MEETING

VALLETTA: Queen Elizabeth II opened the 2015 Commonwealth summit on Friday with a colourful ceremony attended by world leaders gathered for pressing talks on climate change. The monarch, dressed in an aqua blue coat with pink flowers adorning her trademark hat, was serenaded by a harp as she arrived to a red-carpet welcome at a huge sandstone conference centre on the seafront in the Maltese

Mediterranean island. "I wish you every success in this endeavour."

She spoke of the Commonwealth's potential to tackle climate change - giving as an example the Commonwealth Canopy initiative to protect the world's forests - and stressed the importance of getting young people involved in the fight to slow global warming. In a nod to the young, children took to the stage for the opening ceremony.

Justin Trudeau, Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif and Pakalitha Mosisili from Lesotho. The hope is that by finding common ground in Malta - among countries that differ enormously in terms of culture, size, GDP and diplomatic muscle - the COP21 talks in Paris can break through a logjam of highly contentious issues.

'Responsibility to Act'

Potential stumbling blocks in Paris abound, ranging from financing for climate-vulnerable countries to scrutiny of commitments to curb greenhouse gases and even the legal status of the planned accord. The last attempt to get a global climate deal - at the ill-tempered 2009 Copenhagen summit - foundered upon divisions between rich and poor nations. Hollande, as president of the COP21 conference's host country, was expected to make an impassioned plea at the Commonwealth summit later yesterday, before diplomatic toils continue on the sidelines of a banquet hosted by Queen Elizabeth.

While France is not formally taking part in the Valletta talks, Hollande is seeking to send out a message "on the vision of the French presidency for an ambitious, equitable, durable and dynamic (climate) deal", the presidency said. The objective in Paris is to forge a post-2020 deal that will prevent global warming from breaching two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. "We do not have the right to test to destruction the planet's tolerance to our indiscretions. We do have a responsibility to act now," Queen Elizabeth's eldest son Prince Charles said in a speech Thursday.

Countries most at risk - including low-lying small island states and poor nations in Africa, many of them Commonwealth members - have called for capping warming to 1.5 C, saying anything less would result in catastrophic impacts. The Commonwealth's Business Forum warned it was not just vulnerable nations that would pay the price of inaction, and companies globally would have to react to survive. —AFP



VALLETTA: Queen Elizabeth II attends the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) at the Mediterranean Conference Centre yesterday. —AFP

capital Valletta.

As the clock ticks to a UN climate conference in Paris starting Monday, leaders at the summit including France's Francois Hollande, Britain's David Cameron and the UN's Ban Ki-moon will try to open the door to a landmark accord for limiting greenhouse gases. "At this meeting, the Commonwealth will be charged with demonstrating leadership, often in practical ways, on an agenda of global issues," Queen Elizabeth said in her opening address on the

ny dressed up as animals and characters from each of the 53 Commonwealth countries.

Born out of the British empire, the Commonwealth of Nations brings together around a quarter of the world's countries and a third of its population. The 24th biennial summit is due to focus on the issues of extremism and migration as well as the environment. Among the prime ministers who took their seats in the ceremony as their flags flashed across giant screens overhead, were Canada's new leader,

HOLLANDE VOWS 'MORE SONGS'

PARIS: President Francois Hollande vowed yesterday to destroy the "army of fanatics" behind the Paris attacks but also said France would respond with more songs, concerts and shows as the nation paused to honour the 130 killed. "On November 13, a day we will never forget, France was hit at its very heart," Hollande told a solemn ceremony in the courtyard of the historic Invalides, the 17th-century complex housing Napoleon's tomb. "To all of you, I solemnly promise that France will do everything to destroy the army of fanatics that committed these crimes," he said before a crowd of 2,600 dignitaries and some of those injured in the violence.

Some of the wounded sat in wheelchairs, while firefighters and ambulance personnel in uniform stood silently in rows, two weeks to the day since gunmen opened fire on bars, restaurants and a concert hall and detonated suicide vests at the Stade de France stadium. Photographs of the victims were displayed on a giant screen, their young faces evidence that the attackers struck at those enjoying a Friday night out in the French capital. "We will not give in either to fear or to hate," said Hollande, vowing that the French would respond to the attacks defiantly, with more "songs, concerts and shows. We will continue to go to stadiums." The attacks - claimed by the Islamic State (IS) group in response for French air strikes on the jihadists in Iraq and Syria - were the worst-ever terror attack on French soil, leaving 130 dead and 350 injured. Most were under 35. Hollande said "130 destinies had been stolen, 130 laughs that will never be heard again," adding that they had come from more than 50 places in France and 17 countries. The attackers acted "in the name of an insane cause and a betrayed God," he said. —AFP



PARIS: French President Francois Hollande (center) attends with French members of government (back) the "national and republican" tribute yesterday, a solemn ceremony in honor of the 130 people killed in the Nov 13 Paris attacks, at the "Hotel des Invalides". —AFP

MAN JUMPS WHITE HOUSE FENCE, TRIGGERS LOCKDOWN

WASHINGTON: A man draped in an American flag jumped over the fence of the White House while President Barack Obama was inside with his family celebrating Thanksgiving on Thursday, officials and US media said. He was quickly stopped by Secret Service agents after breaching a barricade and jumping over the fence on the North Lawn that was recently refitted with seven-inch (18-centimeter) spikes to make it harder to vault over.

In a statement, the Secret Service named the man as Joseph Caputo: "Caputo was immediately apprehended and taken into custody. Criminal charges are pending at this time." Secret Service officers had their guns drawn and were accompanied by K-9 units, according to two CNN photo-journalists who saw the incident, which triggered a lockdown at the presidential mansion.

The United States, and major US cities in particular, are on heightened alert after the Paris terror attacks, but Obama stressed on Wednesday that there was no specific threat to the US. Caputo was carrying an envelope, wore a blue shirt and white pants, and was cloaked in an American flag, the CNN journalists said.

CNN said he was at least the third person to scale a fence and make it on to White House property this year. The Secret Service came under fierce scrutiny and its head resigned after a US war veteran climbed over the north fence and made it into the presidential mansion armed with a knife in September 2014. He entered the front door of the White House and went through several rooms before being overpowered and arrested. — AFP



WASHINGTON: A man jumps a fence at the White House on Thursday. — AP

TRUMP SLAMMED FOR MOCKING DISABILITY

FRONTRUNNER DENIES INSULTING ANYONE

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump denied Thursday that he mocked a reporter with a disability in a South Carolina speech, despite appearing to imitate mannerisms of the "poor guy" and make fun of him. A statement posted on his Twitter account said Trump doesn't know the reporter personally or what he looks like and was only mocking his journalism. The New York Times reporter, Serge Kovalski, "should stop using his disability to grandstand," the statement quoted Trump as saying.

Kovalski has a congenital condition that affects joint movement. In a speech Tuesday in South Carolina, Trump said, "Poor

guy, you oughta see this guy," and gestured in a jerky fashion as if imitating Kovalski's movements. Trump was challenging recollections by Kovalski and many others about the 9/11 aftermath. Trump has made unsubstantiated claims that thousands of Muslims in New Jersey were seen celebrating the attacks.

In 2001, Kovalski, then with The Washington Post, and another Post journalist wrote a week after the 9/11 attacks about authorities in New Jersey detaining and questioning "a number of people who were allegedly seen celebrating the attacks." The story did not suggest "thousands" were celebrating, as Trump claimed, and a story then by The Star-Ledger in Newark, New Jersey, said the reports of such celebrations by Muslims proved unfounded.

Outrage

Even so, Trump has pointed to the Post story as backing up his claim and took issue with Kovalski's recent statement that he did not remember anyone alleging that large numbers of Muslims were celebrating. "Written by a nice reporter," Trump said in the speech. "Now the poor guy, you oughta see this guy - uh, I don't know what I said, uh, I don't remember. He's going like, I don't remember." His voice took a mocking tone, too. The Times expressed outrage afterward that Trump would "ridicule the appearance of one of our reporters."

Jay Ruderman of the Ruderman Family Foundation in Boston said Thursday the Republican presidential contender should apologize to Kovalski and the public. Ruderman said Trump would benefit from a "series of sensitivity training sessions" and offered to provide them. "It is unacceptable for a child to mock another child's disability on the playground, never mind a presidential candidate mocking someone's disability as part of a national political discourse," he said. — AP



MYRTLE BEACH, South Carolina: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign event at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center on Tuesday. — AP

OBAMA EYES SOME FOOD, FOOTBALL AND NOT-TOO-DRY TURKEY

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama says Thanksgiving is a day for food, football and hoping "the turkey didn't turn out too dry." Even if the White House's thyme-roasted bird didn't turn out to be the moistest, the first family's menu boasted more than enough other choices to fill the stomach. There was honey-baked ham with apricot-mustard glaze, and prime rib and creamed horseradish, according to the White House. Two kinds of stuffing: cornbread with chorizo and "roasted peppers oyster".

As for the veggies, the Obamas could enjoy some braised winter greens - collards, kale, and turnip greens - in addition to kale Caesar salad. Green bean casserole, too. Plus, the macaroni and cheese, sweet potato gratin and Yukon Gold mashed potatoes. As for dessert, it seemed Pie Day came early: banana cream, coconut cream, pumpkin, apple, pecan, cherry.

"We go all out on pies," the president told ABC in a pre-Thanksgiving interview last year. He prefers pumpkin, with a bit of whipped cream on top. On Thanksgiving morning, Obama called 10 service members - two from each of the five branches of the military - to wish them and their families a happy holiday. Obama used his weekly radio and Internet address to appeal again for acceptance of Syrian refugees, saying "so much of our greatness comes from our generosity."

"Nearly four centuries after the Mayflower set sail, the world is still full of pilgrims - men and women who want nothing more than the chance for a safer, better future for themselves and their families," Obama said. "What makes America America is that we offer that chance." Obama's plan to receive thousands of additional Syrian refugees has come under heavy criticism in Congress and by Republican presidential contenders in the aftermath of the Paris attacks Nov 13. — AP

MAN ACCUSED OF ATTACKING PARENTS OVER FAST FOOD

NEW ORLEANS: Authorities say a man faces charges in Louisiana accusing him of killing his father and stabbing his mother because they ordered fast food and didn't get any for him. Ronald Pritchett, 32, of Purvis, Mississippi, faces charges of second-degree murder, attempted second-degree murder and auto theft in the New Orleans suburb of Jefferson Parish, said Col. John Fortunato, spokesman for the sheriff there.

Fortunato Percival Pritchett, 58, and his wife, Renitta Pritchett, 57, were stabbed Wednesday at their home in unincorporated Gretna. Renitta Pritchett was treated and released, University Medical Center spokeswoman Aleis

Tusa said. Fortunato said in a news release that Pritchett became enraged about food. Asked by email for more details, he replied, "They ordered food from a fast food restaurant and didn't include him."

Pritchett was arrested Thursday at a relative's home near the town of Purvis, Mississippi, and waived extradition to Louisiana, Lamar County Sheriff Danny Rigel said. He said deputies checked several relatives' homes before locating Percival Pritchett's tan Chevrolet Suburban at a house where detectives were told Ronald Pritchett was in a "mother-in-law" outbuilding. After evacuating the house, he said, the tactical team

and K-9 units surrounded the smaller building. Rigel said Pritchett refused to come out, so a dog was sent in. Pritchett was treated for minor bites before being booked as a fugitive into the Lamar County jail, Rigel said. Fortunato said other relatives told investigators that Pritchett became enraged about the food, grabbed a knife and went upstairs to confront his parents. They had locked their bedroom door against him, but he allegedly kicked it open and began stabbing them, Fortunato said. He said both parents were stabbed multiple times, Percival Pritchett in the chest and Renitta Pritchett in the head. — AP



Ronald Pritchett



ALTAGRACIA DE ORITUCO, Venezuela: A woman walks by a graffiti depicting Venezuelan opposition candidate for the upcoming legislative elections Rumualda Olivo in this town in Guarico state on Thursday. — AFP

KILLING RAMPS UP FEARS OF VENEZUELA POLL VIOLENCE

MADURO CLAIMS DEATH LINKED TO GANGS

CARACAS: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said Thursday the fatal shooting of an opposition leader appeared to be a gangland score-settling, dismissing claims it was politically motivated ahead of elections. An attacker shot Luis Manuel Diaz dead on Wednesday evening in the central Guarico region at a campaign rally for the Dec 6 legislative elections, party officials said, ratcheting up fears that violence could erupt in the lead-up to the polls. The event was also attended by Lilian Tintori, the wife of a jailed opposition leader and a high-profile critic of Maduro. "They want to kill me," Tintori told a news conference later. "I hold Nicolas Maduro directly responsible."

Polls have indicated Maduro's socialist government could lose its majority in the National Assembly in next month's vote, potentially weakening his grip on power. Maduro has warned that if the opposition wins, his side is "politically and militarily prepared to deal with it" and would "take to the streets". Diaz was regional coordinator of the Democratic Action party, part of an opposition coalition against Maduro, though Diaz was not running for office. The United States condemned the killing, calling it the "deadliest of several recent attacks and acts of intimidation" against the opposition. Observers have warned the elections could spark unrest in the Latin American nation of

30 million people, already wracked by violence and an economic crisis with many families short of basic supplies. Maduro said authorities were investigating the "regrettable" killing and "the interior ministry has evidence that suggests it was a contract killing to settle a score between rival gangs". In a speech to supporters, he rejected a claim by the chairman of Democratic Action, Henry Ramos Allup, that the shooter was a member of an armed gang linked to the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV). "Forensic investigations and testimonies from people who were there show that is totally false and is a reckless accusation," he said. — AFP

LA MULLS 'JOHN LETTERS' TO FIGHT PROSTITUTION

LOS ANGELES: A Los Angeles City Hall proposal to send "john letters" to the owners of cars seen in areas known for prostitution has drawn criticism from a California civil liberties group. The City Council voted Wednesday to have the city attorney's office analyze the proposal to use license numbers to determine who owns the vehicles. The letters would be written to discourage those who were soliciting prostitutes from returning to the area while posing no harm to those who were there for legitimate reasons, Councilwoman Nury Martinez said. "If you aren't soliciting, you have no reason to worry about finding one of these letters in your mailbox," she said.

The collection of license plate data is opposed by the non-profit Electronic Frontier Foundation, the Los Angeles Daily News reported. The San Francisco-based foundation has an ongoing lawsuit against the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department over the issue. "What happens if you have legitimate reason to be in a neighborhood?" asked Dave Mass, an investigative researcher with foundation.

Some other cities have used "john letters" to combat prostitution. In some communities, residents are encouraged to jot down the license numbers of cars they see engaging in suspicious activity and provide it to police. The "john letters" are typically written in a cordial tone and make it clear that police do not assume the owner of the vehicle was the person driving it. "It is a common myth that prostitution is a 'victimless crime' or that it is 'an act between two consenting adults,'" one sample letter used by a police agency in Florida states. "Prostitution is a crime which is linked to drugs (use and sale), acts of violence toward prostitutes and their customers, and in the worst case, human trafficking in juveniles for the sex trade."

The letters also warn about potential exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. Some business owners praised the proposal in Los Angeles. "Let's say that letter comes in and your wife, your girlfriend or mother gets it," said Cindy Sower, a Sun Valley business owner who applauded the proposal. "Maybe it's a wake-up call." — AP



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MODI TO MEET SONIA TO DISCUSS NEW TAX

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited opposition Congress party leader Sonia Gandhi for talks yesterday to break a deadlock over the introduction of a new indirect tax in a bid to put his economic recovery agenda back on track. The face-to-face meeting between the two rivals would be the first since Modi rose to power 18 months ago, and could herald a long-awaited compromise on the proposed goods and services tax (GST), billed as the biggest tax reform since independence.

Modi, 65, has raised India's global profile with a series of trips abroad but suffered his biggest setback as prime minister when his nationalist party crashed to defeat in a big state election this month. That loss, say aides and analysts, means Modi will have to show more willingness to compromise on the GST after Congress - which first proposed the tax when it was in government - set a series of

non-negotiable demands.

"The government is under tremendous pressure to get GST cleared," said Rakesh Sinha, director of the India Policy Foundation, a think tank with close ties to the government. "Modi's engagement with the opposition is only way to prove that every effort is being made to accelerate the pace of economic growth. He is willing to discuss, debate and negotiate now."

Financial markets ticked higher as TV news channels flashed headlines that Modi had for the first time reached out to Gandhi, who will be accompanied by former prime minister Manmohan Singh. Her son and heir-apparent Rahul, the target of a series of public attacks by the BJP, will not attend. Analysts cautioned, however, that while the outlines of a compromise on GST were taking shape, there was no guarantee that a bargain would be struck during the meeting

at Modi's official residence.

"Passage of GST will be positive for the rupee, bonds and the equity market. The rupee may have greater space to reverse its losses if GST is passed," said Ashish Vaidya, head of trading and asset liability management at DBS India. "But clearly it is not given that today's talks will be a blanket 'yes' or 'no' to what the government wants. We will watch the developments." The GST would create a common market in Asia's third-largest economy and, the government estimates, add 2 percentage points to economic output. Yet horse trading has threatened to wreck efforts to simplify taxes: BJP-ruled states have called for an extra state levy and a GST rate of over 20 percent, raising concerns of yet more red tape and tax evasion.

below 20 percent, scrap the state levy and create an independent mechanism to resolve disputes on revenue sharing between states. "We will discuss every aspect of GST with the prime minister and they will have to accept our demands," said a senior aide to Sonia Gandhi. Complicating matters for the government is the need for a two-thirds majority in the upper house to pass a constitutional enabling amendment that would make it possible to implement the GST as soon as next April.

The government's strategy has been to try and win the backing of smaller, regional opposition parties for the GST, thereby isolating Congress. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Venkaiah Naidu said that 30 out of 32 parties now backed GST. Still, to be sure of guaranteeing passage the votes of Congress would be needed. — Reuters

Bottom Line

Congress wants to cap the GST at

CHINESE RIGHTS ACTIVIST JAILED FOR SIX YEARS

HONG KONG: A prominent Chinese rights activist, Guo Feixiong, was sentenced to six years imprisonment yesterday by a court in southern China, amid a continuing crackdown on human rights advocates across the country, his lawyer said yesterday. Two other activists, Liu Yuandong and Sun Desheng, were sentenced to three years and two-and-a-half years respectively, according to Guo's lawyer, Zhang Lei. Guo and Sun had been accused of "gathering crowds to disturb social order" during a nearly week-long peaceful demonstration outside the gates of a newspaper, the Southern Weekly, in January 2013. The protest called on authorities to respect media freedoms amid a censorship row.

"He wasn't guilty of anything at all. This sentence is unacceptable and unfair," Zhang told Reuters by telephone after attending the court on Friday. Guo had previously been jailed for nearly five years for his grassroots activism. Guo, 48, whose real name is Yang Maodong, had been detained by Chinese authorities for over two years before sentencing, with his trial stuck in limbo due to delays and a boycott by his lawyers last year to protest what they called procedural violations.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei, asked why Guo had been jailed and if China was worried about international reaction to the case, said: "China is a country with rule of law. A Chinese court handled this case in accordance with the law. Outsiders should respect China's judicial sovereignty." Court officials did not respond to phone calls seeking comment.

As with previous hearings for Guo, and other rights activists in Guangzhou, the area around the court was blocked off and heavily policed. Guo had been held in a crowded cell, and barred from exercising outside in violation of international standards on the treatment of prisoners, according to rights groups. His lawyer said Guo's health had deteriorated and that two police officers had handled Guo roughly in court, injuring his arms.

Amnesty International said Sun Desheng had been forced to wear handcuffs and leg cuffs for long periods in detention. Human rights groups and Western countries have expressed repeated concern about a widening campaign by President Xi Jinping to quash dissent among academics, journalists and social activists. A Chinese court on Thursday upheld a conviction against a prominent journalist, Gao Yu, 71, who was accused of leaking an internal Communist Party document to a foreign website but reduced her seven-year jail term by two years.

Gao has been released on medical parole, her lawyer, Shang Baojun, told Reuters. Shang said he did not know where Gao had been released to, though he said that he hoped she could serve the rest of her sentence at home. "Beijing's assault on civil society seems to know no bounds as peaceful activists are increasingly subject to criminal prosecutions," said Sophie Richardson, China Director at Human Rights Watch in New York. "The Chinese government should immediately drop all charges against Guangzhou activists Guo Feixiong and Sun Desheng and release them." — Reuters



BOGRA, Bangladesh: Investigators inspect a mosque yesterday that was attacked by gunmen during evening prayers on Thursday in northern Bangladesh. — AP

GUNMEN ATTACK B'DESH SHIITE MOSQUE, KILL ONE

IS CLAIMS DEADLY ATTACK

DHAKA: The Islamic State group claimed responsibility yesterday for a deadly attack on worshippers at a Shiite mosque in northern Bangladesh, as fears grow of a rise in sectarian violence in the mainly Muslim country. US-based monitoring organization SITE reported the group, which has claimed responsibility for a number of recent attacks in Bangladesh, said it had targeted the Shiite worshippers. Gunmen burst into the mosque in Shibganj, 125 km north of Dhaka, during early evening prayers on Thursday and opened fire on the gathered worshippers before fleeing.

"Allah enabled the soldiers of the Islamic State in Bangladesh to target a Rafidah Mushrikin temple (Shiite Mosque)," SITE, which monitors jihadist activity, quoted the Islamic State (IS) group as saying. Police said the muezzin had been killed and three worshippers wounded in the shooting, a rare attack on minority Shiite Muslims in the mainly Sunni nation. Detectives say they are questioning two people over the shooting, although they had not been formally arrested.

Television footage showed the heavily guarded Shiite mosque with broken windows and blood stains on the floor. There are estimated to be around 2.2 million Shiite Muslims in Bangladesh, an officially secular but mainly Muslim country of 160 million.

Upsurge in Militancy

Such attacks were until recently virtually unheard of in Bangladesh, which has a large population of mostly moderate Muslims but has suffered a recent upsurge in Islamic militancy. The government says the jihadist group has no presence in Bangladesh and instead accuses the opposition of trying to destabilise the country of 160 million mainly moderate Muslims. But Bangladesh has been plagued by unrest in the last three years, and experts have warned that a long-running political crisis has radicalised opponents of the government. The mosque shooting came a day after police shot dead a top member of the banned local Islamist outfit Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh accused of hurling grenades at

the country's main Shiite shrine in Dhaka last month, killing two people. That was believed to be the first attack on Shiites in Bangladesh, though banned Islamist militant groups have killed more than a dozen Sufi Muslims and attacked Hindus and Christians in the last two years.

IS has claimed a series of recent attacks, including the shooting of three foreigners, two of whom died, and the killing of a Sufi Muslim shrine chief this month. But experts have expressed scepticism about the claims. "Basically what is being described as IS attacks in South Asia including Bangladesh, these attacks have had no direct links with the IS," said Ajai Sahni, executive director of the Institute for Conflict Management in New Delhi. "What has usually happened is factions or elements within existing terrorist or radicalised groups in these regions have announced a transfer of their loyalty to the IS and have continued to engage with precisely the kind of activities they were doing even before such a transfer." — AFP

Kuwait Times BUSINESS

Saudi economy shows signs of slowing: Data

16 ECB asked to stop meeting market players over policy

17 Trade poses biggest drag on UK growth on record

18



20 Japan plans extra budget, handouts to push recovery

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2015



PANAMA CITY: people look at merchandise while holiday shopping at Best Buy on Thursday, Nov. 26, 2015, in Panama City, Florida. Early numbers aren't out yet on how many shoppers headed to stores on Thanksgiving, but it's expected that more than three times the number of people will venture out to shop on the day after the holiday known as Black Friday. — AP (See Page 17)

OPEC OFFICIALS QUESTION UPBEAT OUTLOOK REMOVAL OF OPEC EXPORT QUOTAS A 'HISTORIC MISTAKE': IRAN

VIENNA: OPEC officials questioned an upbeat forecast from the group's researchers in a meeting ahead of next week's gathering of oil ministers, with some skeptical there will be a quick easing of the supply glut in 2016.

The comments point to a less jubilant mood in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, whose oil ministers meet to set policy on Dec. 4, than during their last meeting in June. Oil has fallen to \$45 a barrel on oversupply concerns compared to \$65 last time.

"Market data is showing loads of uncertainties," said one source. OPEC's national representatives - officials representing the 12 member-countries, plus officials from OPEC's Vienna secretariat - are meeting to discuss the market. The meeting, called the Economic Commission Board, is continuing on yesterday for a second day. A year ago, OPEC made its historic decision to refuse to prop up prices by cutting supply and focus on defending market share. The shift was led by Saudi Arabia, supported by other Gulf OPEC members. Doubts about the policy among less wealthy members are growing.

OPEC's research team expects higher demand for the group's oil in 2016 as supply from rival producers declines for the first time since 2007, reducing the global supply glut compared to 2015.

One of the differences in views being aired, an OPEC delegate said, is around whether this forecast is too optimistic, while another delegate was downbeat about the outlook.

"No, it is not," the second delegate said, asked if the market outlook appeared better. "It is complicated." "We think it will take a longer time for the market to go back to stability. Maybe another year and half," another delegate said before the ECB meeting.

Nonetheless, OPEC is widely expected to leave its current policy in place when ministers meet. Delegates from Gulf OPEC members have made clear that any U-turn would be possible only if large producers outside OPEC, notably Russia, were to join coordinated output cuts. The chance of that happening currently looks slim.

"I am not very optimistic any breakthrough will happen during the coming OPEC meeting," said a delegate from a

country that wants supply cuts who is yet to arrive in Vienna. "I hope I will be proved wrong."

Iran said yesterday that the removal of OPEC's quotas system was a historic mistake and its revival will be very difficult, state news agency IRNA quoted Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh as saying yesterday.

"Removing OPEC's quotas system was a historic mistake ... which was accepted by Iran's then government ... Its revival in the upcoming Vienna meeting is very difficult," he said.

Iran has tried to bring back the quotas at the group's previous meetings, according to Iranian officials, proposing "a technical price formula that can resurrect the quota system and also prevent prices from falling". There have been fierce debates at previous meetings of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) when countries have suggested reintroducing the quotas, Zanganeh said.

"OPEC now has no tool to control the oil prices ... But Saudi Arabia and some other countries are against reintroduction of the quotas system," Zanganeh said. OPEC's next meeting will be in Vienna on December 4. — Reuters

GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF MONTHLY DRAWS FOR SALARY AND RED ACCOUNTS

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank announced six winners for its monthly Salary and Red account draws. The draws announcement took place on Wednesday, 25 November 2015, live at Marina FM, and was held under the supervision of a Ministry of Commerce representative.

Gulf Bank would like to congratulate the following Red and Salary accounts draw winners on their cash prizes.

- Faisal Ali Ghloum Al-Qattan (KD1500 winner)
- Ayedh Musaed Ayedh Al-Rasheedi (1000 KD winner)
- Fauzia Mohammed Hussain Kamal (800 KD winner)
- Leena Abdulaziz Khatem (600 KD winner),
- Almuataz Bellah Ahmed Khamis Boareki (400 KD winner).

• Mohammad Tareq Ali Al-Asfour (KD200 winner)

Customers who open Red Account or Salary Account and transfer their student allowance or monthly salary will be eligible to enter the monthly cash draws for a chance to also win up to KD 1,500. In addition, 1 lucky winner will have a chance to win a new Cadillac SRX 2015 during Gulf Bank's Mega Draw taking place on 7 January 2016.

For further information about the, Salary and Red accounts and prize draws, visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, or call Gulf Bank's Customer Contact Center on 1805805. General information about Gulf Bank's products and services, can also be found at the Bank's website at www.e-gulfbank.com



Gulf Bank announces Red and Salary draw winners Live on Marina FM.

SAUDI ECONOMY SHOWS SIGNS OF SLOWING: DATA MONEY SUPPLY GREW ONLY 3.9% AS OIL SLUMPS

DUBAI: Saudi Arabian money supply and bank lending figures show the economy of the world's biggest oil exporter has started to slow as low global energy prices forced the government to clamp down on spending.

M3 money supply grew just 3.9 percent from a year earlier in October, the slowest expansion since November 2010, when Saudi Arabia was emerging from the global financial crisis, according to central bank data released late on Thursday. Annual growth in September 2015 was 8.5 percent.

Growth in narrower measures of money supply, M1 and M2, also slowed sharply to multi-year lows. Growth in bank lending to the private sector fell to 5.0 percent, again the lowest rate since November 2010, from 7.1 percent. The government has until recent weeks been able to keep the economy growing strongly by boosting Saudi oil output; the

October data suggest this strategy may have reached its limits.

Facing a budget deficit of over \$100 billion this year, Saudi finance officials have said they are trimming spending in some areas to economize, and the cut-backs have started to crimp money supply. "There have been hints of the government introducing a fiscal squeeze, and the data point to the impact of this," said Jason Tuvey, Middle East economist at London-based Capital Economics.

The government's 2016 budget, due to be released next month, is expected to reveal details of the cut-backs and impose tougher austerity measures for next year. Slower October bank lending growth suggests that because of this austerity threat, some private businesses are becoming more cautious about borrowing, and banks more cautious about lending. The cost of loans is rising, part-

ly because banks have begun diverting money to buy bonds that finance the government's deficit. The one-year interbank offered rate has jumped 35 basis points to a six-year high of 1.33 percent since the end of July.

The central bank's October data also contained some signs of slower consumer spending; cash withdrawals from automated teller machines fell to their lowest level this year. A Reuters poll of 24 economists, conducted in mid-October, predicted Saudi economic growth would ease to a median 2.5 percent next year from 3.0 percent this year. Tuvey said the October data suggested the economy would slow more than that consensus, though he added that Saudi Arabia would probably avoid outright recession, since the government could use its huge financial reserves to spread budget cut-backs over several years. — Reuters

3 CHINESE BROKERAGES SAY THEY ARE UNDER PROBE

BEIJING: Three of China's biggest securities firms are under investigation in a fresh aftershock from this summer's market plunge. Shares in Citic Securities Ltd. and Guosen Securities Ltd fell yesterday by the 10 percent

daily limit after both said they were being probed by regulators. A third brokerage, Haitong Securities Ltd., issued a similar announcement after trading in its shares was suspended Friday morning. None gave

details. The Shanghai Composite Index closed down 5.5 percent. Authorities have detained securities executives, an investment fund manager, government employees and a reporter for a business magazine following the collapse in prices that began in early June. The announcements that brokerages themselves were under investigation presented a further widening of the probes.

The investigations were seen by many as an attempt by the ruling Communist Party to deflect blame for the 30 percent fall by the Shanghai index after state media encouraged the public to buy stocks. Citic is China's biggest brokerage and part of Citic Group, the Cabinet's main holding company. Guosen and Haitong are among the country's 10 biggest securities firms. In September, the police ministry announced Citic executives including its general manager, Cheng Boming, were suspected of insider trading and leaking sensitive information. The previous month, the official Xinhua News Agency said eight Citic employees and one current and one former employee of the market regulator were suspected of illegal stock trading. — AP



ANHUI: Chinese stock investors play cards at a brokerage house in Fuyang in central China's Anhui province yesterday. China's stock market fell sharply yesterday as investigations into the securities industry widened to include two top brokerages. — AP

OIL PRICES DIP ON SUPPLY GLUT AND SHAKY CHINESE DATA

LONDON: Crude oil futures fell yesterday, bringing losses this month to more than 8 percent, as disappointing Chinese data and worries over a supply glut overshadowed geopolitical concerns.

The dollar, near nine-month highs versus a basket of other currencies, also weighed on oil. Strength in the greenback makes oil more expensive for holders of other currencies.

Brent crude fell by 5 cents to \$45.41 per barrel by 1311 GMT, after settling down 71 cents at \$45.46 in the previous session. It traded as low as \$44.80 earlier in the session.

West Texas Intermediate (WTI) futures, the US crude benchmark, fell by 75 cents to \$42.29 per barrel. Trading in US futures was muted due to holidays in the country. Both crude contracts were on track for small weekly gains, but were down by roughly 9 percent since the start of November. Bjarne Schieldrop, chief commodities analyst at SEB in Oslo, said shaky Chinese economic data was the primary driver of the price weakness.

Chinese shares slumped 5 percent on Friday, hit by regulatory worries and declining industrial sector profits. Worrying economic indications in the world's largest energy consumer typically filter quickly through to oil prices, particularly given the nagging global surplus of physical oil. But Schieldrop added that the shooting down of a Russian jet by the Turkish military this week had gone from being a geopolitical risk concern to worries about falling oil demand due to potential economic sanctions.

"Rather than being bullish ... it's now bearish for marginal demand," Schieldrop said. Russia threatened economic retaliation against Turkey on Thursday and said it was still awaiting a reasonable explanation, but Turkey dismissed the threats as "emotional" and "unfitting". The market is also shifting its focus to a meeting of ministers from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, which is set for Vienna on Dec. 4. Thus far, market observers say that the group is determined to keep pumping oil vigorously despite the resulting financial strain. Still, some said a surprise was not out of the question. — Reuters

GREEK ECONOMY CONTRACTS 0.9% IN Q3: REVISED DATA

ATHENS: Greece's state statistics agency yesterday drastically revised downwards the economy's third-quarter contraction to 0.9 percent, from 0.5 percent previously. "These differences are on account of using new data, not available at the time of the flash estimate," the Elstat agency said, citing a mixture of September balance of payments data, service turnover and jobless figures as factors for the downturn.

In an annual comparison, Greek output fell by 1.1 percent from the third quarter of 2014, Elstat said. The flash estimate on November 13 had pointed to a 0.4-percent drop from last year. The data is consistent with European Commission forecasts that Greece will fall back into recession in 2015 after a brief respite last year. The Commission is banking on a 1.4-percent contraction in 2015 and a further drop of 1.3 percent in 2016.

Greece's own 2016 budget, to be approved by parliament in early December, foresees "near zero" growth in 2015 and a 0.7-percent economic downturn next year. Although Greece had a record tourism year, the gains were lost to economic uncertainty as the leftist government of Alexis Tsipras clashed with international creditors in June and imposed capital controls. — AFP

SPOTLIGHT ON EXPENDITURE AS S AFRICAN BUDGET COMES UNDER STRAIN

JOHANNESBURG: Crafting South Africa's budget has become a headache for Finance Minister Nhlanelo Nene: labor union allies accuse him of being tight-fisted, while opponents say he's pouring too much money into areas like the civil service that don't help grow the economy.

Africa's most industrialized economy has struggled to balance its finances since coming out of a recession in 2009. Growth remains too hesitant to generate adequate revenue, leading to a deficit seen at nearly 4 percent of GDP this year. The huge government wage bill is likely to be a key factor next week when Standard & Poor's and Fitch review South Africa's credit rating, which is hovering just above junk status.

A recent wave of protests by angry university students demanding cheaper tertiary education has put the spotlight on whether Pretoria is allocating its limited resources efficiently. The students stormed the parliament precinct as Nene read out his medium-term budget statement last month, demanding that the government subsidize university costs and veto planned increases in 2016 tuition fees. As learners clashed with riot police outside parliament, Nene unveiled additional government spending of 10.1 percent on top of levels announced in the main budget in February, to cater for salary increases for government workers.

The size of the civil service has always been a bone of contention between the gov-

erning African National Congress (ANC) and opposition parties who feel it is an unnecessary drain on the national purse.

The opposition Democratic Alliance is angry that the ANC, which has a comfortable majority in parliament, this week shot down proposals to re-assign money from non-core sectors towards tertiary education. The proposals, which included cutting spending on foreign embassies, VIP protection, the security services and ministerial vehicles, would have freed up 904 million rand (\$63 million) to help fund universities, the DA said.

"When it comes to a choice between more money for students or more money for ministers, the ANC chose more money for ministers," the party said in a statement.

PUBLIC WAGES 40 PCT OF BUDGET

Critics have long argued that the government spends too much on wages in the public sector, which gobble up about 40 percent of the roughly \$70 billion national budget.

This year, Nene also set aside 200 million rand in preparation for a controversial multi-million-dollar nuclear energy programme which the opposition says South Africa can ill afford.

"Government spends too much of the tax take on wages and salaries for public sector workers. A smaller public service would free up fiscal resources for other priorities," Barclays Africa economist Peter Worthington told Reuters. —Reuters



MINNETONKA: Koko Htwe looks at a camera at Best Buy with Sandy Htwe, center, and Nyo Nyo Soe on Thursday in Minnetonka, Minnesota. Early numbers aren't out yet on how many shoppers headed to stores on Thanksgiving, but it's expected that more than three times the number of people will venture out to shop on the day after the holiday known as Black Friday. —AP

BLACK FRIDAY CROWDS THIN AFTER US STORES OPEN ON THANKSGIVING

PITTSBURGH/CHICAGO: Crowds were thin at US stores and shopping malls in the early hours of Friday, initial spot checks showed, as shoppers responded to early Black Friday discounts with a mix of enthusiasm and caution.

Many shoppers headed out to stores on Thanksgiving evening, a month before Christmas, reflecting the new normal in US holiday shopping, which was traditionally kicked off the next day, Black Friday.

In an effort to attract the most eager holiday shoppers and fend off competition from Amazon.com Inc, US retailers have increasingly extended their holiday deals by opening stores on the evening of Thanksgiving. "It's still early, and from what we are seeing so far the crowds are good but not great," Craig Johnson, president of Customer Growth Partners, said late on Thursday. The retail consultancy had 18 members studying customer traffic in different parts of the country.

Milagros Munez, 39, a law clerk, was shopping for toys at the Target store in New York's Harlem neighborhood. "We actually came early this morning to miss the crowds. Now that some stores are open all night, I feel like more people go in the evening."

The Macy's Inc store at Water Tower Place

mall in Chicago saw thin crowds in the early hours of Friday after a fairly busy Thanksgiving evening, store associates said.

Nia Darrell, a 23-year-old student, was shopping for coats and handbags at the store with two friends. "I shopped online yesterday and picked up most of what I wanted," she said. "I'm out because Black Friday is more like a tradition but the discounts are similar even online this year."

ONLINE SALES STRONG

Shoppers in the United States spent more than \$1 billion online, 22-percent more than last year, between midnight and 5 pm ET on Thursday, according to the Adobe Digital Index, which tracked 100 million visits to 4,500 US retail sites.

Many stores around the country were full on Thanksgiving evening. Local media reported brawling shoppers at a packed Kentucky mall on Thursday evening, forcing a police officer to intervene and break up the fight. Early Black Friday discounts at stores and online included buy one get 50 percent off on the second "Star Wars" toys at Target Corp, \$200 off quadcopter drones at Best Buy Co Inc, and a 50-inch Samsung smart TV for \$499 at Wal-

Mart Stores Inc. As much as 20 percent of holiday shopping is expected to be done over the Thanksgiving weekend this year, analysts said. The four-day shopping burst will help set the tone for the rest of the season, signaling to retailers whether they need to drop prices or change promotions.

The shopping season spanning November and December is crucial for many retailers because the two months can account for anywhere from 20 to 40 percent of their annual sales. Shoppers are expected to be cautious with their spending again this year. The National Retail Federation is expecting holiday sales to rise 3.7 percent, slower than last year's 4.1 percent growth rate, due to stagnant wages and sluggish job growth.

At around 6 am on Friday, several hundred cars were in the parking lot wrapping the Ross Park mall in Pittsburgh. There was a good crowd walking the mall although it was not overly crowded.

Jorgette Clark, 27, said her budget would probably be lower this year because her husband works in the energy industry. "I feel like we scaled back this year. Our husbands work in the oil fields... It's probably a smaller Christmas this year." — Reuters

ECB ASKED TO STOP MEETING MARKET PLAYERS OVER POLICY DRAGHI COMES UNDER PRESSURE

FRANKFURT: The European Union's top watchdog has urged the European Central Bank to stop meeting market players such as hedge funds shortly before setting policy, adding to pressure for it to tighten its rules of engagement. Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly said she would write next week to ECB President Mario Draghi, arguing that ECB officials should not give an investor any advantage over rivals by meeting them ahead of setting policy - such as interest rates.

The recommendation could reignite a debate about transparency at Europe's arguably most powerful institution, which sets the cost of eurozone borrowing, supervises banks and was part of the 'troika' involved in overhauling troubled states such as Greece.

O'Reilly's intervention follows a closed-door hedge-fund dinner earlier this year where a top ECB official revealed market-sensitive information. Recently published diaries of officials showed that hedge funds and banks regularly met policy-setters, even shortly before key decisions.

"It has already been established by the ECB, in its speaking engagement guidelines, that it should not give a prestige advantage to certain groups over others when a board member meets them," O'Reilly told Reuters. "Rules on the quiet period at the moment refer to speeches and public appearances. But shouldn't the quiet period also apply to bilateral meetings?" she said.

In her Ombudsman role, O'Reilly keeps tabs on European institutions to ensure that they behave ethically and are accountable to the public. Her remarks come amid a rethink at the ECB on key transparency issues, such as the 'quiet period'. This refers to the time when policy-setters avoid discussing central bank business with outsiders.

'OUT OF LINE'

Although the Ombudsman's recommendations have no legal weight, they add pressure to the ECB to fall into line with common practice elsewhere. The ECB declined to comment.

O'Reilly's comments come after ECB diaries revealed that Benoit Coeure, an influential member of the ECB's executive board, met BNP Paribas in September 2014 just hours before cutting the deposit rate - the charge on banks for parking money at the ECB. Separately, Coeure had told an audience including hedge funds this May about plans to accelerate bond buying. The euro fell when it was announced to the public the following day and some investors cried foul. The ECB said the delayed publication of his speech was accidental.

The Bank of England, in contrast, has strict published rules that prohibit its Monetary Policy Committee members from meeting with 'market participants' roughly one week ahead of the meeting at which they set policy such as interest rates. The ECB has no such restriction although one person familiar with its thinking said that it was "only a matter of time" before rules would be introduced to stop top officials seeing bankers at such sensitive times.

O'Reilly welcomed an ECB move to publish the diaries of its six-person executive board from February next year, which followed a successful freedom of information request by a journalist to make them public. "Sunlight is the best disinfectant," she said, adding that the ECB's growing influence, including as a supervisor of banks, required a rethink of its transparency. — Reuters

UK USES NEW POWERS TO RULE ON CUADRILLA SHALE GAS PERMITS

LONDON: Britain will use new powers to determine whether to allow shale gas firm Cuadrilla Resources to carry out fracking at two sites in northwest England, overruling local planning decisions.

Britain is estimated to have substantial amounts of shale gas trapped in underground rocks and Prime Minister Cameron has pledged to go all out to extract these reserves, to help offset declining North Sea oil and gas output. Yet fracking applications have struggled to find approval from local communities, concerned about noise and environmental impacts, and to

address this the government has changed planning rules to make its own decisions on shale gas appeals.

Local government minister Greg Clark has informed Lancashire County Council of the minister's intention to himself determine Cuadrilla's appeal on two rejected permits in the area in northwest England.

"Ministers have decided to recover Cuadrilla's appeals for shale exploration in Lancashire," the government said in a letter to the council dated Nov. 26.

Cuadrilla's wells in Lancashire would be the first British shale gas wells where frack-

ing is applied since hydraulic fracturing at a separate project near Blackpool, in Lancashire, triggered an earth tremor that resulted in an 18-month ban on the technology in 2011. John Williams, senior principal consultant at the consultancy Poyry Management said a decision on the appeal could be made by the second half of 2016 but rules requiring the company to monitor water supplies at the site for 12 months before fracking can start would delay any gas extraction.

"We could see some drilling in the second half of 2017 but they still have to

determine whether there are reserves that can be extracted economically and it would likely be 2018 at the earliest before a decision to move into full production would be taken," he said.

A spokesperson for Cuadrilla said if the projects are given approval the company would begin water monitoring at the sites as soon as possible.

Britain changed its planning rules in August to allow government intervention to approve or reject shale gas drilling permits and give priority to appeals involving shale gas projects. — Reuters



LONDON: Retail stores display "Black Friday" advertisements and banners on Oxford Street in central London, as the annual retail event takes place yesterday. — AFP

TRADE POSES BIGGEST DRAG ON UK GROWTH ON RECORD

BANK OF ENGLAND GROWTH Q3 FORECAST NOT YET HIT

LONDON: Foreign trade put the biggest drag on record on British economic growth last quarter, as a weakening global economy and surging demand for imports slowed Britain's recovery from the financial crisis, data showed yesterday.

The economy grew 0.5 percent in the third quarter, the Office for National Statistics said, confirming a preliminary reading and slowing from 0.7 percent growth between April and June. The slowdown reflects a global weakening led by emerging markets such as China, while exporters have struggled with the rise in sterling this year.

But the data was in line with a forecast in a Reuters poll, and sterling edged up against the euro and dollar on the day, reducing some of its earlier losses. Consumer spending remained strong. But trade lopped 1.5 percentage points off the economic expansion from July to September. That marked the biggest quarterly drag on gross domestic product growth since records began in 1997 and a sharp turnaround from the second quarter when trade boosted GDP.

Imports surged by the most in nearly 10 years, up 5.5 percent from the second quarter and overshadowing a much weaker rise in exports. Overall the economy grew 2.3

percent compared with the same period a year ago, down from 2.4 percent in the second quarter and lower than 2.9 percent growth for all of 2014, when Britain outpaced all other major advanced economies.

Scott Bowman, an economist with Capital Economics, said he expected the slowdown to be temporary despite the obstacles posed by Britain's planned referendum on its membership of the European Union and the government's squeeze on public spending.

Finance minister George Osborne on Wednesday spelled out tough spending cuts for several government departments, although they were not as severe as some had expected.

Despite concerns about the global economy, business investment rose 2.2 percent in the three months to September and was up 6.6 percent on the year, figures likely to be welcomed by policymakers who want to see a more balanced recovery.

KEEP ON SPENDING

Britain has relied on consumers to drive much of its growth since 2013 and consumer spending remained strong, growing 0.8 percent for the third consecutive quarter. It was up 3.1 percent from a year earlier, matching

the fastest growth rate since late 2007, before the financial crisis.

Households have benefited this year from a pick-up in wages while inflation has hovered around zero and interest rates remain at a record low. The Bank of England, which is considering when to start raising interest rates, has said it expects GDP growth in the third quarter to be revised up to 0.6 percent. It is forecasting 2015 growth of 2.7 percent.

That might prove optimistic, based on the latest data and Britain's official growth forecasts which were confirmed this week at 2.4 percent for 2015. Services output, the largest part of the economy, rose by 0.7 percent on the quarter, unchanged from the initial reading.

Industrial production edged up 0.2 percent but manufacturing output fell 0.4 percent in the quarter, its third consecutive quarterly decline, accentuating the unbalanced nature of the recovery.

Two surveys earlier on Friday also showed the dip in the economic mood as consumer morale slipped to its lowest level in six months in November and growth among services companies cooled.

Growth in house prices slowed too, mortgage lender Nationwide said. — Reuters

LAST YEAR'S INVESTMENT PARIAH RUSSIA COMES IN FROM THE COLD

LONDON: Russia is returning from the investment wilderness after last year's oil price collapse and Western business sanctions with funds attracted by falling interest rates and a light 2016 debt repayment calendar. Those who braved Russian markets this year are already in line to scoop dollar-based returns of 15-20 percent on equities and bonds, among the best in the world.

But this merely represents recovery after a horrific 2014 that saw the rouble crash by 40 percent, \$150 billion capital outflows and the spectre of default by Russian companies that had borrowed heavily in dollars. Now, almost a year after a dramatic late night 6.5 percentage point interest rate rise to defend the collapsing rouble, a turnaround for the economy and investment flows may be nigh. That is, provided geopolitics, oil prices and the domestic economy all deliver as hoped. "Russia is definitely one to watch," Mark Burgess, CIO for Columbia Threadneedle Investments, EMEA told the recent Reuters Global Investment Outlook summit. "Were there to be any signs of sanctions being lifted, there would be investment opportunities being thrown up from that."

Despite the latest geo-political spat with Turkey over the downing of a Russian warplane, the commonly held view now is that with Moscow joining the alliance against Islamic State militants in Syria, ties with the West are on the mend. That in turn means sanctions imposed for Russia's meddling in Ukraine may be rolled off in 2016, at least by Europe. While those measures only bar some companies such as Rosneft and Sberbank from tapping global capital markets, their removal will be a gamechanger because of the risk premium they have added to Russian assets in general.

Other positives: the exchange rate plunge has protected Russia's balance of payments surplus, and the rouble, having fallen 20 percent this year in real terms - versus currencies of trade partners and adjusted for inflation - looks cheap.

Any sign of oil prices bottoming out into next year would also be a significant catalyst for Russian assets. And while the economy will remain in recession, the worst of the downturn may be over, most investors believe. Also setting Russia apart from emerging peers such as Brazil and Turkey is a balance of payments surplus that may top 4 percent of annual economic output next year.

That's key at a time of rising US interest rates when international capital is costlier and harder to come by.

EXTERNAL DEBT

Russian companies have been more resilient than expected, as their own cash buffers and state aid have headed off anticipated debt defaults. That scenario looks even more unlikely now, given their external debt repayments amount to around \$75 billion next year, versus well over \$100 billion in 2015 and almost \$50 billion just in the last 2014 quarter. "The market is looking ahead and seeing external debt as less of a headwind," UBS strategist Manik Narain said. Refinancing debt has been also less onerous than feared.

Russian bankers say they are flush with dollars, as firms fearing asset freezes by the West have repatriated cash held abroad - state-run lender VTB for instance says its corporate deposits have swollen 20 percent in the past year and loan books have grown 13 percent. Receding default risk has helped the yield premia offered by Russian companies' dollar bonds over U.S. Treasuries to fall a massive 4 percentage points this year, according to JPMorgan which runs the most widely used emerging debt indexes. Russian corporate bonds have returned 26 percent this year, more than double total returns on the CEMBI index, JPM said, predicting that low supply of new bonds and geopolitics will support gains into 2016. — Reuters

GERMAN CONSUMER CONFIDENCE SLIPS OVER REFUGEE INFLUX

BERLIN: German consumer confidence slipped for a fourth month in a row in November as shoppers worried about the impact of a record influx of asylum seekers, a survey found Thursday.

A monthly index calculated by market research firm GfK from questioning 2,000 consumers slipped 0.2 points to 9.4, although the rate of decline had slowed from September and October.

"The persistently strong influx of asylum seekers is causing economic

optimism to dwindle further," GfK said in a statement as Germany expects around one million newcomers this year.

About 40 percent of respondents said they expected unemployment to rise, and most linked the trend to the refugee crisis, although few expected to lose their own jobs. "The economic mood of citizens currently seems to be much more pessimistic than the real economy is, or how experts judge it to

be," with leading economists predicting 1.6 percent GDP growth next year, said the institute. Germans' income expectations also fell, but their willingness to spend bucked the trend and rose slightly at the start of the Christmas shopping season, the survey found, pointing to rock-bottom interest rates and low energy prices. Looking to December, GfK's headline household confidence index was forecast to slip further to 9.3 points.

"Further development of the consumer mood will also depend, among other things, on how consumers will respond to the terrorist attacks in Paris of November 13," the report said. "If the uncertainty among consumers rises sharply due to the events in Paris and possible further attacks or attempted attacks, and some people, fearing further attacks, shun crowds such as pedestrian zones, this will further weigh on consumer sentiment." — AFP

SOUTHEAST ASIA'S STRONGER GROWTH MAY BE WEAKER THAN IT SEEMS HIGH DEBT, WEAK EXPORTS POSE CHALLENGE

JAKARTA: Stronger-than-expected growth in some Southeast Asian economies has sparked optimism the worst of a slowdown may be over, but high debt and weak exports make sustaining the momentum a challenge for policymakers as US interest rates go up.

The Philippines wrapped up the region's third-quarter GDP performance on Thursday with annual growth of 6 percent, up from 5.8 percent in the second quarter. Annual growth also picked up in Indonesia and Thailand, the region's two largest economies, taking weighted average growth in the region of some 500 million people with a combined GDP of \$2.2 trillion to 4.2 percent, according to Capital Economics.

Officials from Bangkok to Jakarta have been quick to seize on the improved growth numbers and consumer confidence as evidence the worst slowdown since the 2009 crisis is over.

"We think growth in the third quarter is a turning point," said Indonesian central bank Governor Agus Martowardojo.

Economists and businesses hold a less sanguine view. China's slowdown and recession in Japan, both leading markets for the region, high consumer and corporate debt at home and the risk of more market ructions when the US raises interest rates, are all clouding prospects ahead. "It's too early to

call a trough," said economist Joseph Incalcaterra at HSBC in Singapore. "We forecast growth in the fourth quarter to be weaker just about everywhere."

Araya Sawaengwong, 48, who owns a small music shop in a Bangkok mall, said the economy was in bad shape.

"I'm struggling to sell my stuff as there are not many buyers these days. Buyers now become sellers competing to sell things but nobody wants to buy...I don't think things are getting any better."

IMPORTS FALL

Economic growth has been deceptively underpinned by a fall in imports rather than strength in exports for some countries.

Indonesia's exports in the third quarter fell 0.7 percent from a year earlier, but external demand still contributed 1.2 percentage points to the economy's 4.7 percent growth as imports tumbled by 6.1 percent.

Sliding prices of commodities that account for around half of Indonesia's total exports have crimped incomes and depressed domestic activity, in turn, hitting imports.

"From an accounting perspective, this gives the appearance that growth is stronger than it actually is," Incalcaterra said. In Thailand, the external sector's large contribu-

tion to the economy's 2.9 percent expansion was mostly due to a drop in imports, as investment shrank for the first time since early 2014. Without the lift from net exports, Southeast Asia's second-largest economy would have grown by just 0.1 percent.

Net exports dragged on Singapore's performance, but it still grew 1.9 percent in the third quarter from a year earlier helped by spending on its 50th anniversary celebrations and a boost from inventories.

The data may show a growth pick-up in most of the major Southeast Asian economies, but exporters say there was no significant change in demand in the third quarter.

"We export to ASEAN countries and Australia and (demand in the) third quarter was still pretty flat," said Sancoyo Antarikso, director at PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk which exports consumer items such as shampoo and soap.

While additional monetary stimulus could still be deployed to bolster growth, policymakers are wary about capital outflows when US rates rise. There are also limits to what fiscal stimulus can do to counter sluggish global trade. "Growth will remain weak for the next two quarters until we start seeing signs of a broader pick-up outside ASEAN," said HSBC's Incalcaterra. — Reuters

GOLD DIPS TO NEAR 6-YR LOW, SET FOR 6TH STRAIGHT WEEKLY DROP

LONDON: Gold dipped to its lowest level in nearly six years yesterday and was heading for a sixth straight weekly decline under pressure from a firm dollar and prospects of a US interest rate rise next month. Spot gold hit \$1,055.99 an ounce, its lowest since February 2010, and was down 1.5 percent at \$1,057.27 by 1314 GMT.

The metal was down 1.9 percent for the week. US gold futures also fell 1.3 percent to \$1,055.90 an ounce and were also headed for a sixth consecutive weekly decline. Gold was undermined by a firm dollar, trading near an eight-month high against a basket of major currencies, mostly boosted by euro and Swiss franc weakness. The dollar-denominated metal becomes more expensive for foreign investors when the US currency rises.

"The dollar is bid and you have the inverse relationship with gold simply because the Fed is going to be tightening," Societe Generale analyst Robin Bhar said.

"The omens are not positive for gold in the lead-up to the December rate meeting." The Federal Reserve is widely expected to raise US rates for the first time in nearly a decade when it meets next on Dec. 15-16. Higher rates would rise the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding gold and could dent demand and boost the dollar. "Once again, gold is unable to find a bid. Any small rally that we see is being sold into," said a Sydney-based precious metals trader. Buying in China has been good but has been unable to support prices, the trader said. Premiums on the Shanghai Gold Exchange, a proxy for demand in China, were trading at \$5-\$6 an ounce, versus \$3-\$4 at the beginning of the month. — Reuters

VW LABOR BOSS SAYS CO2 CHEATING HAS HIT NEW CAR ORDERS

WOLFSBURG: Volkswagen is facing slowing orders for new cars, with consumers shunning purchases after the automaker admitted this month it understated fuel usage and carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, VW's top labor representative said yesterday.

"There is caution in buying," the German company's works council chief Bernd Osterloh told reporters. "The CO2 issue has triggered a greater crisis of confidence (in VW products) than the nitrogen (emissions) issue." VW said on Nov. 3 it had manipulated the level of CO2 emissions in about 800,000 cars sold mainly in Europe, and is expecting costs of at least 2 billion euros (\$2.1 billion), including compensation payments to customers.

Two weeks later, VW said the CO2 cheating, which mainly involved diesel cars, affected more petrol-powered vehicles than previously disclosed. The revelations about fuel economy and CO2 emissions have deepened the crisis at VW, which initially centred on software used on up to 11 million diesel vehicles worldwide that VW admitted in September had vastly understated their actual emissions of the pollutant nitrogen oxide.

Global sales of VW group vehicles fell 3.5 percent in October, though they edged up 0.5 percent in Germany. VW has denied reports that orders and sales have started to plunge in the wake of the CO2 admissions. Osterloh, who also sits on the VW supervisory board's influential steering committee, said there could be risks to jobs should the decline in orders persist. "Employment is safe provided we are selling cars," he said. "If we sell no cars, it will get relatively difficult." "We will have to look at incoming orders of the next days, weeks and months," he added. — Reuters



MATSAPHA: Workers of a foreign-owned textile factory sew on machines during their shift on September 1, 2015 in the factory on the outskirts of Matsapha, Swaziland. Unable to fulfill the criteria required by Washington regarding human rights, Swaziland in January 2015 lost the benefit of AGOA, the US program allowing it to be exempt from taxes to export its products. — AFP

TAIWAN CUTS 2015, 2016 ECONOMIC GROWTH FORECASTS

TAIPEI: Taiwan yesterday cut its growth forecast for 2015 for the second time since August, to 1.06 percent, while also lowering expectations for next year amid slumping exports.

The full-year figure was adjusted down 0.50 percentage points from August when the Directorate General

of Budget, Accounting and Statistics made the previous estimate.

"External demand growth remains weak... also inventories of consumer electronics continue to be in an adjustment phase," the government agency said in a statement. Taiwan has been struggling to spur growth in its export-focused economy, which

has suffered with a slow recovery from the global financial crisis while also facing stiffer competition in the key tech sector.

It also trimmed its 2016 forecast to growth of 2.32 percent, from an earlier estimate of 2.7 percent. Taiwan rolled out a Tw\$4.08 billion (\$124.9 million) stimulus package earlier this

month to help boost consumer spending, after its economy shrank for the first time in six years in the third quarter. Despite the measures—which includes subsidies for domestic travel and home appliances—growth forecast for the fourth quarter of 2015 was also slashed by 1.41 percentage points to 0.49 percent. — AFP



TOKYO: Toshiba President Masashi Muromachi (C) is surrounded by reporters as he leaves following a press briefing at the company's headquarters in Tokyo yesterday. Toshiba last week reported that its US nuclear subsidiary Westinghouse had booked an impairment loss. —AFP

JAPAN PLANS EXTRA BUDGET, HANDOUTS TO PUSH RECOVERY

ABE SEEKS TO BREATHE FRESH LIFE INTO ECONOMY

TOKYO: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has ordered Cabinet ministers to prepare an extra spending package, including cash handouts for the poorest pensioners, seeking to breathe fresh life into Japan's stalling recovery.

The amount of the supplementary budget has not been decided, the chief government spokesman, Yoshihide Suga, said Friday after the Cabinet met.

Local media said the package will likely exceed 3 trillion yen (\$24.5 billion) and will be prepared in December, for approval early in the new year.

It will likely include one-time subsidies of 30,000 yen (\$245) for cash-strapped pensioners. Suga said it also will include provisions to help farmers improve their competitiveness as the Japan opens its markets further as part of a Pacific Rim trade agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Suga said the measures are part of broader plan announced by Abe to increase Japan's gross domestic product to 600 trillion yen (\$4.9 trillion) by 2020.

The extra spending aimed at farmers

and seniors, bastions of support for Abe's Liberal Democratic Party, also will likely find favor among voters ahead of an election next summer Japan slipped into a mild recession in the spring. Although the jobless rate fell to a 20-year low of 3.1 percent in October, according to data released yesterday, consumer spending and incomes also edged down as the tight labor market failed to spur significant increases in wages.

Abe has proposed a raft of policies meant to help workers cope with child and elder care, part of a "mobilization to ensure active participation of all members of society."

Ultimately, the fate of his "Abenomics" approach, which has relied heavily on pumping cash into the economy, hinges on getting consumers and companies to spend more and thus boost demand.

So far, short-handed employers have resorted to use of overtime and hiring more temporary workers, seeking to avoid increases in base wages that

would be difficult to reverse if the economy takes a turn for the worse. Household spending fell 2.4 percent in October from the year before, and average incomes fell 0.9 percent, Friday's data showed.

Japan's inflation rate also was lower in October, with core inflation excluding volatile food prices down 0.1 percent for the third month in a row.

Abe has called for raising Japan's minimum wage, which is now at a modest 798 yen (\$6.50) an hour on average, by 3 percent a year, aiming to get it up to 1,000 yen (\$8.15) an hour by 2020.

Big companies, reaping record profits thanks to strong export earnings, can afford that. However, most people paid the minimum wage work for small and medium-size companies that cannot afford to pay more, said economist Masamichi Adachi of JPMorgan. "Those small tiny firms, which are always losing money and don't pay taxes, are not making money at all. If they have to raise wages their losses will grow and they will find it hard to survive," he said. — AP

BLACK FRIDAY FOR CHINA STOCKS BUT METALS NOT SO HEAVY

LONDON: Chinese shares slumped 5 percent yesterday, hit by regulatory and industrial sector worries, though it wasn't enough to derail the first weekly rise for metals like copper and zinc since early October.

The Shanghai Composite index and the CSI300 both saw their biggest one-day drops in more than three months and ensured it was set to be a subdued post-Thanksgiving session for Wall Street.

Europe had a flat feel too. Britain's FTSE 100 was down 0.2 percent by 1230 GMT though 0.2 percent gains for France's CAC40 and Germany's DAX left the pan-regional FTSEurofirst 300 heading for a token weekly gains. "There is clearly a risk that China will try and devalue the currency further," said Ankit Gheedia, equity and derivative strategist at BNP Paribas.

"(However) Europe is still trading on the ECB next week, which is why the market is relatively resilient," he said referring to expectations of another round of stimulus.

The intensive selling in China had come amid signs its securities regulator was making a fresh clampdown on leveraged buying and combined with data showing a 4.6 percent drop in profits among big industrial firms. The mining industry was the laggard with profits down 56.3 percent in the first 10 months of the year. Overall it was also the fifth straight monthly drop in profits, underscoring the pressure currently on China's giant economy.

The slump in Shanghai stocks brought a 25 percent rebound rally since late August to a shuddering halt and contributed the lion's share of a 1.1 percent weekly drop in MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside of Japan.

Japan's Nikkei closed down 0.3 percent too though it ended the week marginally highly to extend a winning streak that started in the second half of October.

The jittery China mood ensured euro-zone bond yields, which move inverse to price, nudged lower again as investors also kept positioning for the next salvo of ECB stimulus, expected at the central bank's Dec. 3 meeting. They are paying more than ever for the privilege of owning shorter-term German, French, Dutch government bonds and yields on benchmark 10-year yields are also sliding again.

"The market is anticipating the ECB to act swiftly and decisively next week," said DZ Bank strategist Christian Lenk, highlighting bets that Mario Draghi and his colleagues will continue to hike up the cost of sitting on cash for banks.

"If you take the two-year Schatz (German) yield as the benchmark for the (ECB) deposit rate, the market expects a cut in the deposit rate by 20 bps to minus 0.40 percent, which we think is thinkable." —Reuters



HANGZHOU: An investor walks past a screen showing stock market movements in a stock firm in Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang province yesterday. Chinese shares closed down more than five percent on November 27, after inquiries were announced into several major brokerage firms. — AFP

Weekender

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Fans dressed in costume attend the Anime Festival Asia 2015 in Singapore yesterday. Anime Festival Asia 2015 (AFASG15), the region's biggest premier festival for Japanese popular culture and anime runs from November 27 to 29. — AFP (See page 29)

Singapore Film Festival kicks off with red carpet pageant

SEE PAGE 29

Grace Jones wants to perform at Glastonbury

The 67-year-old music icon is getting ready to release a new album in 2016, her first studio release since 2008's 'Hurricane'. Grace will be heading out on tour and she will be keeping the weekend of June 24 to June 26 free in case Michael and Emily Eavis want her to sing at the world famous music event. In an interview on TV show 'Alan Carr's Chatty Man', she said: "Absolutely I'm going to go on tour, next year. If Glastonbury can afford me I might show up. I will be touring." Grace has also revealed the LP - entitled 'She' - has been influenced by

African music and explores all the different sides of her eccentric personality. The 'Pull Up To the Bumper' hitmaker admits the album should have been finished earlier and she's unhappy she's kept her loyal fans waiting for new songs. Grace - who has a book out, 'I'll Never Write My Memoirs' - said: "The album is called 'She', at least that is the title so far. It's a mix of African rhythms, all my personalities in one. It's coming out hopefully. Its two years late. It's really taking the p**s."



Rita Ora is reportedly dating Krept Johnson

The pair have been close friends for a while and collaborated together on her hit 'Poison' back in May, but their "chemistry" has led to romance and the 25-year-old stunner is now apparently enjoying secret dates with the 'Freak Of The Week' rapper. A source shared: "Rita is enjoying being single but there is certainly chemistry with Krept. They've known each other for a long time and get along really well." Last week, Casyo 'Krept' Johnson - who is one half of hip-hop duo Krept and Konan - was spotted linking arms with the blonde bombshell outside of Mayfair restaurant Hakkasan in London. And despite Rita's relationship with Blink 182 drummer Travis Barker ending earlier this month, she is happy meeting up with the talented musician and wants to keep "trying" for love. The insider told The Sun newspaper: "Her tight schedule means it's tough to maintain a relationship but she's having fun trying." Meanwhile, Krept has been vocal about his feelings for Rita and recently gushed about her "vibe".

Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin reunited to celebrate Thanksgiving

The former couple - who announced they were "consciously uncoupling" last year - spent the holiday together with 11-year-old daughter Apple and nine-year-old son Moses. Taking to Instagram, she wrote: "Happy Thanksgiving from us to you! (sic)" The pair have remained friendly ever since they decided to go their separate ways, with Gwyneth having recently featured on Coldplay's new song 'Everglow'. Meanwhile, the 43-year-old actress - who is now dating the executive producer of 'Scream Queens', Brad Falchuk - previously admitted she felt like she had failed when she split from Chris. She shared: "My marriage. I am from a tribe of people who stay married. My parents stayed married until my dad died. I really don't come from a culture of divorce at all and I had very high hopes for what my life could be like. I think that it was very difficult for me that I couldn't do that and that I wasn't able to be married to the father of my children for the rest of my life. It was very challenging for me in terms of having to re-assess what that said about me, ideas that I had about that kind of failure."



Neil Patrick Harris gave his twins 'biology' lesson

The 42-year-old actor - who has a five-year-old son, Gideon Scott, and a daughter, Harper Grace, with his husband David Burtka - cooked up a spectacular feast to mark the annual celebration and also posted a photograph of his children holding misshapen carrots while dressed in their pajamas. Writing on his Instagram account, Neil joked: "Earlier today, prepping for Thanksgiving dinner. Teaching our children both cooking and apparently, biology. #thankful" The former 'How I Met Your Mother' star - who revealed he is gay in 2006 and had his children via a surrogate mother - also

posted an image of the delicious-looking food he'd prepared for the big day. He captioned the image: "Happy Thanksgiving everyone! I'm so thankful for food, family, friends, and [David]. Loving today (and turkey)!" Neil also gave fans a further insight into his personal life by broadcasting his family's dinner via the video streaming app Periscope. Earlier this year, Neil admitted he comes across as the "bad cop" when he disciplines his children.





Kardashian, Jenner family pose for a group Thanksgiving photo

Caitlyn Jenner stood proud at the middle of the photo whilst ex-wife Kris Jenner held grandson Reign, 11 months, and boyfriend Corey Gamble posed nearby. Sisters Kourtney Kardashian and Kim Kardashian West both held their daughters, Penelope, three and North, two, whilst Scott Disick - who split from the 36-year-old beauty in July - held their five-year-old son Mason. Standing near Scott was Thanksgiving host Khloe Kardashian whilst Kendall Jenner beamed from behind Kourtney. Kanye West also flashed a rare smile whilst Kylie Jenner and Tyga showed no signs of a break

up as they posed for the camera. Taking to Instagram to share the photo, Kylie wrote: "Thankful for my blended family." Meanwhile, Kim, 34, recently took to her official website to list the 10 things she was thankful for this year, including a "loving husband [and] a happy daughter". She wrote: "Thanksgiving is a day for spending time with my whole family, eating delicious food and being thankful for all the amazing blessings in our lives. Here's what I'm thankful for this year.

Tom Hanks opens up on wife breast cancer

The 59-year-old mother-of-two underwent a double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery after she received the devastating news in December, and whilst Rita is finally cancer-free, her husband has opened up about the "hell" their family were in during that time. Tom, also 59, shared: "What has been so amazing about it is how powerfully it plays out in a relatively short period of time. "We all know by now what hell that sort of health crisis is. "It just comes along out of the blue and everything else stops because the only thing to do is to drop everything else and pay attention to myriad stuff that needs to be attended to. "Rita found out last December. That meant Christmas and New Year was a completely different version of how it had been on any year before, and now here we are a year later and she seems to be out of it." The Oscar winning actor feels blessed that they could afford the best healthcare and added he was in awe of how Rita coped with her ordeal. In an interview with the Daily Mail newspaper, he said: "Rita and I are lucky because we can afford the best healthcare in the world, we knew that blessing right off, but while it was happening, all I could do was bow down before the courage of my wife."



Gemma Arterton plans to let her 'hair down'

The 29-year-old beauty portrays actress and royal mistress Nell Gwynn in the eponymous theatre production, and she's looking forward to appearing in a role she can really relate to. She said: "[The play] speaks to me in that 'working-class girl finding her voice and breaking through class barriers' kind of way." The former Bond girl starred in London's West End earlier in her career, in the musical 'Made In Dagenham', and she didn't envisage making a return to the theatre so soon. However, Gemma admitted she couldn't reject the chance to play such an interesting role. She told the Daily Mail newspaper: "There's singing! And dancing! Gwynn's very lively." Gemma revealed she was particularly attracted to the role because of how Nell engages with the audience about popular topics, including the treatment of woman. She said: "It's nice to know that we've had to fight through this before." Earlier this year, Gemma - who was born in Kent, England - revealed she'd never be tempted to move to America, despite being one of the world's most in-demand actresses.



Courtney Stodden made a stand for animal rights

The 21-year-old beauty visited the Hollywood & Highland Center in Los Angeles dressed up as Little Bo Peep in support of PETA's Save The Sheep campaign earlier this week. She warned: "The shearing industry is heartbreaking. Not many people are aware of how torturous it really is. Sheep are deprived of food and water before being sheared, in part so that they'll be too weak to put up resistance. But when these naturally nervous prey animals do panic, the shearers stomp and stand on their heads and necks. Workers throw scared sheep around and slam their heads and bodies against hard wooden floors. It's terrible." Courtney - who was wearing a revealing adult version of the popular nursery rhyme character's costume - advised people not to buy clothing made of wool for Christmas presents this year and to purchase items that are made from cotton or "plant-based" sources.



Feel the Force: Fans live and breathe Star Wars

Michael Bender was hooked by age two. Jennifer Landa got the bug when she was nearly six. Steve Sansweet was well into his 30s when the Star Wars passion was born. All three are among the legions of hardcore fans the space epic has generated over the years and who are champing at the bit in anticipation of the saga's latest installment—"Star Wars: The Force Awakens"—that hits screens in December. From the United States, to Russia, China and Saudi Arabia, the franchise has spawned a remarkable global fan base arguably unheard of in movie history and spanning several generations.

"The fans have really played an incredibly major role in keeping Star Wars alive and growing," said Sansweet, an avid fan and former Wall Street Journal reporter who joined Lucasfilm in 1996 as head of fan relations and content management. Now aged 70, Sansweet retired in 2011 and now runs Rancho Obi-Wan, a non-profit museum north of San Francisco that houses the world's largest collection of Star Wars memorabilia.

He said the genius of Lucasfilm after the first movie came out in 1977 was to listen closely to its fans and to allow them to claim ownership of the franchise to some extent. "Movies before were seen as here and gone, there was no real attempt to bring in the fans," Sansweet said. "Lucasfilm let go to a large extent when other companies were going out at conventions and handing out cease and desist orders. "But Lucas was much smarter about it... and allowed (Star Wars) to spread into popular culture."

'First ever memory'

Michael Bender, a physical therapist, is one of those die-hard fans who became smitten with the saga as an infant. "I was two when I went to see 'The Empire Strikes Back', the second film in the series, and this is my first ever memory actually," said Bender, 36, who lives in the Los Angeles area. There is no mistaking his passion for the series upon entering the two-bedroom apartment he shares with his wife and two small dogs. On one table sits a limited-edition \$3,200 book set that documents each chapter of the saga.

Another side-table has a Star Wars collectible chess set, and on display nearby are four automated Star Wars books complete with light and sound. Other Star Wars items—figurines, prints, paintings—are scattered around the living room and many more are stored at his parents' house. In a large rollaway chest, Bender also keeps the cherished stormtrooper costumes that he wears as a member of the "501st Legion," an international fan-based Star Wars costuming group. Created in 1997, the group has grown into a worldwide phenomenon with 8,000 members who take part in charity events and other affairs related to the film.

Bender says his membership in the "501st Legion" has allowed him to fully live out his passion for the saga and meet fellow fans, including in Tunisia where several of the Star Wars movies were partially shot. "It has created a lot of bonds," he said. "When I went to Tunisia in 2011, I met some fans and... we all bonded instantly. "We were finishing each other's sentences before the end of the



Photo shows Daisey Ridley as Rey (left) and John Boyega as Finn, in a scene from the new film, 'Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens,' directed by JJ Abrams. The movie, which received a PG-13 rating, will be released in US on Dec 18, 2015. — AP

evening." For Jennifer Landa, 35, an aspiring actress in Los Angeles, the passion for Star Wars borders on obsession. Her apartment is filled with Star Wars memorabilia - sheets, luggage, jewellery, cookie cutters, slippers, mugs, dresses, purses, a glass-encased coffee table with Star Wars figures and the list goes on and on.

'Not gonna hide'

She even had a Star Wars-themed wedding last year at which her father dressed as Darth Vader, stormtroopers acted as ushers and the two flower girls dressed as Princess Leia. The wedding cake was topped with two Star Wars creatures—Wampa (a snow beast) and Tauntaun (a snow lizard). "I wanted something that would represent who we are as a couple," Landa said of her wedding. "But we also didn't want to alienate guests who weren't necessarily fans." Sporting Darth Vader tights and a Star Wars top, she said she realizes her passion may be considered over the top by some but is comforted by the fact that she is by no means unique. "I thought for a while that I was alone in feeling like that but then I went online and found people who felt the same way," Landa said.

"So now, I'm just like why not go full force. This is who I am and I'm not gonna hide anymore." Like Bender, she has bought advance tickets to see the movie several times and hopes her five-month old daughter Lucia will eventually share the same passion. "Pretty much everyday is related to something Star Wars," Landa said. "Whether I'm using a stormtrooper spatula to make my breakfast, to listening to the music or to tweeting and sharing the latest trailer for 'The Force Awakens', to making jewelry. "I mean my day is pretty much all Star Wars," she added. "It's part of my daily life." — AFP



A boy poses for a photograph with the Star Wars character 'Stormtroopers' at the Lego Star Wars exhibition in Hong Kong.— AP



Fans pose for a photograph with the Star Wars character 'Stormtroopers' at the Lego Star Wars exhibition in Hong Kong on Wednesday, Nov 25, 2015. — AP



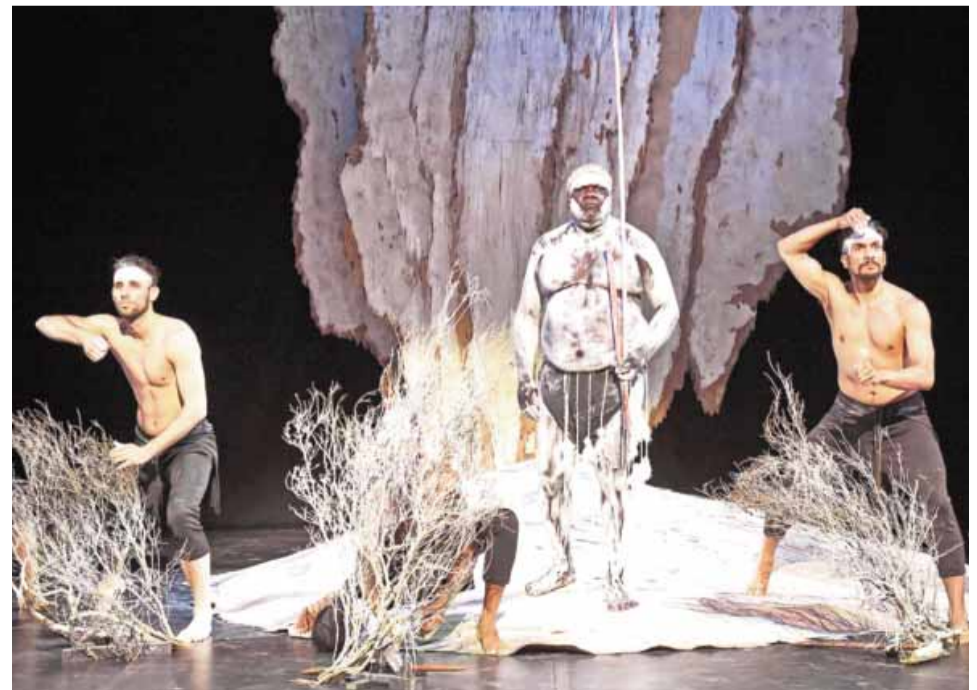
Fans look at a model of a Millennium Falcon at the Lego Star Wars exhibition in Hong Kong. — AP

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Bangarra dancers perform Ochres in Sydney

Dancers from the indigenous dance group Bangarra perform their production of Ochres in Sydney yesterday. Ochre is a clay substance that represents a huge part of Aboriginal life and is used for rituals and ceremonies, visual arts, healing. It is also a symbolic way for Aboriginal people to tell their stories through body painting while celebrating the spirit of these stories through dance. — AFP photos





Romani Berlekov, a homeless artist, paints a landscape of a beach on the Connecticut coast from a cell phone image at the Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Boston. — AP Photos

Art program gives Boston's homeless a place to create

In an elegant church in one of Boston's most chic shopping districts, homeless people from across the city gather once a week to express themselves in ways not possible when living on the streets. As winter approaches, attendance at Common Art increases, and as many as 100 homeless and low-income people paint, draw, knit, sew, make jewelry or engage in other crafts that allow them to boost their self-esteem and make a little cash.

Chris Haubrich started coming to Common Art about 10 years ago when he was homeless, and still comes regularly even though he now has an apartment. "This is the place that saved me," Haubrich said, dabbing at a colorful painting of a parrot. "This is my safety net." "I was a kid who grew up being told I couldn't do anything," he said. "I had no patience, and this has brought out my patience, given me focus."

Common Art was founded in 1996 when a homeless person told a local pastor that he wanted a place to be creative, said Amanda Grant-Rose, executive director of Common Cathedral, the non-denominational ministry that oversees the program. "This is an opportunity to escape from their day," she said. "This is an opportunity for self-expression, and it's an opportunity for income." The art is sold on the sidewalk outside the church, and every Sunday some participants travel to Boston-area churches to sell their work. Pieces can go for a few dollars to \$50 or more.

Participants use the income for more art supplies, maybe a hot meal or even a night or two in a hotel when temperatures plummet, said Heidi Lee, the program's artist-in-residence. Common Art is now held every Wednesday, without fail, at Emmanuel Episcopal Church on swank Newbury Street - even when Wednesday falls on Christmas, or during the worst of winter storms. "That's when people really need a place to go," said Lee, whose job is to provide instruction, advice and encouragement.

Art is just one example of the creative outlets that shelters and homeless organizations across the country offer, said Megan Hustings, interim director of the National Coalition for the Homeless. Several cities have street newspapers. Some shelters offer writing and poetry workshops, or even dance, aerobics and yoga classes. "Homelessness is very difficult, it can be very debilitating, and when you're going through stressful times ... having the opportunity to have some kind of normalized experience is very positive," she said.

Haubrich typically creates mountain scenes using acrylic paints on canvas, but has branched out recently to animals. His mountain scenes are inspired by the late Bob Ross, the soft-spoken, bushy-haired art instructor on the PBS series "The Joy of Painting," he said. The pro-

gram has boosted his self-worth, and taught him how to get along with others. "I've learned how to respect one another, how to respect different cultures, and I've learned responsibility, leadership," he said.

Artistic experience is not necessary. "I couldn't even draw a stick figure when I started here," said Jeff Shaw, who mixes joint compound with paint to create abstract works. All are welcome, whether they choose to participate in artistic expression or not. On a recent rainy Wednesday, one man sat quietly on the perimeter of the room absorbed in a book. Others spread out sleeping bags and blankets on the stage and fell asleep. Some people just hung out, chatting. Some just showed up for a cup of coffee and a hot meal. And that's OK. "You don't have to create," Grant-Rose said. "It's about community. We welcome everybody." — AP



Homeless artists Romani Berlekov (left) and Frank Brescia paint at the Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Boston. At the Boston church, many homeless participate in the Common Art program, which is designed not only to give them a place to stay warm, but an opportunity to express themselves, learn some life skills and gain self-esteem.

Streaming channels, the gifts that keeps on giving

Looking for a holiday present that's a perfect fit, procrastinator-friendly and a constant reminder of your generosity? Consider a gift subscription to one of the abundance of streaming choices that range from mainstream to niche. Some, such as this year's new HBO Now or CBS All Access, may be welcomed by a cord-cutter whose New Year's resolution is to abandon traditional TV delivery. Others are alternatives to what's on cable or satellite.

Compatibility may be an issue in some cases. Although most major subscription-based offerings can be watched on any platform or device, including Roku, Amazon Fire TV, iPhones or iPads, there are some exceptions - and surprises. With SlingTV, for example, you won't be able to watch ESPN's "Monday Night Football" on a phone or tablet: Verizon has locked up NFL mobile streaming rights.

And you can watch PlayStation Vue, which delivers live TV, movies and sports starting at \$49.99 monthly, on devices other than a PlayStation, including Amazon Fire TV, Fire TV stick, and iPhone and iPad. Some platforms are particularly expansive in what they include. Roku, along with offering many broad-based sites, also has the anime-focused Crunchyroll (\$6.95 per month) and Korean drama site DramaFever (starting at 99 cents monthly). Here are some other contenders to ponder:

Big box channels

Sling TV, with a starting \$20 monthly fee for live TV that includes ESPN, AMC, A&E and TNT, offers add-on packages such as for Spanish-language networks including Univision (\$5). Hulu (\$7.99 monthly with commercials, \$11.99 without) carries current and past episodes of ABC, Fox and NBC network shows, originals such as "The Mindy Project" and cable fare from FX, AMC, Bravo, Comedy Central and others. Netflix (starting at \$7.99 monthly), has become known for original series including "House of Cards" and "Orange is the New Black," but also has a deep library of movies and TV shows. Amazon Prime (\$99 annually) has also added original series including "Transparent" and "The Man in the High Castle" to its thousands of movie and TV shows.

Drama kings and queens

It's not TV, it's HBO Now (\$14.99) and Showtime streaming (\$10.99), both introduced this year and delivering new series and other programming in tandem with their cable debuts, as well as complete past seasons. CBS All Access (\$5.99) offers current season episodes (one day after airing), local live CBS feeds from most major TV markets and will be home to a 2017 "Star Trek" reboot.

Home stadium

Every sport is king, depending on the channel. The offerings include "NFL Sunday Ticket" from DirecTV (\$199 at the start of the season, now \$99); MLB.TV Premium (\$129.99 annually) for regular season games; NHL GameCenter (\$159 annually) with live out-of-market regular season games; and DishWorld Sports (\$10) for European football and other global sports.

Multiplex theater

Feeln (\$3.99 monthly) combines Hallmark Hall of Fame movies featuring stories of love and family with other Hollywood movies and TV series, including children's shows, and original projects. Shudder (\$4.99 monthly) from AMC lives up to its name with horror films grouped under categories including "Monster Mash," "Psychos and Madmen" and, for a diversion, "Alien Intruders."

In the kitchen

Tastemade (\$4.99 a month for the ad-free version) is a food-and-travel channel that visits cultures and cuisines around the world and offers tips from expert chefs. And while a number of cooking channels are available free, a former TV star is taking the subscription route with her Paula Deen Channel, \$4.99 monthly for cooking and lifestyle videos.

Anglophile

Acorn TV (\$4.99 monthly) bills itself as the best of British television with an array of dramas, comedies and mysteries including "Brideshead Revisited," "Agatha Christie's Poirot," "Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries," "Foyle's War" and "Jeeves & Wooster."

Healthy mind, body

Gaia (\$7.95 monthly) streams yoga, meditation and other "mind-expanding" programs for a more conscious life, while The Gymbox (\$10 monthly) promises a variety of workouts, updated weekly, including kickboxing, Pilates, step aerobics and cycling.

Planet hugger

Newly launched Smithsonian Earth (\$3.99 monthly) streams nature and wildlife documentaries and series planned as separate from Smithsonian Channel content and available in an ultra-high-definition format on compatible devices.

Kids, or the kid within

Sesame Street GO (some free content, \$3.99 monthly, \$29.99 annually for full access) houses full-length episodes of "Sesame Street" along with educational music videos from Sesame Workshop. — AP



Photo shows a cafe that serves traditional Indonesian herbal medicine, known as 'jamu', in Jakarta. The trendy cafe looks like a typical coffee shop in the Indonesian capital Jakarta, but in fact it sells herb-infused brews promising to fix every ailment from coughs to impotence.



Customers seen at a cafe that serves traditional Indonesian herbal medicine, known as 'jamu', in Jakarta. — AFP photos

Storm in a herbal cup: Indonesian elixirs get a modern twist

The trendy cafe looks like a typical coffee shop in the Indonesian capital Jakarta, but in fact it sells herb-infused brews promising to fix every ailment from coughs to impotence. Indonesians have for generations taken herbal medicine, known locally as "jamu", as a remedy for common ailments, and many children's early memories include being forced to gulp down concoctions of ingredients such as ginger and turmeric. Now entrepreneurs have fused the age-old love of tonics made from the archipelago's vast selection of herbs with the younger generation's desire for a fashionable setting, and come up with beverages that focus on modern-day problems. And as demand for alternative medicines grows from the Middle East to Africa, Indonesian jamu manufacturers hope the country can use its expertise in the sector to become a major player in the global herbal medicine industry.



Photo shows an employee of a cafe selling traditional Indonesian herbal medicine, known as 'jamu', as she prepares a jamu drink for customers in Jakarta.

A resurgence in domestic popularity is being driven by hangouts such as the Jakarta cafe, which welcomes young professionals and students to a retro setting that mixes old-fashioned furniture with touches of the past, such as black and white prints and vintage bicycles. "Potent!" exclaims the menu, which features a picture of a beaming man wearing a tradition-

ally patterned cap and a smart suit as he promotes a "stamina-boosting aphrodisiac", named the Ginseng Prakoso Plus. Next to him is a picture of a woman with her hair meticulously styled into a bun, offering a drink called the "Tight Cavity", which aims to help improve a couple's sex life after a woman has given birth.

'Wives always smiling'

Other brews at the cafe, named "It's a long time such we had jamu", tantalizingly promise to "keep husbands at home" and "wives always smiling". The cafe, which opened two years ago, also offers a range of lighter, more palatable jamu, such as drinks made from the herb rosella to recharge the immune system, turmeric to boost stamina, and ginger to fight colds and coughs. "Initially the bitter taste put me off, but I have grown accustomed to it," said graphic designer lo Woo, 23, who gets her particular amu fix at the cafe three to four times a month.

"It's less dreadful to consume it with friends here, where it's cosy and comfortable." It is not just hipster cafes seeking to breathe new life into jamu. Traditional healer Retno Widati has since 2011 been teaching people seeking to open their own businesses how to make jamu ice cream from green beans, rice and galangal, a herb related to ginger common in Indonesia. "Young people are not taking jamu as often as in the old days, they fear the bitter taste," she said, adding her aim was to re-introduce it to people in a "more modern form".

The "jamu movement" has some high-profile supporters, notably Indonesian President Joko Widodo, who reportedly starts his day with a glass of boiled turmeric and ginger. The government has thrown its support behind the industry, which currently employs 15 million people and boasts more than 1,000 manufacturers, including some listed on the Jakarta stock exchange. Industry Minister Saleh Husin in September urged more exports of jamu products, and said the sector aims to generate revenue of up to 20 trillion rupiah (\$1.45 billion) this year, up from 15 trillion rupiah in 2014.

The old ways

Producers of jamu products see great opportunities abroad. Asia remains the stronghold for herbal remedies but their popularity is growing around the



A cafe employee prepares a drink of traditional Indonesian herbal medicine, known as 'jamu', for a customer.

world, according to experts. But Jamu Entrepreneurs Association chairman Charles Saerang said Indonesia, which is home to around 6,000 varieties of herbs, was still punching below its weight and remained a small player in the \$50-billion herbal remedy industry, which is dominated by countries including China and India.

He said the sector should focus on exporting good quality, cheap raw ingredients instead of simply ready-made products, as it mainly does now, which could increase annual earnings four fold. Despite the arrival of hip cafes seen as key in driving jamu's modernization, there remains a hardcore of Indonesians who prefer the old ways tonics served at streetside stalls, or in unpretentious, inexpensive local shops. "Why should I pay five times more for something that's essentially the same? I'd rather save my money because more money means more jamu to enjoy," said school handyman Agustinus Martanbaim, 38, who buys his herbal drinks from local vendors.— AFP



A worker at the Huaca (ancient burial ground) Pucllana located in the heart of Lima, prepares for a day's activities, following the discovery of human remains of four adults belonging to the Pre-Colombian Ichma Culture which inhabited the valley between 1000 to 1450 BC. —AFP



Peruvian archaeologists work at the Huaca (ancient burial ground) Pucllana in the heart of Lima. —AFP

Four pre-Inca tombs found in Peru's Lima

Archaeologists in Peru have found four tombs that are more than 1,000 years old in a pyramid-shaped cemetery that now sits in the middle of a residential neighborhood in Lima, experts said Thursday. "There are four human burial sites, for adult individuals, three women and one man, who lived between the years 1000 to 1450," said archaeologist Isabel Flores, director of the program in Huaca Pucllana, a ceremonial complex in Miraflores district. The find confirms the historical presence in Lima of the Ichma culture. It took hold on the central coast around 1000 and disappeared around 1450 as Inca civilization began to spread.

"These are the first four tombs of the Ichma culture. We think that we may still find more" despite long-term looting, said Flores, who has been researching the site for more than three decades. The tombs featured seated remains, looking toward the sea, wrapped up in textile and hand-woven natural materials alongside offerings such as ceramics and weaving tools. "So this is the first district in the country that has more than 1,500 years of known history to date," added Flores, who also runs the Huaca Pucllana Museum. In Lima alone, there are some 350 "huacas," the indigenous Quechua-language word for these ceremonial complexes, most of which predate Spanish colonization. —AFP



Peruvian archaeologists work at the Huaca (ancient burial ground) Pucllana in the heart of Lima. —AFP

Soprano Hannigan shatters classical music glass ceiling

With looks often described as straight out of a Bond film, Barbara Hannigan strides on to lead the orchestra dressed in vampy black leather, bondage boots and a wig. The Canadian soprano is rewriting the rules of classical music not just as a performer but as a conductor. "Mommy, I didn't know women were allowed to be conductors," a friend's daughter once said when she saw her take the stage. But Hannigan not only conducts, she sings at the same time. And her performances are bringing the house down in concert halls across Europe with her show-stopping signature piece-Ligeti's "Mysteries of the Macabre".

Now one of the most sought-after singers in the world, known for her fearless performances as much as her voice's "extraterrestrial" intensity, Hannigan's trajectory has however been nothing if not untypical. Brought up in rural Nova Scotia, somewhere more associated with folk and country music than the avant-garde, she has become the go-to interpreter of cutting-edge contemporary music. At an age when many sopranos begin fearing their careers might be nearing an end, hers only really took off internationally when she turned 40.

She made her name with her fearless portrayal of the eponymous femme fatale in Alan Berg's erotic opera "Lulu" at La Monnaie in Brussels in 2012, directed by the controversial Polish maestro Krzysztof Warlikowski. Instead of playing Lulu as a man-eater who gets her comeuppance, Hannigan

said in an interview with AFP that she saw her as a survivor who is "always true to herself". She won further fans touring Europe in George Benjamin's opera "Written on Skin" and brings a similar charge and virtuosity to the desperate woman, all tears and running mascara, on the end of a phone in Francis Poulenc's monologue "La voix humaine" ("The Human Voice") now playing at the Paris Opera until December 12.

'The body is an instrument'

"For me the body is an instrument, the entire body, everything, including the toes," Hannigan, now 44 said. "I have always been involved in training the body, because I want everything to respond at the same level as my voice. "To be honest I also know my system and I like to move. I never sit down. I'm constantly moving, and so as a singer and a performer I move constantly too to be static is not in my nature."

It is the contrast between her cool beauty and the passion and insight she brings to her roles that, critics say, sets Hannigan apart. Her character in "The Human Voice" is often played as a victim, but Hannigan sees her as the opposite. "She is absolutely desperate and possessed by her lover but she has also possessed him. We don't know who has done what, but I think that she has given him as much pain as he has given her. She's not a submissive type of woman. She is like a hero, she's that horrible heroine," she said, laughing.

Hannigan first got noticed in a 2002 tongue-

in-cheek "soap opera" called "Toothpaste" about a couple who spilt up because she leaves the lid off the "Phu-King" toothpaste. With such lines as, "I must suffer crusty toothpaste. You don't care!", it is a far cry from great lyric roles many young



Canadian soprano Barbara Hannigan performs as Agnes in the opera 'Written on skin' by British composer George Benjamin and directed by Britain's Katie Mitchell during the Aix-en-Provence Opera Festival in Aix-en-Provence, southern France. —AFP

opera singers dream of, but by that stage Hannigan had long realised she had a gift for making new or so-called difficult music accessible. "I was 17 years old when I sang my first world premiere. So it was normal for me to work with composers. I never was told, 'Don't do this, it's bad for you.' "So while I was singing Mozart and Bach I was also singing Ligeti and Boulez and Stockhausen. I realised I had a talent for this music and I love it," she said.

'Avoided the mirror'

She acknowledged that many singers found new music difficult. "Here, look at this Ligati score, which I will conduct in the spring. It is complex! "But Haydn did not write something to be simple and Ligeti did not write something to be complex, they wrote the imprint of their souls." For all her recent success, she is no stranger to self-doubt however. "Turning 40 was painful for me. I started to avoid myself in the mirror. I wanted to keep my age a secret," Hannigan, who lives in Amsterdam, wrote earlier this year. "In part, it had to do with my shelf life as a singer. Many of us feel we have a best-before date stamped on our foreheads. Once we pass 50, voices, especially the higher lighter ones, lose elasticity and beauty of tone. "But Lulu helped me grow older. I sang her at 41. She made me realize that I could never have been ready to sing her until exactly that age-my years of experience, the 10-20,000 hours of practice really paid off. "I had needed all that time." —AFP



A cosplayer dressed in costume attends the Anime Festival Asia 2015 in Singapore. Anime Festival Asia 2015 (AFASG15), the region's biggest premier festival for Japanese popular culture and anime runs from November 27 to 29. —AFP photos



Cosplay fans dressed in costume attend the Anime Festival Asia 2015 in Singapore.

Singapore Film Festival kicks off with red carpet pageant

Taiwanese actress and model Sonia Sui Tang, and Singapore actress Yeo Yann Yann, were among the special guests who graced the gala opening of the Singapore International Film

Festival, at Marina Bay Sands. Sui and Yeo, together with Taiwanese director Lee Chung, both appear in the SGIFF's special presentation of "The Laundryman." Lee's feature-length debut

which revolves around a hitman haunted by the ghosts of his victims.

Directing duo, Cheng Yu-Chieh and Lekal Sumi, walked the red carpet with the cast of the festival's opening film "Panay." The cast includes Ado Kalitaing Pacidal, Bokeh Kosang, and Kaco Lekal, aboriginal actors, Dongi Kacan and Rahic Gulas. Singer, Suming performed items from the film's soundtrack, including the one that won the best original song prize at last week's Golden Horse Awards, at the opening night after-party. Hiep Thi Le, Matthew Foo, Ernest Seah, and Maria J, four members of the cast of "Bugis Street," also stepped up for opening night. They will return to the SGIFF along with director Yonfan, on Saturday for a 20 years after screening.

"Southeast Asia is rich with an eclectic mix of film talents and auteurs, each with their own unique expressions and styles. With over 150 specially selected films and programs, SGIFF is a choice platform for the facilitating and expanding the conversation and interest on filmmaking, and it is always exciting to discover these independent voices and connect them with the wider international audience," said SGIFF Executive Director, Yuni Hadi. The festival runs from 26 Nov to 6 Dec 2015, at various venues, including Marina Bay Sands, the National Museum of Singapore, Shaw Theatres Lido, National Gallery Singapore, The Arts House, The Projector and The Substation.—Reuters



Fans dressed in costume attend the Anime Festival Asia 2015 in Singapore.



A cosplayer dressed in costume poses for a photograph at the Anime Festival Asia 2015 in Singapore yesterday.

GOOGLE GETS 348,085 'FORGET' REQUESTS IN EUROPE

SAN FRANCISCO: Since a top European court ruled people have a right to be forgotten online, Google has received 348,085 requests for tidbits to vanish from search results.

Silicon Valley-based Google, a subsidiary of newly-created parent company Alphabet, complied with less than half of the demands, basing decisions on criteria intended to balance privacy with the public's right to know. A report released on Wednesday by Google showed that the top country for requests was France, where the Internet giant is in a standoff with data protection officials.

A European Court of Justice ruling in May 2014 recognizing the "right to be forgotten" on the net opened the door for Google users to ask the search engine to remove results about them that are inaccurate or no longer relevant.

Google set up an online form that people in Europe can fill out to ask for information to be excluded from search results.

Similar processes have been put in place to ask to be forgotten by Microsoft's Bing search engine that also powers queries at Yahoo.

It is the Internet companies themselves who get to decide which requests to grant. Microsoft previously disclosed that in the first half of this year it got 3,546 requests that online information be forgotten by Bing, granting half of them. In the report released on Wednesday, Google said that right-to-be-forgotten requests have targeted slightly more than 1.23 million Internet pages (URLs), and that it agreed to remove 42 percent of them from online search results in Europe.

Some crimes vanish

France was the country with the top number of requests, accounting for 73,399 applications aimed at nearly a quarter of a million URLs, followed by Germany with 60,198 requests concerning 220,589 URLs. In both countries, about 48 percent of the unwanted links were eliminated from Google search results, according to the report.

Meanwhile, the report indicated that Google granted about 38 percent of the 43,101 requests submitted in the United Kingdom; 37 percent of the 33,106 requests in Spain, and just shy of 30 percent of the 26,186 requests made in fifth-placed Italy.

Google said it complied with nearly 46 percent of the 10,121 requests in Belgium, nearly 41 percent of the 9,687 requests in Sweden, and about 45 percent of the 8,339 requests in Switzerland.

A Google outline of scenarios leading to information being forgotten in searches included pages with content solely about someone's health, race, religion or sexual orientation. Common causes for "delisting" pages also included criminal convictions regarding children or stories focusing on criminal charges that were subsequently overturned by courts. Google said that it had endorsed requests from crime victims or their families to remove from search results news reports of rapes, murders or other assaults.

"We may decline to delist if we determined that the page contains information which is strongly in the public interest," Google said in an online post. "Determining whether content is in the public interest is complex and may mean considering many diverse factors."

The list of factors included whether content relates to the petitioner's professional life, a past crime, political office, position in public life, or whether the content itself is self-authored content, government documents, or journalistic in nature, according to Google.

Social network memories

Facebook was the top online spot where people wanted information forgotten from searches, with a total of 10,220 URLs removed, according to Google.

The second most common venue for removals was proflengine.com, with 7,986 links to the people-focused search engine removed from Google search results, the report indicated. The list of Top 10 sites for URLs to be forgotten included Google Groups, YouTube, Badoo, Annuaire, Twitter, and the Google+ social network. —AFP



HAVANA: A family gathers around a smartphone as they talk to family members outside Cuba, at a Wi-Fi public network in Havana on Wednesday. Cuban telecommunications company Etecsa has increased to fifty the public Wi-Fi hotspots available throughout the country from ten hotspots around five months ago. —AP

GROWTH BUT NOT EXPANSION IN US INTERNET GAMBLING MARKET

ATLANTIC CITY, NJ: Internet gambling is slowly growing - but not expanding - after 2-1/2 years of online betting in the United States.

Online gambling revenue is increasing in at least two of the three states that currently offer it - New Jersey and Delaware. The third, Nevada, doesn't report Internet revenue separately.

But a hoped-for wave of expansion has not happened as many states sit on the sidelines and assess the costs and benefits of the nascent industry. "Internet gambling revenue in Delaware, Nevada and New Jersey badly missed initial forecasts, which themselves were overly aggressive," said Chris Krafcik, research director for Gambling Compliance, which tracks gambling legislation nationwide.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's administration, for example, had initially estimated Internet gambling would bring in \$1 billion in its first year. It did about 12 percent of that.

"The negative PR that resulted, fair or not, really took the wind out of the expansionary sails," Krafcik said. San Francisco-based Gambling Compliance predicts either California or Pennsylvania will approve Internet gambling next year, followed by New York and Mississippi in subsequent years. In 2016, the group projects, nine states will consider legalizing it, though not necessarily act to approve it.

The industry still faces some nagging issues, as well as looming threats - including an effort in Congress to ban Internet gambling nationwide. The Restoration of America's Wire Act has been introduced in both chambers this

year, backed by billionaire casino mogul Sheldon Adelson, and could come up for a hearing next month.

New Jersey began offering Internet gambling on Nov. 25, 2013, and took in \$122 million in its first full year. Over the first 10 months of this year, the Atlantic City casinos have already equaled that total, with their Internet gambling revenue up 17.6 percent from the same period last year.

Delaware won \$1.4 million in fiscal year 2014; \$1.8 million in 2015, and \$500,000 so far this fiscal year, which runs from July through June.

Nevada stopped reporting Internet gambling revenue as a separate item at the end of 2014. Online poker, the only brand of online gambling Nevada offers, is just a drop in the bucket of the state's \$11 billion gambling market.

Online poker is the most popular form of Internet gambling, although the small number of states offering it has kept prize pools low. New Jersey has sought to partner with other states that might legalize it to offer larger, joint prize pools. PokerStars, the world's largest Internet poker site, will begin operating in New Jersey in the first half of 2016, and many industry executives expect it to grow the market, though how much remains to be seen. In March, Morgan Stanley cut its estimate of the potential US Internet gambling market by nearly half, pegging it at \$2.7 billion by 2020, down from an initial estimate of \$5 billion.

At first, one of the main impediments to people getting online to gamble was funding their accounts. Many credit cards wary of running afoul of a law banning banks from

funding illegal Internet bets were reluctant to process transactions, but that has changed. New Jersey says MasterCard is approving 70 percent of attempted Internet gambling transactions in the state, while Visa is at 62 percent. PayPal also recently agreed to participate.

From a legal and consumer protection standpoint, Internet gambling has proven to be reliable and transparent, said David Rebeck, New Jersey's top gambling regulator. Technology to ensure a player is actually within the state's borders have reduced false rejections - initially a problem - to a negligible issue. And it's keeping most outsiders from gambling illegally: only two people were found to have successfully placed bets from outside New Jersey since 2013, Rebeck said. Officials confiscated the money in their accounts, totaling about \$1,000.

In New Jersey, Internet gambling was seen as a lifeline to Atlantic City's struggling casinos. Less than a year after it began, four of its 12 casinos went out of business. But for those that remain, Internet gambling often makes the difference between an up or a down month.

"The market was smaller than a lot of people predicted, but the market is growing pretty nicely now," said Tom Ballance, president of the Borgata, Atlantic City's top casino and its leading online winner.

Internet gambling has generated \$6 million in earnings for the Borgata over the first three quarters of this year, Ballance said. "In Atlantic City, \$6 million in profit is not easy to come by," he said. "We'll take that anytime." —AP

WHAT'S NEXT IN ITS DECADE-LONG SOAP OPERA?

SAN FRANCISCO: Yahoo has starred in a decade-long soap opera during which it's run through five CEOs, fended off a hostile takeover bid from Microsoft and sparred (often unsuccessfully) with activist investors who muscled their way on to the Internet company's board.

Expect more drama next year. Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer wants to buy more time for the turnaround she promised after the Sunnyvale, California, company lured her away from Google three-and-half years ago. Here's what Yahoo's next chapter could look like based on what we know now:

THE CONQUERING HEROINE

This is, of course, the story line that Mayer, 40, has envisioned all along. She has pledged that Yahoo's revenue will eventually increase at the same clip as overall digital advertising revenue, something that the company hasn't come close to doing yet.

It still might happen if Mayer's big bets on mobile applications and online video pay off and Yahoo gets the all-clear from the feds to use Google's search technology to attract more traffic and sell more advertising. Mayer also has indicated that Yahoo is working on products that could draw people to use its services more frequently. Some unsubstantiated reports suggest that Yahoo plans to unveil a digital assistant to compete against Apple's Siri, Google Now and Microsoft's Cortana.

THE BIG PURGE

Many investors believe Yahoo remains bloated, giv-

en that its net revenue has fallen from \$5.4 billion in 2008 to a projected \$4 billion this year.

In an apparent attempt to placate Wall Street, Mayer plans to jettison an unspecified number of services that have either been losing money or are barely money. Depending on how deep she cuts, hundreds of Yahoo workers could lose their jobs. Yahoo ended September with 11,500 employees and contractors, down 32 percent from when Mayer was hired in July 2012.

TAXING SITUATION

Yahoo is planning to spin off its \$30 billion stake in Chinese e-commerce bazaar Alibaba Group into a separate company called Aabaco either next month or in January. The maneuver is designed to dodge a huge tax bill Yahoo would face if it sold the Alibaba stock itself, but it might not work. The IRS has refused to clear the plan in advance for a tax exemption.

Based on preliminary feedback from tax lawyers, Yahoo believes the spin-off will qualify for tax-free status. That opinion still doesn't guarantee that Yahoo won't be saddled with a tax bill of more than \$10 billion. The tax uncertainty hanging over the Alibaba spin-off is among the reasons that Yahoo's stock has fallen 35 percent so far this year.

SELL OR ELSE

Activist investor Starboard Value is so worried about the tax problem that it wants Mayer to scrap that idea and sell Yahoo's Internet business - that is,

everything that most people associate with the Yahoo brand - instead.

If Mayer doesn't back down, Starboard is threatening to gather enough shareholder votes to toss out Yahoo's board of directors, which includes Mayer. It probably couldn't stage that mutiny until the summer, if then.

Yahoo has faced two other shareholder rebellions since 2008, one by led by Carl Icahn and the other led by Daniel Loeb. Both Icahn and Loeb wound up with seats on the company's board. Neither investor remains a director now.

Under the Starboard plan, Yahoo might end up as nothing but a holding company that owns stakes in Alibaba and Yahoo Japan. Yahoo Mail, its websites and other services still used by hundreds of millions of people would belong to a new owner - assuming anyone wants them.

THROWING IN THE TOWEL

Some investors want Yahoo's board to replace Mayer. The directors have given no indication that they have lost faith in Mayer and she seems intent on finishing the job she started.

Mayer, 40, is about to take on another challenge at home; she is due to give birth to twin girls in December. If things continue to deteriorate at Yahoo and more shareholders clamor for a new CEO, it doesn't take much imagination to envision Mayer deciding to step down to spend more time with her children at some point next year. —AP

GERMAN COURT SAYS ISPs MAY HAVE TO BLOCK MUSIC-SHARING SITES

FRANKFURT: Germany's highest court said Internet service providers could be made responsible for blocking websites offering illegal music downloads, but only if copyright holders showed they had first made reasonable attempts to thwart such piracy by other means.

The federal Supreme Court dismissed two cases brought by music rights society GEMA against Deutsche Telekom and music companies Universal Music, Sony and Warner Music Group against Telefonica's O2 Deutschland.

It said on Thursday the plaintiffs did not make enough effort to halt the copyright violations in the first place but it said Internet service providers could in principle be held responsible for blocking music illegally available on the Internet, even if the content remained available elsewhere.

GEMA, which acts to protect the rights of the owners of musical works, had demanded that Deutsche Telekom, Germany's largest telecoms company, block the website "3dl.am" because it offered access to copyright-protected music.

In a separate case, the music companies wanted O2 Deutschland to block access to "goldesel.to," part of the eDonkey network, a peer-to-peer file-sharing network for music.

The court said in its ruling: "The company that offers Internet access will only be held responsible for blocking the site when the copyright holder has first made reasonable efforts to take action against those who have themselves infringed their rights, like the website operators, or those who have enabled the infringement, like the Web hosting providers."

The music industry says it loses billions of dollars every year from the illegal downloading of songs, depriving it of the revenue it needs to pay songwriters, artists and talent scouts.

Courts around the world are grappling with the question of who is responsible for copyright infringement through illegal downloads. Google's YouTube, for example, has been the subject of multiple court cases.

A German court ruled in July that YouTube was only responsible for blocking copyright-infringing videos when they had been brought to its attention, and could not be expected to scan everything on the site. —Reuters

YAHOO'S CEO IS RUNNING OUT OF TIME TO TURN THINGS AROUND MAYER'S TURNAROUND PLAN HITS ROADBLOCKS

SAN FRANCISCO: Marissa Mayer's nearly four-year attempt to turn around Yahoo needs a turnaround itself, repeating a pattern of futility that has hobbled one of the Internet's best-known companies for the past decade. Like her predecessors as Yahoo CEO, Mayer has been unable to snap the company out of a financial funk despite spending billions on acquisitions and new projects. Yahoo's stock has sunk by 35 percent so far this year as investors' frustration with the follies have mounted, spurring calls for her replacement.

"This is like an 'emperor has no clothes' situation," says Eric Jackson, a Yahoo shareholder and managing director of the New York hedge fund Ader Investment Management. "The company and the shareholders would be better served with her leaving." Jackson, though perhaps Mayer's most outspoken critic, isn't alone. After conferring with investors, SunTrust analyst Robert Peck recently wrote a letter to Yahoo's board recommending that the directors consider firing Mayer. Activist investor Jeffrey Smith of hedge fund Starboard Value is urging Mayer to abandon a spin-off of the Yahoo's most valuable asset a \$30 billion stake in Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group - and sell the company's Internet business instead. If Mayer continues down her current course, Smith is threatening to lead a shareholder mutiny aimed at overthrowing Yahoo's board next year - a rebellion that, if successful, could lead to her ouster. Yahoo's own employees seem dispirited as well. Mayer's approval rating among those who posted on the employer-review website Glassdoor.com has fallen to 73 percent from 99 percent after her July 2012 hiring.

At least a dozen members of Yahoo's management team have left in the past year. The departures have included two of Mayer's top lieutenants, former marketing and media chief

Kathy Savitt and former development and acquisitions chief Jacqueline Reses.

Confidence

Yahoo declined to comment for this article. Mayer has repeatedly expressed confidence that Yahoo is heading in the right direction, most recently during her October review of the company's disappointing quarterly performance. "I have very aggressive expectations for

since Mayer became CEO. It's likely to fare even worse in the October-December quarter, given that company expects net revenue to drop by about 20 percent.

Now Mayer is drawing up plans for another major shake-up, one likely to eliminate hundreds of jobs as Yahoo sharpens its focus on "fewer products with higher quality," as she said in October. Mayer promised more details in January.



Yahoo President and CEO Marissa Mayer speaks during the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Mayer's nearly four-year attempt to turn around Yahoo needs a turnaround itself, repeating a pattern of futility that has hobbled one of the Internet's best-known companies for the past decade. —AP

Yahoo's core business," she said. "We have the right talent, the right strategy, and the right assets to drive long-term sustainable growth for our investors."

Yahoo's revenue fell 8 percent from the previous year after subtracting the company's advertising commissions, its steepest decline

It wasn't supposed to get this bleak with Mayer at the helm. She came to Yahoo as a widely respected technology executive who had helped build Google into the Internet's most powerful company while repeatedly outmaneuvering Yahoo with products that attracted more traffic and advertising. —AP

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2015



00:50 Gator Boys
01:45 Call Of The Wildman
02:15 Call Of The Wildman
02:40 River Monsters
03:35 Tanked
04:25 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster
05:15 Gator Boys
06:02 Treehouse Masters
06:49 Roaring With Pride
07:36 Call Of The Wildman
08:00 Call Of The Wildman
08:25 Tanked
09:15 Tanked
10:10 Tanked
11:05 Tanked
12:00 Tanked
12:55 Snake Sheila
13:20 Snake Sheila
13:50 Gangland Killers
14:45 Sharnwari: A Wild Life
15:10 Sharnwari: A Wild Life
15:40 Night
16:05 Night
16:35 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
17:30 Roaring With Pride
18:25 Gangland Killers
19:20 Sharnwari: A Wild Life
19:45 Sharnwari: A Wild Life
20:15 Night
20:40 Night
21:10 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
22:05 Roaring With Pride
23:00 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
23:55 Snake Sheila



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



00:40 Strangest Weather On Earth
01:05 Strangest Weather On Earth
01:30 Weird Connections
01:55 Weird Connections
02:20 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
03:10 Cosmic Collisions
04:00 Mythbusters
04:48 NASA's Unexplained Files
05:36 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
06:24 Cosmic Collisions
07:12 Weird Connections
07:36 Weird Connections
08:00 How It's Made
08:25 How It's Made
08:50 How It's Made
09:15 How It's Made
09:40 How It's Made
10:05 How It's Made

10:30 How It's Made
10:55 How It's Made
11:20 How It's Made
11:45 How It's Made
12:10 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
12:35 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
13:00 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
13:50 Primal Connections
14:40 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
15:30 Home Factory
15:55 Home Factory
16:20 Strangest Weather On Earth
16:45 Strangest Weather On Earth
17:10 Strangest Weather On Earth
17:35 Strangest Weather On Earth
18:00 Strangest Weather On Earth
18:25 Strangest Weather On Earth
20:30 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
20:55 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
21:20 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
22:10 Primal Connections
23:00 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
23:50 Home Factory



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

09:20 Wizards Of Waverly Place
09:45 I Love Violetta
10:00 Best Friends Whenever
10:25 The Incredibles
12:20 Jessie
12:45 Girl Meets World
13:10 Mako Mermaids
13:35 Dog With A Blog
14:00 Gravity Falls
14:30 I Love Violetta
14:40 Violetta Recipes
14:55 Lolirock
15:20 Austin & Ally
15:45 Girl Meets World
16:10 Best Friends Whenever
16:35 Austin & Ally
17:00 Gravity Falls
17:25 Girl Meets World
17:50 I Love Violetta
18:00 Mickey, Donald, Goofy In The Three Musketeers
19:05 I Didn't Do It
19:30 Liv And Maddie
19:55 Dog With A Blog
20:20 Jessie
20:45 Good Luck Charlie
21:10 Good Luck Charlie
21:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
22:00 Binny And The Ghost
22:25 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
22:50 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:10 Wolfblood
23:35 Wolfblood



00:00 House Of DVF
00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
01:25 Hollywood Cycle
02:20 E! News
03:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
04:10 E! Entertainment Special
05:05 The E! True Hollywood Story
06:00 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
06:55 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
07:50 Style Star
08:20 E! News
09:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
10:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
11:10 New Money
11:35 Fashion Police: The 2015 American Music...
12:05 E! News
13:05 Live From The Red Carpet: The 2015...
15:00 Hollywood Cycle

16:00 WAGs
17:00 WAGs
18:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
19:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
20:00 Dash Dolls
21:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
22:00 E! Entertainment Special
23:00 The Soup
23:30 Fashion Police: The 2015 American Music...



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



01:05 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
02:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs

Dogs
02:25 Emmerdale
02:55 Emmerdale
03:20 Emmerdale
03:45 Emmerdale
04:10 Emmerdale
04:30 Emmerdale
04:55 Emmerdale
05:15 Coronation Street
05:40 Coronation Street
06:05 Coronation Street
06:30 Coronation Street
07:00 Coronation Street
07:30 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
08:25 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
09:50 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
10:40 Eggheads
11:15 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
12:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
13:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
14:05 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
15:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
15:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
16:50 Seven Days With Aïj
17:45 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
18:30 Eggheads
19:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
19:55 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
20:50 Seven Days With Aïj
21:45 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
22:35 Eggheads
23:00 Coronation Street
23:25 Coronation Street



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



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



00:00 Turkey Shoot
02:00 REC 4: Apocalypse
04:00 Absolute Killers
06:00 Days Of Thunder
08:00 Born To Race: Fast Track
10:00 Destruction: Las Vegas
12:00 Man Of Tai Chi
14:00 Mercenaries
16:00 Days Of Thunder
18:00 Son Of Batman
20:00 The Courier
22:00 RoboCop



00:00 REC 4: Apocalypse-PG15
02:00 Absolute Killers-PG15
04:00 Days Of Thunder-PG15
06:00 Born To Race: Fast Track-PG15
08:00 Destruction: Las Vegas-PG15
10:00 Man Of Tai Chi-PG15
12:00 Mercenaries-PG15
14:00 Days Of Thunder-PG15
16:00 Son Of Batman-PG15
18:00 The Courier-PG15
20:00 RoboCop-PG15
22:00 Colors-PG15



00:00 The Right Kind Of Wrong
02:00 Napoleon Dynamite
04:00 The Nutty Professor (1996)
05:45 Renaissance Man
08:00 The Love Punch
10:00 The Nutty Professor (1996)
12:00 Napoleon Dynamite



DELIVERY MAN ON OSN MOVIES PREMIERE HD

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2015

- 14:00 Roommates
- 16:00 The Love Punch
- 18:00 You Again
- 20:00 Walk Of Shame
- 22:00 Life Of Crime

OSN MOVIES
DRAMA

- 01:15 Belle-PG15
- 05:00 Atlas Shrugged Part 2: The Strike-PG15
- 07:00 Song For Marion-PG15
- 09:00 Romeo & Juliet-PG15
- 11:00 Atlas Shrugged Part 2: The Strike-PG15
- 13:00 Step Up Revolution-PG15
- 14:45 Miss Julie-PG15
- 17:00 Romeo & Juliet-PG15
- 19:00 What Maisie Knew-PG15
- 21:00 Reclaim-PG15
- 23:00 Her-18

OSN MOVIES HD
FESTIVAL

- 01:00 Phantom
- 02:45 Men Of Honor
- 05:00 Evita
- 07:15 Heaven's Door
- 09:00 The Alamo
- 11:15 Evita
- 13:30 Grace Of Monaco
- 15:15 Awakenings
- 17:15 The Alamo
- 19:30 The Invisible Woman
- 21:30 How I Live Now
- 23:15 I Origins

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:00 Snowpiercer-PG15
- 03:00 Get On Up-PG15
- 05:15 Chef-PG15
- 07:15 The Giver-PG15
- 09:00 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I-PG15
- 11:15 Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes-PG15
- 13:30 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies-PG
- 16:00 The Giver-PG15
- 18:00 Boyhood-PG15
- 21:00 The Imitation Game-PG15
- 23:00 The Skeleton Twins-18

OSN MOVIES HD
KIDS

- 01:30 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 03:00 Hiroku: Defenders Of Gaia
- 04:30 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
- 06:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 08:00 Goat Story 2
- 09:30 The Dragon Pearl
- 11:15 Minuscule: Valley Of The Lost Ants
- 13:00 Hiroku: Defenders Of Gaia
- 14:30 The Elf Who Stole Christmas
- 16:00 The Nut Job
- 18:00 The Dragon Pearl
- 20:00 Hammer Boy
- 22:00 The Elf Who Stole Christmas
- 23:30 Marvel's The Invincible Iron Man

OSN MOVIES HD
PREMIERE

- 00:00 The Purge: Anarchy-PG15
- 02:00 HairBrained-PG15
- 04:00 Hellboy: Blood & Iron-PG
- 06:00 Bears-PG
- 08:00 Ender's Game-PG15
- 10:00 Tinker Bell And The Pirate Fairy-FAM
- 11:45 Need For Speed-PG15
- 14:00 Bully-PG15
- 16:00 Ender's Game-PG15
- 18:00 Non-Stop-PG15
- 20:00 Delivery Man-PG15
- 22:00 Without Men-18



- 03:14 Grojband
- 03:35 Johnny Test
- 05:05 Total Drama World Tour
- 05:27 Total Drama World Tour
- 05:50 Regular Show



MAN OF TAI CHI ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

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

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



- 03:05 Calimero
- 03:20 Zou
- 03:30 Loopdidoo
- 03:45 Art Attack
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:20 Calimero
- 04:35 Zou
- 04:45 Loopdidoo
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:35 Calimero
- 05:50 Zou
- 06:00 Loopdidoo
- 06:15 Art Attack
- 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:50 Calimero
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:20 Loopdidoo
- 07:35 Art Attack

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



- 07:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 07:25 Supa Strikas
- 07:50 Supa Strikas
- 08:15 K.C Undercover
- 08:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island

- 09:10 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 09:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 10:00 Annedroids
- 10:30 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors
- 10:55 Mighty Med
- 11:20 K.C Undercover
- 11:45 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 12:10 Kirby Buckets
- 12:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 13:00 Phineas And Ferb
- 13:45 Phineas And Ferb
- 14:30 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 14:50 Supa Strikas
- 15:15 Supa Strikas
- 15:40 Supa Strikas
- 16:10 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors
- 16:35 Star Wars Rebels
- 17:00 Mighty Med
- 17:25 Phineas And Ferb
- 18:10 Phineas And Ferb
- 18:55 Boyster
- 19:10 Annedroids
- 19:40 Mighty Med
- 20:05 K.C Undercover
- 20:30 Supa Strikas
- 20:55 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 21:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 21:50 Star Wars Rebels
- 22:15 Mighty Med
- 22:40 Phineas And Ferb
- 23:30 Phineas And Ferb
- 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA



- 03:45 Wild Vietnam
- 04:40 World's Weirdest Brains And Babies
- 05:35 Shane Untamed
- 06:30 Monster Fish
- 07:25 Megafish
- 08:20 Yukon Vet
- 09:15 Live Like An Animal
- 10:10 Philly Undercover
- 11:05 The Incredible Dr. Pol
- 12:00 Shark Men
- 12:55 The Monster Project
- 13:50 Tiger Queen
- 14:45 Wild Thailand
- 15:40 Expedition Wild
- 16:35 Wild Mississippi
- 17:30 World's Deadliest Animal Apocalypse

- 18:25 Outback Wrangler
- 19:20 Wild Thailand
- 20:10 Expedition Wild
- 21:00 Wild Mississippi
- 21:50 World's Deadliest Animal Apocalypse
- 22:40 Outback Wrangler
- 23:30 Shark Men
- 00:20 The Monster Project
- 01:10 Tiger Queen
- 02:00 Monster Fish
- 02:50 Built For The Kill



- 03:15 Boy With A Tail: Body Bizarre
- 04:05 Ultimate Shopper
- 05:00 Ultimate Shopper
- 06:00 Say Yes To The Dress
- 06:25 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 07:15 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 08:05 The Face UK
- 08:55 The Face UK
- 09:45 Cake Boss
- 10:10 Cake Boss
- 10:35 Nida'a
- 11:25 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 11:50 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 12:15 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 12:40 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 13:05 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 13:30 Say Yes To The Dress: Randy Knows Best
- 13:55 Say Yes To The Dress: Randy Knows Best
- 14:20 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 15:10 Cake Boss
- 15:35 Cake Boss
- 16:00 Cake Boss
- 16:25 Cake Boss
- 16:50 Cake Boss
- 17:15 Perfect Look
- 18:05 Oprah's Master Class
- 18:55 Say Yes To The Dress
- 19:20 Say Yes To The Dress
- 19:45 Say Yes To The Dress
- 20:10 Say Yes To The Dress
- 20:35 Say Yes To The Dress
- 21:00 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 21:50 Nida'a
- 22:40 Psychic Matchmaker
- 23:05 90 Days To Wed
- 23:55 90 Days To Wed
- 00:45 My 600lb Life
- 01:35 The Day I Almost Died
- 02:25 Psychic Matchmaker



KUWAITI MUAY THAI PLAYERS BAG 14 MEDALS IN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

The Kuwait Olympic Committee Institute (Lion Team Academy) recently won 14 medals in the World Muay Thai Championship. The 14 medals included two golden medals won by Ismael Radhwan and Omar Abdul Aziz, four silver medals won by Shaheen Hosam, Aya Mohammed and Adel Ameen and eight bronze medals won by Abdullah Trad, Aya Mohammed, Adel Ameen, Zumanah Sherazi, Omar Abdul Aziz, Sai Samer and Yehya Al-Dossary.



YOUTH CHORUS: 10TH CHRISTIAN MALAYALAM GROUP SONG COMPETITION

Youth Chorus organized the Tenth Christian Malayalam Group Song Competition recently, in the United Indian School Auditorium, Abbasiya. Ten teams of different churches and congregations participated in the program. The program was inaugurated by Youth Chorus Patron Thomas Chandy MLA.

Bethani Prayer Group, Divine Voice of Kuwait, Sharon Fellowship Church (Northern Region), St Basil Indian Orthodox Church, St Stephen's Indian Orthodox Church, Carmel School, Kuwait, St Mary's Jacobite Church, St Gregorios Indian Orthodox Maha Edavaka, KMRM- Yuvajyothi, Church Of God(Full Gospel) are the teams participated. All the teams were awarded with Youth Chorus mementos after the program. Pazhayidathu Aleyamma John Memorial, Omana Jose Memorial and Youth Chorus Ever Rolling trophies and certificates will be awarded to the first, second and third prize winners respectively during the Christmas program of Youth Chorus which will be held on Thursday, 17th December 2015 at 6:00 pm in the United Indian School Auditorium., KMRM- Yuvajyothi, Divine Voice of Kuwait, and St Basil Indian Orthodox Church won the first, second and third prize respectively.

The program was presided over by Youth Chorus President John Abraham. M K Pothen, a well-wisher of Youth Chorus who is going for good to Kerala was honored in the meeting. Adv P John Thomas welcomed the gathering. Shibu P Thomas felicitated the program and Philip George expressed the vote of thanks. The program was well compared by Bavitha Bright and Jojy Jacob.





The German embassy in Kuwait organized a bazar yesterday to sell Christmas-related memorabilia. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

41ST ANNUAL SPORTS DAY, MILESTONE EVENT FOR ICSK



The Indian Community School, Kuwait (ICSK) conducted its 41st Annual Sports Day on 13th November, 2015 at Kheifan Stadium marking a milestone in the school, Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain was the chief guest and Said Mubarak Al-Muthairy, Retired Brigadier General, was the guest of honor for the august function. The most awaited event of the day was a spellbinding fusion of dance drill with yoga and aerobics put up by 6,000 students from all four ICSK schools, highlighting the theme 'We are one and unique.'



OBAMA EYES CHANCE TO MAKE MARK AT LAST ON CLIMATE CHANGE

WASHINGTON: Six years after a fiasco in Copenhagen and a year before he leaves office, a Paris summit offers Barack Obama the chance to make his mark in the fight against climate change.

In December 2009, Obama left the Danish capital after signing on to a hastily issued statement by leaders hoping to save face. His hair now greying, Obama will arrive on Monday in the French capital against a very different backdrop.

A deal to slow global warming seems to be within reach, even if it is less ambitious and less far reaching than first hoped.

After the terror attacks in Paris, Obama was among the first to say he would stick to his plans to attend climate talks on November 30. Some 150 other leaders are also expected to be there. Only a few of them, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel were around to remember what Obama has called the "disorganized mess" of Copenhagen. This time, the ground has been well prepared in advance. A year ago, Obama inked a deal with the planet's other major polluter, China.

For the first time, Beijing made a firm promise that greenhouse gases would

peak by 2030, sending a signal to the rest of the world. Tellingly, Obama's first meeting when he lands in Paris on Monday will be with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The negotiations in Paris will also be different, each country is setting its own targets rather than having binding targets imposed upon them.

That also means the agreement will not be a formal treaty, which would need ratification from a skeptical US Congress. Memories are still fresh of the US legislative branch torpedoing the Kyoto climate deal. Still, Republicans and environmentalists are

also laying the ground work for the political fight ahead. "Paris is a legacy moment for President Obama, a capstone for all he has done domestically to move the United States into a more sensible and inspiring place on climate change," said Jennifer Morgan of the World Resources Institute. "We are in a much different position on climate than we were six years ago, with renewable energy now providing a low carbon energy option for those without electricity around the world, and people feeling the impacts of climate change in their daily lives". —AFP

GOVERNMENTS TAKE ROSE-TINTED VIEW OF CLIMATE PROJECTIONS

OSLO: Before a summit on climate change in Paris next week, many governments are citing scientific studies indicating that their plans to curb greenhouse gas emissions until 2030 will come within 0.7 degrees Celsius of an agreed 2C (3.6 Fahrenheit) target for limiting global warming this century.

Yet the studies they choose to quote are only the most optimistic of a range of projections, and presume that governments will go on to make even deeper emission cuts after 2030, which is far from certain.

With no action, a UN scientific panel estimates that the global average surface temperature in 2100 will be around 4.8C (8.6F) above pre-industrial times, dramatically increasing the frequency of extreme weather events and raising the sea level. To avoid the worst of these effects, a ceiling of 2C has been agreed, and about 170 governments have submitted national plans before the Nov. 30-Dec. 11 summit to curb emissions from 2020-30.

Keen to show their policies will work, many cite two estimates that the pledges so far could limit the rise to 2.7C (4.9F). US Climate Envoy Todd Stern mentioned 2.7C in testimony to a Senate sub-committee last month, saying national policies marked "a powerful move in the right direction".

Christiana Figueres, the head of the UN Climate Secretariat, summed up the national plans in a report last month by saying they "have the capability of limiting the forecast temperature rise to around 2.7 degrees Celsius by 2100".

Yet Bill Hare, one of the scientists behind Climate Action Tracker (CAT), a group of four European institutes that first estimated 2.7C, said promises for action until 2030 "mark progress, but current policies are far from enough".

He said the CAT estimate required all countries to continue deeper curbs on emissions right up to 2100 - far stricter than the assumptions by most other research institutes.

The International Energy Agency also estimates an increase of 2.7C. But projections by at least 10 research groups range up to a rise of 3.7C (6.7F).

Thomas Spencer, of the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations in France, noted that there were huge uncertainties in all projections beyond 2030: "It's like trying to predict the winner of a marathon after only the first 10 km."

Bjorn Lomborg, head of the Copenhagen Consensus Center who won fame with his 2001 book "The Skeptical Environmentalist", reckons current national plans will only make a fraction of a degree of difference to warming this century.

"It's like saying Greece is on track to solve its debt crisis after paying a first instalment of a loan," he said.

This year is on track to be the warmest on record, already about 1.0C (1.8F) above pre-industrial times. Andrew Jones of US-based experts Climate Interactive, which estimated with MIT Sloan that the existing pledges put the globe on track for 3.5C (6.3C) of warming by 2100, said 94 percent of the difference with CAT hinged on less optimistic projections about what happens after 2030.

Climate Interactive reckons, for instance, that overall greenhouse gas emissions from China, the world's biggest emitter, will rise after 2030, while CAT says they will fall. —Reuters



MELBOURNE: A group of Pacific Islanders attend a rally calling for action on climate change in Melbourne yesterday. From school children to the elderly, thousands rallied in the Australian city of Melbourne yesterday to demand action on climate change ahead of crunch talks in Paris designed to stop Earth from overheating. —AFP

AUSTRALIA KICKS OFF CLIMATE RALLIES AHEAD OF GLOBAL TALKS

MELBOURNE: Tens of thousands of people from all walks of life rallied in the Australian city of Melbourne to demand action on climate change Friday, the first in a series of global events ahead of crunch talks in Paris. Organizers said they were overwhelmed by the turnout for the gathering, one of some 2,000 events in cities around the world this weekend to pressure leaders to curb carbon pollution and stop the Earth from overheating.

"We have people from all sorts of different backgrounds who've come together for this moment," said Victoria McKenzie-McHarg from the Australian Conservation Foundation.

"Because our future depends on cutting pollution and creating a clean and just future for all," she said as the crowd swelled to an estimated 40,000 according to a police count carried by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Citizens' marches had originally been scheduled for Paris, which is hosting world leaders for the United Nations climate talks from Monday, but they were cancelled after France's worst terror attacks left 130 dead in the city.

France will deploy nearly 11,000 police for the climate summit, which aims to seal a deal to keep global warming from rising two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-19th century levels.

Led by indigenous people, the march in central Melbourne took in schoolchildren, farmers, religious groups and politicians, and even a group calling themselves "climate angels" wearing white gowns and feathered wings. One young boy carried a sign which read "Stop messing with my future" while an older man held one saying "Grumpy old man says cut CO2 emissions". Others brandished signs with slogans such as "Climate Change is not Cool" and "There is no planet B" as the crowds closed roads during evening peak hour.

'Moment in history'

"We have school groups here today marching as part of their school in uniform, it's a phenomenal gathering of people from all walks of life," said McKenzie-McHarg.

"People have travelled for four hours

to get here today to be part of this march and this moment in history." Marches will take place elsewhere in Australia on the weekend, calling for an end to the use of fossil fuels and a shift to renewable energy, before rolling out to other Asian cities and those in Europe, Africa and the Americas. The main event was to have taken place in central Paris Sunday near the scene of several of the November 13 shootings.

Undeterred, activists now plan to create a two-kilometre (1.2-mile) human chain along the march route on Sunday.

They will break the chain as they pass the Bataclan concert hall, where the worst violence claimed 90 lives, in a homage to the victims.

"This was the first of the major global marches happening right around the world this week," said McKenzie-McHarg of the Melbourne event.

"And absolutely our thoughts are with those in Paris who wanted to walk. We know that our hearts are united. And the voices of the people here today will be resonating all the way to those cobblestones streets of Paris." —AFP

AS WEATHER SHIFTS, STRAWBERRIES LEAVE SOUR TASTE IN NORTHEAST INDIA

SOHLIYA, India: Strawberries are a treat for many, but they are increasingly leaving a sour taste in the mouths of growers in Meghalaya, in India's northeast. The state, with just under 3 million people, is the third largest producer of strawberries in India, its government says. On average, about 500 metric tons of the fragile fruit is grown each year on 1,500 hectares (3,700 acres) of land.

The berries were introduced in the late 1990s by a few farmers and enthusiastically adopted by others, who saw their farm profits soar, growers say. One described growing the high-value crop as like winning the lottery. But today the fruits of that windfall - new homes, televisions and big bank savings balances - are under threat, like the crop itself, as weather conditions shift.

Increasingly erratic rainfall has led to the spread of fungal diseases in the berries, and much hotter temperatures have cut into production over the last three years, farmers say.

The changes, linked to climate shifts, have led farmers to consider giving up their once-favourite crop, or trying to move to locations more favourable for growing the fruit. "In the last few years, the temperature has crossed 30 degrees Celsius, and this is creating a lot of problems for the strawberry growers here," said Ostander Lyngkholi, a pioneering strawberry farmer and the head of Sohliya village, one of the hubs of strawberry cultivation. His four-acre patch had previously earned him enough money to build a house for his family, buy a vehicle

and save the equivalent of more than \$3,000, he said.

LOST INVESTMENT?

The weather changes also threaten years of efforts to build a thriving straw-

berry production and marketing system in the region, with the help of the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE).

Until the weather changed, "it worked really well. The strawberries were sent to different parts of the country and

were even exported to Bangladesh," said Hemanta Rabha, an IIE official. The IIE and growers also financed the building of a high-tech nursery for strawberry seedlings in 2012, at a cost of around 1.5 million Indian rupees (\$23,000).

With shifting weather patterns, including early heavy rains and some hail, the established system of planting in September and harvesting around April is leading to growing crop damage, Rabha said. "The weather has become erratic and in the last few years we have almost continuously had pre-monsoon showers," said Samgar Sangma, of the Meghalaya-based Centre for Environment Protection and Rural Development.

Strawberry production has fallen sharply over the past three years. Last year Meghalaya produced under 200 tonnes, less than half the annual average for the state, officials said. After suffering three years of losses, "I am worried about the future," admitted Lyngkholi.

INSURANCE, MIGRATION COULD HELP

Growers do not have access to crop insurance, according to Sangma, and so do not receive any compensation for the damages. The state government says it plans to introduce policies against crop failures soon. Rabha said some farmers have already started to move their crops to cooler areas. But "migrating to a new place will be very expensive," warned Aslia Marak, one grower from Darechikgre village, in the West Garo Hills district.

The harsher weather also has hit production of strawberry plants at the Sohliya nursery, forcing many growers to import plants from California. However, a large number of those have been damaged by heat, farmers said. —Reuters



A Swedish tourist surfing in Unstad beach, in the Lofoten Islands within the Arctic Circle. Surfing in the Lofoten Islands has started early in the 60s, and is possible all year long in the Atlantic waters close to 5°C at Winter time and 11°C at summer time. They go to paddle between glistening icebergs or ski on blinding white ice, but a rising number of polar tourists get to see something else, too: the monumental changes wrought by global warming. — AFP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem **د. فهد علي المخيزيم**

Consultant Pediatrician **إستشاري أطفال**
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (26/11/2015 TO 02/12/2015)

SHARQIA-1 MISS YOU ALREADY 11:30 AM MISS YOU ALREADY 1:30 PM MISS YOU ALREADY 3:30 PM CREED 5:30 PM MISS YOU ALREADY 8:15 PM MISS YOU ALREADY 10:30 PM THE FORGOTTEN 12:45 AM	FANAR-5 BRIDGE OF SPIES 12:00 PM BRIDGE OF SPIES 3:00 PM BRIDGE OF SPIES 6:00 PM BRIDGE OF SPIES 9:00 PM BRIDGE OF SPIES 12:05 AM	AL-KOUT.1 MISS YOU ALREADY 11:30 AM CREED 1:30 PM CREED 4:15 PM CREED 7:00 PM CREED 9:45 PM CREED 12:30 AM
SHARQIA-2 THE FORGOTTEN 11:30 AM CREED 1:30 PM CREED 4:15 PM THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 7:00 PM CREED 9:45 PM CREED 12:30 AM	MARINA-1 MISS YOU ALREADY 12:30 PM MISS YOU ALREADY 2:45 PM THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 5:00 PM MISS YOU ALREADY 7:45 PM MISS YOU ALREADY 10:00 PM THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 12:05 AM	AL-KOUT.2 TALES OF HALLOWEEN 12:00 PM BLINKY BILL THE MOVIE 2:00 PM BLINKY BILL THE MOVIE 4:00 PM THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY-PART 2 6:00 PM TALES OF HALLOWEEN 8:45 PM TALES OF HALLOWEEN 10:45 PM TALES OF HALLOWEEN 12:45 AM
SHARQIA-3 BLINKY BILL THE MOVIE THU+SAT 11:45 AM CREED 11:30 AM NO THU+FRI+SAT BRIDGE OF SPIES 2:00 PM BLINKY BILL THE MOVIE 4:45 PM TAMASHA-Hindi 6:45 PM BRIDGE OF SPIES 9:30 PM BRIDGE OF SPIES 12:15 AM	MARINA-2 CREED 1:00 PM PINOCCHIO 1:45 PM CREED 3:45 PM CREED 6:30 PM SPECTRE 9:15 PM CREED 12:15 AM	AL-KOUT.3 BRIDGE OF SPIES 12:00 PM BRIDGE OF SPIES 3:00 PM BRIDGE OF SPIES 6:00 PM BRIDGE OF SPIES 9:00 PM BRIDGE OF SPIES 12:05 AM
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	360°-3 TAMASHA-Hindi 11:45 AM TAMASHA-Hindi 2:45 PM TAMASHA-Hindi 5:45 PM TAMASHA-Hindi 8:45 PM TAMASHA-Hindi 11:45 PM	AJIAL.2 AMAR AKBAR ANTHONY-Malayalam 4:00 PM SIZE ZERO-Telugu 4:00 PM AMAR AKBAR ANTHONY-Malayalam 7:00 PM SIZE ZERO-Telugu 7:00 PM AMAR AKBAR ANTHONY-Malayalam 9:45 PM SIZE ZERO-Telugu 9:45 PM
		AJIAL.3 TAMASHA-Hindi 4:00 PM TAMASHA-Hindi 6:45 PM
		AJIAL.4 INJIIDUPPAZHAGI-Tamil 4:15 PM INJIIDUPPAZHAGI-Tamil 6:45 PM INJIIDUPPAZHAGI-Tamil 9:15 PM

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CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my name from Hasina, holding Indian passport No. Z1810768 to Hasina Nabi in future be called & known by new name. 42, Durat Villa, Shiv Badi, Kharol Colony, Udaipur, Raj. (C 5086)
26-11-2015

I, **Fahad Habib Dadapeer** holder of Indian Passport No. G8813498 hereby change my name to Fahad Habib, Gadde Street, Rajampet, A.P. (C 5084)
24-11-2015

Farida D/o Ismail, holder of Indian Passport No. J1328035

Prayer timings

Fajr: 04:58
Shorook 06:22
Duhr: 11:36
Asr: 14:30
Maghrib: 16:49
Isha: 18:11

hereby change my name to **Farida Pakawala**, 16-Rituvan Collectorate, Paricer Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh. (C 5082)
22-11-2015

MATRIMONIAL

Jacobite parents invite proposals for their son, post graduate Engineer, working in Kuwait, 28/172. Contact: pdakn2015@gmail.com (C 5085)
25-11-2015

Christian Orthodox Parents of specialist Doctor (innocent divorcee) invite proposals for their son 35/180 cms, working in London Hospital (UK). Contact: drproposal2015@gmail.com (C 5081)





DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers use seats

Arrival Flights on Saturday 28/11/2015				Departure Flights on Saturday 28/11/2015			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05	UAL	982	IAD	18:15
KLM	413	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	IRM	1180	Mashhad	18:45
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	ABY	123	Sharjah	18:45
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55	QTR	1080	Doha	18:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	IRA	669	Mashhad	18:55
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05	KAC	742	Dammam	19:05
MSR	614	Cairo	01:20	KAC	614	Bahrain	19:10
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	IRM	1188	Mashhad	19:15
DLH	635	Doha	01:35	KAC	774	Riyadh	19:25
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	618	Doha	19:35
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	CLX	856	Luxembourg	19:35
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	104	London	19:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05	KAC	176	Geneva/Frankfurt	19:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15	KNE	480	Taif	20:10
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20	JZR	189	Dubai	20:15
THY	1464	Istanbul	03:25	FDB	061	Dubai	20:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
JZR	503	Luxor	04:25	KAC	786	Jeddah	20:30
AGY	680	Alexandria	04:30	ABY	121	Sharjah	20:35
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40	FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
THY	764	Istanbul	05:55	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:55
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
BAW	157	London	06:40	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
KAC	416	Jakarta/Kuala Lumpur	07:15	UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40	KAC	676	Dubai	21:45
KAC	204	Lahore	07:40	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45	KLM	415	Amsterdam	22:05
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50	KNE	470	Jeddah	22:15
KAC	382	Delhi	08:00	KAC	564	Amman	22:25
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20	AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:25
KAC	344	Chennai	08:30	FDB	059	Dubai	22:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	UAL	981	Bahrain	23:25
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:10	JAD	301	Amman	23:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45
JZR	327	Al Najaf	09:20	JZR	125	Bahrain	23:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	MSC	403	Asyut	23:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:55
OMA	641	Muscat	10:05				
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40				
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05				
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15				
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30				
AGY	684	Sohag	11:35				
IAW	157	Al Najaf	11:50				
NIA	151	Cairo	11:55				
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25				
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30				
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50				
JZR	241	Amman	12:50				
OMA	645	Muscat	13:00				
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00				
IRC	6511	ABD	13:05				
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:35				
SVA	2660	Jeddah	13:45				
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50				
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	13:55				
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00				
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10				
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10				
KNE	472	Jeddah	14:35				
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50				
KAC	512	Mashhad	14:50				
KNE	462	Madinah	14:55				
IZG	4167	Mashhad	14:55				
GFA	221	Bahrain	15:00				
IRM	1186	Tehran	15:00				
NIA	251	Alexandria	15:30				
KAC	562	Amman	15:40				
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:45				
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45				
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10				
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10				
JZR	357	Mashhad	16:30				
FDB	051	Dubai	16:30				
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	16:40				
KAC	542	Cairo	16:55				
RJA	640	Amman	16:55				
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15				
KNE	474	Jeddah	17:25				
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30				
JZR	325	Al Najaf	17:50				
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:55				
KAC	118	New York	17:55				
SVA	500	Jeddah	18:00				
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00				
KAC	502	Beirut	18:00				
FDB	063	Dubai	18:05				

Word Search Puzzles

TEXAS WORD SEARCH PUZZLE



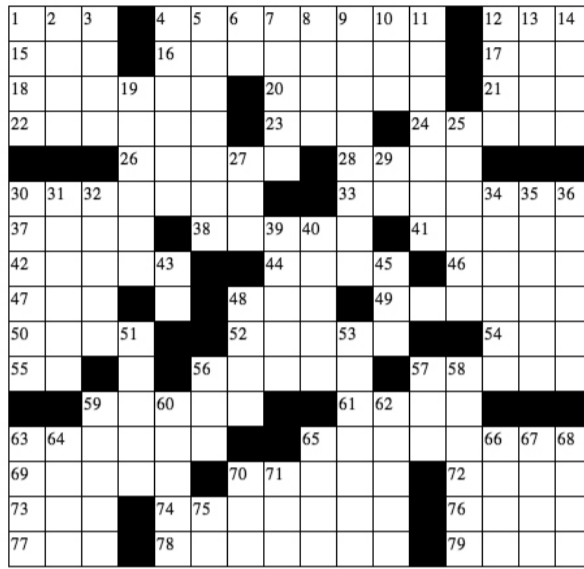
- AMARILLO COWBOYS JUNETEENTH PANHANDLE
- ARMADILLO FORT WORTH LONE STAR STATE RANGERS
- BLUEBONNET GALVESTON LONGHORNS RIO GRANDE
- CATTLE GULF COAST LUBBOCK SAN ANTONIO
- CORPUS CHRISTI HOUSTON OIL WELLS THE ALAMO

Yesterday's Solution

SOLUTION TO FAMOUS PAINTERS PUZZLE



CROSSWORD 1093



ACROSS

- (usually followed by 'to') Naturally disposed toward.
- An atoll in the Marshall islands.
- A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.
- Of or relating to a member of the Buddhist people inhabiting the Mekong river in Laos and Thailand.
- A chief of a North American tribe or confederation (especially an Algonquian chief).
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- Of people.
- A river of central Italy.
- The airforce of Great Britain.
- (Hinduism) An ascetic holy man.
- Electronic equipment that provides visual images of varying electrical quantities.
- The ending of a series or sequence.
- Low-lying wet land with grassy vegetation.
- Cement consisting of a sticky substance that is used as an adhesive.
- Lyrebirds and scrubbirds.
- Wild llama.
- (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
- The sacred city of Lamaism.
- Any of several plants of the genus Camassia.
- Everyone except the clergy.
- A special way of doing something.
- A young male horse under the age of four.
- A poliovirus vaccine consisting of inactivated polio virus that is injected subcutaneously to provide immunity to poliomyelitis.
- Causing a sensation as of things crawling on your skin.
- The dialect of Albanian spoken in northern Albania and Yugoslavia.
- Largest crested screamer.
- The cry made by sheep.
- A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- A block of solid substance (such as soap or wax).
- Any plant of the genus Reseda.
- Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
- The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
- Sexually transmitted urethritis (usually caused by chlamydia).
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).

- On, to, or at the top.
- A doctor's degree in education.
- Only extant member of the order Rhynchocephalia of large spiny lizard-like diapsid reptiles of coastal islands off New Zealand.
- A Russian river.

DOWN

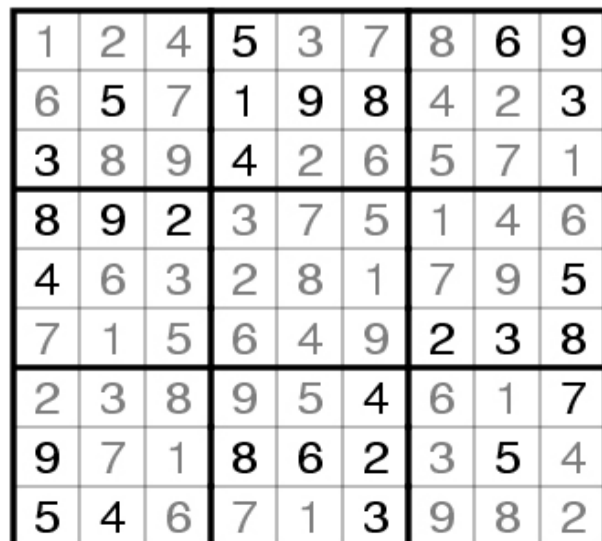
- By bad luck.
- A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
- Scottish chemist noted for his research into the structure of nucleic acids (born in 1907).
- A dry scab formed on the skin following a burn or cauterization of the skin.
- In accordance with nature.
- A class of proteins produced in lymph tissue in vertebrates and that function as antibodies in the immune response.
- A small portable timepiece.
- An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
- A long narrow sled without runners.
- A metal-bearing mineral valuable enough to be mined.
- United States writer who was a leading figure of the beat generation (1922-1969).
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- A member of the Finno-Ugric-speaking people living in eastern European Russia.
- Something that is a source of danger.
- Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- North American rat snakes.
- Marked by or showing unaffected simplicity and lack of guile or worldly experience.
- Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- A member of the nomadic Ugrian people living in northwestern Siberia (east of the Ural mountains).
- United States artist whose work reflected social and political themes (1898-1969).
- Any of various thermoplastic resins used to make things.
- A soft silvery metallic element.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- (Jewish folklore) An artificially created human being that is given life by supernatural means.
- Tropical American insectivorous bird having a long sharp bill and iridescent green or bronze plumage.
- Perennial herb of East India to Polynesia and Australia cultivated for its large edible root yielding Otaheite arrowroot starch.
- Narrow wood or metal or plastic runners used for gliding over snow.
- (anatomy) Being in or directed toward the midline or mesial plane of the body.
- A person who makes deceitful pretenses.
- Make fit for, or change to suit a new purpose.
- Jordan's port.
- At or constituting a border or edge.
- Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- United States poet and critic (1899-1979).
- (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
- Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- Provided with artificial light.
- A bivalent and trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

Daily SuDoku



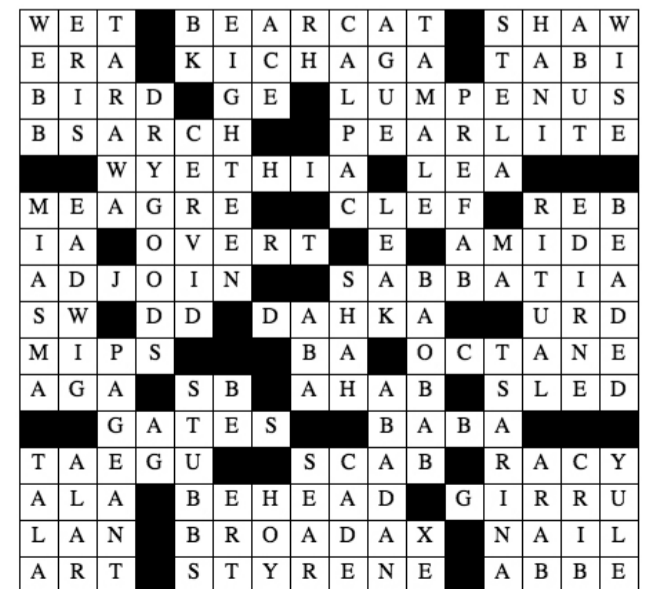
very hard

Yesterday's Solution



hard

Yesterday's Solution



ELECTRIC SERIES PLANS DRIVERLESS CHAMPIONSHIP

LONDON: The world's first electric car racing series is planning to add a driverless championship in 2016-17 as part of its support package. Formula E, now in its second season, said in a statement on Friday that the new 'Roborace' series would be developed in partnership with investment company Kinetik. The aim was to "provide a competitive platform for the autonomous driving solutions that are now being developed by many large industrial automotive and technology players as well as top tech universities." Formula E's current championship

started in October and runs to July next year, meaning any new series would be part of their third season. The plan would be for Roborace to take place before each Formula E round, using the same circuits in major cities worldwide with 10 teams each fielding two driverless cars.

Races would last for one hour and all teams will have the same cars, competing "using real-time computing algorithms and AI (artificial intelligence) technologies." One of the teams will be organized as a crowd-sourced community team which organizers said

would be open to software and technology experts and enthusiasts. Formula E chief executive Alejandro Agag said Roborace would be "one of the most cutting-edge sporting events in history." "Roborace is an open challenge to the most innovative scientific and technology-focused companies in the world," he added.

Traditional automakers, especially premium brands such as Mercedes-Benz and Audi who are winners in conventional series like Formula One and sportscars, are already implementing advanced driver assistance

systems on their cars. In 2013 a Mercedes-Benz S-class limousine drove between Mannheim and Pforzheim without driver input. Industry newcomers Tesla Motors, as well as tech giants Apple and Google, are also developing self-driving cars. The current 10 round Formula E championship includes a race in Long Beach, California, with other venues including Beijing, Berlin, Moscow, Mexico City, Paris and London. Carmakers BMW, Audi, Renault and Citroen are already involved with Formula E teams. — Reuters

FORMULA ONE GRAPPLES MAJOR PROBLEMS - ON AND OFF TRACK

ABU DHABI: Wounded by another predictable and dull championship, and locked in a decision-making paralysis, the end of the Formula One season comes more as a relief than a climax. The regular appearance of the jet-set on their yachts around Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina circuit may provide the glamour upon which the sport trades, but beneath that surface there are major concerns, both sporting and financial. Most worrying for all in Formula One is not just the scale of the problems, but the lack of any immediate means of addressing, let alone curing, them. On the sporting front, 2015 has been predictable, with Mercedes even more dominant than the year before. If champion Lewis Hamilton and teammate Nico Rosberg finish 1-2 this weekend, it will be for a record 12th time in a season.

In sports, predictability is bad, and the television viewing figures which were already tumbling in 2014 will likely decline further, with the domino effect on advertising and sponsors. There is no greater indicator of the problem than Germany - a nation drenched in F1 success for a generation - being left off the calendar, in part, because local promoters struggle to draw crowds. "We know who's going to win, and who's going to be second, third and fourth," F1 head Bernie Ecclestone said in an interview last month. "You've lost the excitement."

It is a candid admission from a man who is tasked with generating and maintaining interest from broadcasters, sponsors and race promoters. But one-sided seasons are not new and the sport was not too badly scarred by the similar dominance of Michael Schumacher or Sebastian Vettel. The real problems are off the track. In the past two months alone the sport has seen Red Bull - recently the sport's power team - threatening to quit, the Lotus team hauled before the courts over unpaid debts, and Ferrari vetoing much-needed cost-cutting proposals.

Throw in a commercial leader in Ecclestone entering the latter half of his 80s with no succession plan in place, and a brewing European Union investigation into anti-competitive behavior, and things are not looking great. The sport is bewilderingly complex, governed by agreements and an array of decision-making bodies whose content and operations are always obscure and often downright secret. The regulatory power is in the hands of FIA, the commercial power rests with Ecclestone and the hedge fund CVC Capital Partners which owns a controlling stake, and the sporting power is with the teams. Getting those three bodies to agree on any reform, no matter how urgently required, borders on the impossible.

At the heart of the problem, of course, is money. FIA, under previous president Max Mosley, leased out the commercial rights - chiefly made up of sponsorship, broadcasting rights and race-hosting fees - to Ecclestone, initially on a short-term basis, but eventually in an extraordinary 100-year deal. Ecclestone sold down his stake in the bodies which collectively play the role of "commercial rights holder" and the controlling stake is now owned by CVC. The hedge fund rakes in nine-figure annual revenues from the sport and its initial plan was to float the business, list on a public stock exchange, collect a tidy profit and move on. But the onset of the global financial crisis changed that. While CVC is looking for an exit plan, much of the revenue they are collecting goes to pay their creditors and there is precious little reinvestment in growing F1, or helping grassroots motorsports, which FIA could be doing if it had retained the commercial rights. — AP



MARANELLO: Ferrari cars are parked at the Push-Start test-drive service, in Maranello, Italy. — AP

FERRARI HOMETOWN OVERWHELMED BY THE ROAR OF TEST-DRIVING FANS

MARANELLO: In the streets of Maranello, the hometown of Ferrari, the roar of the famed sports car is no longer the occasional bragging right of a proud new owner, but a constant backdrop as a number of test-drive businesses give would-be Schumachers the chance to rev up and peel out. The howl of engines is disturbing residents' tranquility - including the afternoon siestas - and the risk of speeding cars is a safety concern, say city officials, who have started cracking down on the businesses. With 37 super cars available for test drives in a city of 17,000, complaints have been mounting.

"They are obviously big cylinder cars that are very powerful, and they are circulating on the same streets with regular traffic," says Maranello Mayor Massimiliano Morini. "You can understand that this creates a very big problem of cohabitation for those living nearby who understandably want and have the right to rest." The test-drive businesses have been cashing in on the super car maker's global appeal by offering aficionados without the wealth to buy their own hot wheels a high-powered spin "for the price of a dinner out," as one business owner put it.

That translates to 80 euros (\$85) for a 10-minute drive in a Ferrari F430 Spider. For a

two-hour spin in a Ferrari 458 Special, the check goes up to 1,400 euros (\$1,485). While such businesses exist in cities around the world, from London to Paris to Las Vegas, driving a Ferrari around Maranello is an unrivaled experience for the true Ferrari fan. So far, there have been no significant accidents in Maranello, according to city officials, and the test-drive business owners say the most damage has come from scraping wheels on curbs. All test drives are accompanied by a trained race car driver.

That hasn't lessened safety concerns, however. Maranello's police force conducted more than 450 traffic controls involving the super cars in the first nine months of the year, with 305 fines issued over the last five years, according to city statistics. Maranello and neighboring Fiorano have teamed up to tighten rules limiting hours that the test drives can take place. They essentially cut out a couple of hours in the early afternoon and ban companies from soliciting customers near the gates of the Ferrari museum, which is visited by 300,000 people each year.

To improve compliance, Maranello has imposed an eight-day suspension after the third citation, which Morini says is a bigger deterrent than the previous 500-euro fine.

Business owners say the rules have cut off oxygen to their enterprises. "We are entrepreneurs, and we are in a tourist town, and I can't promote my business," said Maja Corluka Valestri, owner of Pit Lane Red Passion, adding that the economic damage from the new rules was already evident. "We have lost 80 percent of business." Having to turn away customers during what were peak business hours has been particularly difficult. "It's like asking a restaurant to close between 1 pm and 2 pm," Stefano Ravazzini, owner of Push-Start, which was the first to launch the test-drive service six years ago.

Having lost a court battle challenging the rules as anti-business, the company owners are evaluating the next step to save their investments, which for the largest can include 10 Ferraris and facilities such as souvenir shops and cafes. The everyman enterprises are in many ways anathema to Ferrari's exclusive market position. The centrifugal push back into a leather-clad seat as a Ferrari accelerates from 0 to 100 kpm (62mph) in just over 3 seconds is meant to be a thrill attainable only for those who can afford the nearly 200,000 euro starting sticker price, and that is limited to just over 7,000 new cars a year. — AP

NO 3 MICHIGAN STATE ROUT BOSTON COLLEGE

NO 18 UCONN FALL 79-76 TO SYRACUSE AT BATTLE 4 ATLANTIS

FULLERTON: Denzel Valentine took his game to another level, scoring, rebounding and dishing off. His teammates followed his lead, making third-ranked Michigan State too much to handle. Valentine had a triple-double of 29 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists, and the Spartans beat Boston College 99-68 Thursday in an opening-round game at the DirectTV Wooden Legacy to give coach Tom Izzo his 500th career victory. "It's Thanksgiving, when you're supposed to give thanks," Izzo said. "I'm thankful for the guys I got, the guys I have and all the people who have helped me have this special win." Valentine helped the Spartans expand their 13-point halftime lead to 27 midway through the second half and they eventually led by 34. His second triple-double of the season was the first in the event's nine-year history.

Valentine's six 3-pointers were one off his career high, and his points total was a career best. Tum Tum Nairn added 13 points and eight assists for the Spartans, who shot 63 percent and dominated the boards 38-20. They hit 69 percent from the field in the second half. "We were clicking on all cylinders," forward Matt Costello said. After the final buzzer, Izzo's players gathered around him at midcourt, holding up "Izzo 500" signs and posing for photos.

Eli Carter, a graduate transfer from Florida, led the Eagles with 22 points - one off his career high at BC. The Spartans (5-0) next play Boise State (3-2). The Broncos beat UC Irvine 71-64 in the day's first game at cozy Titan Gym on the campus of Cal State Fullerton. Boston College (3-1) played Irvine (4-1) yesterday. After hitting consecutive 3-pointers, Valentine backpedaled up the court smiling at Golden State Warriors star Draymond Green sitting courtside. Valentine converted a one-handed jam off a turnover and dashed over to high-five Green, clearly delighted by his alma mater's theatrics. Green stopped over in Fullerton on his way to Phoenix for the Warriors' next game.

"Draymond being here is really special to me. I look up to a guy like him," Valentine said. "When he's in the gym I have to play well. I was really focused. My teammates wanted to play well. It was a special day." Valentine scored 14 points in Michigan State's 25-11 run to open the second half. The Spartans made four straight 3-pointers in the spurt, with Valentine hitting three in a row and passing to Bryn Forbes for the other. The Eagles tried rallying from the perimeter, getting three straight 3s while closing to 80-59. It didn't help. Valentine sparked a 10-0 burst with a basket and an assist that pushed Michigan State's lead to 88-59.



CALIFORNIA: Michigan State coach Tom Izzo (right) gets a hug from guard Denzel Valentine, who is next to forward Matt Costello, after Izzo's 500th career win, during an NCAA college basketball game in Fullerton, Calif on Thursday, Nov 26, 2015. — AP

"If there's a better team in the country, I haven't seen them play," Eagles coach Jim Christian said. "They have no bad possessions. They're very unselfish. They make the extra play." The Spartans led 46-33 at

halftime, getting 13 straight points from Valentine in a 23-13 run to close the half. He had eight points as the Spartans rattled off 10 in a row to launch the spurt that produced their largest lead of 15.

Michigan State shot 62 percent in the game's opening minutes and built a 19-10 lead before Valentine even made his first basket. The Eagles answered with a 10-4 run to close to 23-20 before Valentine's offensive outburst gave the Spartans a cushion.

No 18 UConn fall

Connecticut has had plenty of experience playing in tough, physical games with Syracuse. In this latest meeting with its former Big East rival, it was the Orange's offense that was too much for the Huskies to handle. Michael Gbinije and Trevor Cooney each had 17 points and Syracuse beat No 18 Connecticut 79-76 on Thursday to advance to the championship game of the Battle 4 Atlantis. Tyler Lydon added 16 points off the bench. Gbinije also had seven assists.

The Huskies (4-1) will face Gonzaga in the third-place game on Friday. "The second half they really just took it to us offensively," Huskies coach Kevin Ollie said. "We were in a drought in the first half and the second half and really allowed them to take over the game, and in transition they really hurt us with the 3's." The teams traded the lead at the start of the second half, with neither able to get much separation.

That changed around the 13-minute mark when the Orange (5-0) tightened their zone on defense and started an 18-8 spurt that gave Syracuse a 65-55 lead with 7:45 remaining. The Orange then fought off several pushes by the Huskies to preserve the win. Daniel Hamilton led UConn with 18 points. Sterling Gibbs and Rodney Purvis each added 12. "We learned a lot from it, and we just have to recover," Hamilton said. "We didn't get back on defense. I think that's a thing we gotta key in on. And finishing off at the rim. We were getting there we just gotta wind up finishing." UConn's Amida Brimah was forced to the bench during Syracuse's big run, picking up his fourth foul.

But the Huskies kept picking away at the lead and closed to 73-71 on a 3-pointer by Purvis. The Orange strung together some free throws to push the lead back to seven. UConn rallied again and trimmed that lead to 79-76 with 36.8 seconds left. Syracuse was forced into a wild shot with the shot clock winding down. But it found the ball in a scramble for the rebound and was able to run out the final seconds. UConn raced out to a 10-point lead, but Syracuse fought back to tie it at halftime. Both teams shot well in the half and shared with ball while doing it. Syracuse had five assists on its 10 baskets, and the Huskies had seven on their 11 made field goals. — Agencies

NO 19 NORTHWESTERN WOMEN THUMP EASTERN WASHINGTON

Texas: Christen Inman scored a career-high 28 points, Nia Coffey added 17 and Ashley Deary scored 13 with 10 steals and seven assists to lead the No 19 Northwestern women past Eastern Washington 74-70 Thursday at the Lone Star

Showcase. Maggie Lyon added 10 points, 10 rebounds and three blocked shots for Northwestern (4-0). Deary's 10 steals were the second most in a women's Division I game this season. Hayley Hodgins hit a 3-pointer to pull Eastern

Washington (3-2) within three, 70-67, with 3:19 remaining but a bucket by Inman and two free throws by Jordan Hankins made it 74-67 with 23 seconds left and the Wildcats held on from there. The Eagles missed four of their final five

shots and committed three of their season-high 25 turnovers in the final three minutes. Hodgins scored 24 for Eastern Washington. Ashli Payne added 17 and Tisha Phillips scored 15, both career highs. — AP

JONES SOARS ON SYDNEY WINDS AS FRUSTRATED SPIETH KEEP IN TOUCH

SYDNEY: Sydneysider Matt Jones stormed into a three-stroke lead with a three-under-par 68 in the second round of the Australian Open yesterday as reigning champion Jordan Spieth moved into a share of third despite another frustrating day. The American world number one also carded a 68 to stand four shots off the pace set by Jones on seven-under and a stroke behind big-hitting local Todd Sinnott, who was second after a 70. Although conditions were markedly calmer than on Thursday, when temperatures soared and gusts of wind swirled across the fairways at the Australian Golf Club, good scores were still at a premium. Spieth could have really put his stamp on the tournament, therefore, if he had built on the progress he made on

the front nine, when he picked up birdies at the first, second and seventh holes.

Another at the 14th sent him to four-under but a poor chip and a short putt at the next saw him drop his first shot of the day, a swipe of the hand in the direction of the offending ball making clear his frustration. A second bogey at the 16th dropped him deep into the pack again and although he finished with a birdie at the 18th, the 22-year-old was left on three-under feeling he had missed an opportunity. "The crosswinds again made it a guessing game out there today, leaving a 50-50 shot and we got less than 50 percent of them right," he told reporters. "It just made it so frustrating as I was striking the ball well, and it was a round I could have shot six or seven under

par, and I just didn't have any chances.

"So boy, it was a round that could have been and that made it so frustrating as I found myself finally getting into a nice rhythm as I was hitting fairways and giving myself opportunities but I just couldn't quite gauge the wind." US PGA tour winner Jones was already in the clubhouse when Spieth got underway, having mixed five birdies with two birdies to add the 68 to the impressive 67 he shot when the wind was at its peak on Thursday afternoon. The 35-year-old is a member of the host club and conceded that 20 years playing the course gave him some advantage when it came to dealing with the breeze. "But you've still got to get it in the hole," he said. "If there was no wind, I could have gone out and

shot three over today—that's how golf is."

Belgian Nicolas Colsaerts had the best round of the day with a 66 for a share of third with Spieth, former US Open champion Geoff Ogilvy (71), overnight leader Lincoln Tighe (73) and another local in Aron Price (68). Former world number one Adam Scott had a rare round where he failed to pick up a single birdie, finishing nine shots off the pace on two-over after a 73. The difficult conditions means he comfortably made the cut, however, and, like US Open and Masters champion Spieth, will be looking to go low over the weekend. "Right now I think the goal is going to be to try and shoot 10 under on the weekend and I think that should be good enough," said Spieth. — Reuters

'BATMAN' FURY MUST PROVE HE IS NO JOKER AGAINST KLITSCHKO

BERLIN: Tyson Fury faces the acid test of his boasts that he will end Wladimir Klitschko's four-year reign as undisputed world heavyweight champion when the pair clash in Duesseldorf today. The 27-year-old English challenger is undefeated in his 24 fights with 18 knock-outs as he faces the vastly more experienced champion, 12 years his senior, who holds the WBA, IBF, IBO and WBO belts. Fury has much to prove at Duesseldorf's Esprit Arena, having insisted he has spotted 'chinks' in Klitschko's armour and has promised to 'expose' him in the ring. "Old guy, young guy. Old champion, new champion. Enough said," was Fury's succinct appraisal. Klitschko, 39, suffered the last of his three defeats more than a decade ago and plans to make Fury the 54th knock-out and 65th win of his career.

As he rightly points out: "Fury has never faced an opponent like me before. "First I destroy my opponent mentally, then physically." Klitschko made a point of shaking hands with Fury before their press conference in Duesseldorf and has mainly soaked up the Briton's taunts. He's heard most of them before. Britain's David Haye insisted he was going to knock out "the large, slow robot from the Ukraine" in July 2011, only to lose unanimously on points. The victory gave Klitschko the WBA belt to make him undisputed heavyweight champion and only the WBC title, held by Deontay Wilder of the USA, is not in his collection.

Last September, Fury showed his theatrical side by bursting into their London press conference dressed as Batman. He pretended to knock

out a character dressed as the Joker, before telling Klitschko "This is a fool... just like you". The champion, nicknamed Dr Steelhammer, sees Fury as "a clown" with a "few screws loose" who needs "therapy", which the Ukrainian plans to administer in the ring. Fury did little to help his cause by giving a bizarre interview to a British newspaper earlier this month when he said the end of the world is approaching.

The British fighter expressed some extreme opinions on homosexuality, abortion and paedophilia. "He was actually a funny guy, an entertainer, at the start," Klitschko told German magazine Sport Bild this week. "But what he has been saying recently is embarrassing and moronic." serenaded insults - Fury has even serenaded Klitschko during an open training session in Duesseldorf. He adapted the Bette Midler song 'Wind Beneath my Wings' to include the lyrics "I'll be the one with all the belts" come today night. The Briton says he will seek out veteran crooner Rod Stewart, who is providing the pre-fight entertainment, for a duet in the ring if he wins. But Klitschko expects Fury to sing a different tune come today night. The original fight date in October was postponed due to Klitschko's calf injury which has now healed. The champion looks in good shape, even though he will be giving away more than a decade in age and a few inches in height. Former heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis has tipped Klitschko to knock Fury out in the fifth round. Five of his eight fights since beating Haye have been won by a knock-out of some description. — AFP



ESSEN: Ukrainian Heavyweight World Champion Wladimir Klitschko (2nd left) and his challenger Britain's Tyson Fury pose for a face-off during an official weigh-in in Essen, western Germany yesterday. — AFP

Athletics

GOLDEN BOY COE TO BATTLE THROUGH SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

MONACO: Sebastian Coe likened winning the IAAF presidency to the joyous birth of his four children. His opening steps in track and field's top job could easily be described as the equivalent of a month of sleepless nights running after fractious babies. It has been nothing but a blunt and challenging introduction to the vagaries of top-level sport administration for Coe, working 18 hours a day in a firefight for track and field. The 59-year-old Briton was thrust fully into the unforgiving spotlight to deal with doping in Russia, allegations of systemic corruption against the man from whom he took over, Lamine Diack, as well as claims of conflict of interest because of his lucrative ambassadorial role with US sportswear giant Nike.

Following the revelations surrounding Diack, the World Anti-Doping Agency's independent commission produced a bombshell report with evidence of state-sponsored doping in Russia. Coe, who has always been outspoken against doping and vowed a "zero tolerance" when he was named president, was quick to act, temporarily banning Russia. The Briton on Thursday also stepped down from his Nike role, at the cost of £100,000 a year, and vowed he was the man to turn around track and field. WADA's independent commission report's co-author Dick Pound, a former WADA president, and IOC president Thomas Bach have both defended Coe as the man to lead athletics out of its darkest hour.

With Coe seemingly never out of the crosshairs of an ever-demanding British press, the IAAF has taken to publishing daily "frequently asked questions" of the press in a "continued effort to be as transparent as possible and to ensure that the public have the same access to the information that the IAAF provides the media". Upon being elected IAAF president in August, having beaten Ukrainian pole-vault great Sergey Bubka 115-92 in a tight vote, Coe pledged to maintain "the very highest level of vigilance" with regard to doping.

With WADA having accused the IAAF of being "inexplicably lax" in their approach to doping, at a time when Coe was the organisation's vice-president, they are words that have quickly come back to haunt him. And they are not the only ones. Coe described Diack as his "spiritual leader", only for the 82-year-old Senegalese to be arrested by French police over claims he took 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) in bribes to cover up positive drug tests. When media reports emerged that the IAAF had turned a blind eye to hundreds of suspicious



International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) President Sebastian Coe

blood tests, Coe very ill-advisedly branded the claims a "declaration of war" on athletics.

To date, Coe has generally avoided opprobrium over his spell as the chairman of FIFA's ethics commission, despite the avalanche of corruption accusations that has tumbled down upon world football's governing body in the years since he left. But he has done well to sever his ties with Nike, for whom he was a global ambassador, in light of the American sport giant's continued backing of drug cheat Justin Gatlin and allegations of doping leveled at Nike's Oregon Project running camp in a recent BBC documentary. The day-to-day crises are all a far cry from his days as the poster boy of British athletics during the 1980s, when his fierce rivalry with countryman Steve Ovett made him one of the most well-known figures in the sport.

The articulate Coe won Olympic gold in the 1500m at the 1980 and 1984 Olympics, as well as two silver medals in the 800m, and set eight outdoor and three indoor world records in middle-distance track events. His achievements in politics and sports administration have been every bit as stellar, with highlights including a five-year stint in Britain's parliament and a stunning success as head of the 2012 London Olympics. It means that for all his current tribulations, he continues to enjoy strong support from within the athletics community, but his reputation will now hang on his ability to see through the decisive action he seems intent on instigating. — AFP

MCC THINK-TANK PROPOSES DRS RULE CHANGE

ADELAIDE: The influential World Cricket Committee has proposed a change to the Decision Review System (DRS), the law-making Marylebone Cricket Club said yesterday. The group, featuring some of the biggest names in world cricket including former Australia captains Steve Waugh and Ricky Ponting and Sri Lankan great Kumar Sangakkara, is an independent body funded by the MCC, who are the acknowledged guardians of the laws and spirit of the game. International Cricket Council chief executive David Richardson who is also a committee member, said the governing body is paying close attention to the ideas of the MCC think-tank.

The committee met in Adelaide ahead of the inaugural day-night Test, discussing many topics including the contentious DRS. "There should be no loss of a

review for the fielding side if the ball is shown to be clipping the stumps in the umpire's call zone," the committee said in a statement. "This could then allow the removal of the reallocation of two reviews after 80 overs." The issue was highlighted in last week's second trans-Tasman Test in Perth when New Zealand used their final review to refer a confident leg before wicket appeal on day one. Ball-tracking technology suggested it was hitting the top of middle stump.

But with just under 50 percent of the ball predicted to hit the wicket, the verdict was deemed the umpire's call and New Zealand lost the remaining challenge. The MCC group hoped an upcoming Massachusetts Institute of Technology report on the accuracy of DRS technologies would convince sceptical India to finally embrace the system. The think-tank

was also impressed by a report from former Test umpire Simon Taufel on technology designed to allow the third umpire to monitor no-balls. "A fast, automated system for the calling of front-foot no-balls would be a welcome enhancement to the game," the committee said.

The committee also expressed concern about the lack of balance between bat and ball and the fact home advantage carries too much significance in Test cricket. The group, a long-time supporter of day-night Tests, suggested a wider process was required to help boost interest in Test cricket. "Other factors to be considered include the quality of pitches, marketing, ticket pricing, access for children, spectator experience and finding ways of making sure that each country's best players are available," the committee noted. —AFP

AUSTRALIA BOWLERS SHINE ON DAY-NIGHT TEST DEBUT

ADELAIDE: New Zealand's pacemen struck back with two late wickets under the floodlights at Adelaide Oval but Australia's bowlers shined in the sun as the inaugural day-night test opened yesterday. Batsmen had spoken of the pink ball with trepidation in the leadup to the historic match and 12 wickets tumbled in front of a festive crowd of 47,441. After winning the toss, New Zealand squandered a positive start with poor shot selection to be dismissed cheaply for 202 early in the twilight of the late session of the third and final test.

Pacemen Tim Southee and Doug Bracewell swung the ball around devilishly to remove Australia openers David Warner (1) and Joe Burns (14). But captain Steve Smith (24 not out) and Adam Voges (nine) dug in to guide the hosts to 54-2 at stumps under an inky black sky. Australia, 1-0 up in the series, took the lead in nudging a 138-year-old format into prime-time hours so it was fitting that the home side held a slender advantage at the close. Their satisfaction was tempered, however, with an injury to pace spearhead Mitchell Starc who limped off late in the middle session and never returned. Scans confirmed he had suffered a stress fracture in his right foot and he will bowl no further in the test. "It's very disappointing for him. He's been on fire," Siddle, who took 2-54 and celebrated his 200th test wicket, told reporters. "I think we've got enough bowling in our lineup anyway to take the 10 more wickets needed so I think we'll be fine." Starc, who has carried an ankle injury for months, was the pick of Australia's bowlers with 3-24, but was in clear discomfort from the first ball.

SCOREBOARD

ADELAIDE, Australia: Scores at the close on the opening day of the third Test between Australia and New Zealand at the Adelaide Oval on yesterday.

New Zealand 1st innings

M. Guptill lbw b Hazlewood	1
T. Latham c Nevill b Lyon	50
K. Williamson lbw b Starc	22
R. Taylor c Nevill b Siddle	21
B. McCullum c Nevill b Starc	4
M. Santner b Starc	31
B.J. Watling c Smith b Hazlewood	29
M. Craig b Lyon	11
D. Bracewell c Burns b Siddle	11
T. Southee c Warner b Hazlewood	16
T. Boult not out	2
Extras (lb1, w2, nb10)	4
Total (all out; 65.2 overs)	202

Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Guptill), 2-59 (Williamson), 3-94 (Latham), 4-98 (Taylor), 5-98 (McCullum), 6-142 (Santner), 7-164 (Craig), 8-184 (Watling), 9-194 (Bracewell), 10-202 (Southwell)
Bowling: Starc 9-3-24-3, Hazlewood 17.2-2-66-3, Siddle 17-5-54-2, Lyon 15-1-42-2, M. Marsh 5-1-12-0 (1w, 1nb), Smith 2-0-3-0.

Australia 1st innings

J. Burns b Bracewell	14
D. Warner c Southee b Boult	1
S. Smith not out	24
A. Voges not out	9
Extras (b4, lb1, w1)	6
Total (2 wickets; 22 overs)	54

Fall of wickets: 1-6 (Warner), 2-34 (Burns)
To bat: S. Marsh, M. Marsh, P. Nevill, M. Starc, P. Siddle, J. Hazlewood, N. Lyon
Bowling: Southee 7-0-16-0, Boult 6-2-15-1, Bracewell 5-2-6-1 (1w), Santner 4-0-12-0.

ASHWIN SPINS INDIA TO SERIES VICTORY

NAGPUR: Ravichandran Ashwin claimed 12 wickets in the match as India swamped South Africa by 124 runs with two days to spare in the third Test yesterday to clinch the series. The Proteas, who resumed at 32-2 chasing a target of 310, folded up for 185 in their second innings after tea on the third day on a dusty, deteriorating pitch at the VCA stadium in Nagpur. Off-spinner Ashwin followed his 5-32 in the first innings with 7-66 in the second to take his tally in the series to 24 wickets in five innings so far. India had won the first Test in Mohali by 108 runs, while the second in Bangalore was washed out by rain after the opening day's play.

The fourth and final Test will be played at the Ferozeshah Kotla ground in New Delhi from December 3, with the hosts firm favourites to complete a 3-0 scoreline. Proteas captain Hashim Amla and Faf du Plessis put on the highest partnership in the Test of 72 runs, scoring 39 apiece, but no other batsman touched 20. Leg-spinner Amit Mishra removed both batsmen in the space of six deliveries just before tea, ending the resistance by the flat-footed tourists against the turning ball. India have now won eight of their last nine Tests on home soil—all inside three days—having routed Australia 4-0 and the West Indies 2-0 in 2013 before taking the first and third Tests in the current series.

Proteas 9-year record ends

The winning sequence was broken only by the drawn rain-hit Bangalore Test. The defeat marked top-ranked South Africa's first series loss abroad in nine years after the 2-0 setback in Sri Lanka in 2006. Indian captain Virat Kohli hailed Ashwin as the best spinner in the world and said he was pleased to win the series against the number one side in the world. "Ashwin is a world-class spinner, probably the best in the world at the moment," said Kohli. "He is a very improved bowler and stepped up for us in a big way in this series."

"It is very pleasing to defeat South Africa, especially since they won both the Twenty20 and one-day series earlier. We played some very good cricket in all the three Tests." Kohli said his team was not bothered by the criticism over the Nagpur wicket, adding it was more important to perform well in difficult conditions. "It was a challenging wicket, but our batsmen showed character to put runs on the board," he said. "You have to create chances when you get conditions which are going to be bowler-friendly. "Spinners obviously had an

upper hand in the series, but sealing the series by playing well was more important for us."

'Difficult pitch'

Amla admitted it was a "difficult" wicket to bat on, but said his team had tried its best to adjust to the conditions. "The pitch was a difficult factor, it was turning and bouncing whether it was the new ball or the old one,"

said after the fall of the fourth wicket at 58, defended for 46.2 overs in the fifth-wicket partnership.

Amla negotiated 167 deliveries and du Plessis faced 152 balls before falling in quick succession to Mishra at the end of the afternoon session. Amla, whose highest score in the series is 43, edged a catch to Kohli at gully. In Mishra's next over, du Plessis played over an



NAGPUR: India's Ravichandran Ashwin (center) celebrates with Wriddhiman Saha (left) and Ajinkya Rahane after taking the wicket of South Africa's AB de Villiers yesterday. —AFP

said Amla. "It was a hard game, but we are obviously very disappointed. "Whether we win or lose, we have to fight honorably. We tried to dig deep as long as we could." Amla and du Plessis, who came together in the morning ses-

attempted pull and was bowled. South Africa faced a tough task since a target of over 300 runs had been chased successfully just once on Indian soil—by the home team who made 387-4 to defeat England in Chennai in 2008. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

NAGPUR: Final scoreboard on the third day of the third Test between India and South Africa at the VCA stadium in Nagpur on yesterday.

India 1st innings: 215 (M. Vijay 40, W. Saha 32, R. Jadeja 34, M. Morkel 3-35, S. Harmer 4-78).	D. Vilas c Saha b Ashwin	12
South Africa 1st innings: 79 (JP Duminy 35, R Ashwin 5-32, R. Jadeja 4-33) India 2nd innings: 173 (S. Dhawan 39, C. Pujara 31, M. Morkel 3-19, Imran Tahir 5-38)	S. Harmer not out	8
South Africa 2nd innings (overnight 32-2): D. Elgar lbw b Ashwin 18	K. Rabada c Kohli b Ashwin	6
S. van Zyl c R. Sharma b Ashwin 5	M. Morkel b Ashwin	4
I. Tahir lbw b Mishra 8	Extras: (b9, lb5, nb4)	18
H. Amla c Kohli b Mishra 39	Total (all out, 89.5 overs)	185
AB de Villiers lbw b Ashwin 9	Fall of wickets: 1-17 (van Zyl), 2-29 (Tahir), 3-40 (Elgar), 4-58 (de Villiers), 5-130 (Amla), 6-135 (du Plessis), 7-164 (Duminy), 8-167 (Vilas), 9-177 (Rabada), 10-185 (Morkel).	
F. du Plessis b Mishra 39	Bowling: I. Sharma 15-6-20-0 (nb4), Ashwin 29.5-7-66-7, Jadeja 25-12-34-0, Mishra 20-2-51-3.	
JP Duminy lbw b Ashwin 19	India won by 124 runs; lead 2-0 in four-match series	

RUSSIAN LEADERS CSKA AIM TO END LOSING STREAK

MOSCOW: Russian Premier League leaders CSKA Moscow have to bounce back from three straight defeats to get their season back on track. After two straight domestic defeats and a 2-0 loss to Wolfsburg of Germany in the Champions League this week, the Red Army side face bottom-placed Anzhi Makhachkala on Sunday with their title lead over Rostov cut to five points from nine at the start of the month. CSKA manager Leonid Slutsky was upset with a defeat that dashed CSKA's chances of qualifying for the Champions League

knockout stage. "It's a very disappointing defeat as we had the initiative and created scoring chances," Slutsky said. "We need to concentrate on two Premier League matches remaining before the winter break. I hope we will win both of them to maintain our lead."

Reigning champions Zenit St Petersburg, who beat Valencia 2-0 to ensure they top Champions League Group H, turn their focus back to domestic action when they meet Terek Grozny on Sunday. "We were very happy to record five wins in as many

Champions League matches," Zenit Brazilian star Hulk said. "It's a new milestone in the club's history. But now we need to focus on the Russian league matches. "We've lost too many points this season but we still have chances to retain the title as the leaders dropped points in their recent games."

Second-placed Rostov, held to a 1-1 draw by lowly Ufa in their previous league encounter, will have to pass a tough test when they visit FC Krasnodar on Monday. Rostov head coach Kurban Berdyev, who guided Rubin Kazan to

their back-to-back Russian titles in 2008-09, said that the serious personnel problems prevented his team from showing their best football. "In the last matches we lacked mobility and had no reserves for boosting our performance because of injuries. Hopefully the things will sort themselves out for our next match," Berdyev said. Moscow club Lokomotiv, who sit third one point behind Rostov, tackle city rivals Dynamo also on Monday after a 4-2 defeat in Europa League clash with Sporting Lisbon. —AFP

3 OLYMPICS PLACES UP FOR GRABS IN SENEGAL

JOHANNESBURG: Senegal host an eight-nation Olympics football qualifying tournament during the next 15 days with the top three finishers securing places at the 2016 Rio Games. South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia are in Group A with the Senegalese and Group B comprises Algeria, Egypt, Mali and 1996 gold medalists Nigeria. Owen Da Gama of South Africa could have been speaking for all eight coaches when he spoke about the opening game against Senegal at Stade Leopold Sedar Senghor in Dakar. "This match will define our destiny. Our aim is to start well because an opening-round loss will place us under pressure in the remaining two group games," he said.

Group matches are scheduled for the 60,000-seat national stadium in Dakar and the 5,000-capacity Stade Caroline Faye in M'Bour, 70 kilometers south of the capital city. Dakar stages both semi-finals, the third place play-off to decide the last qualifier for Rio, and the final of a competition which doubles as the CAF U-23 Africa Cup of Nations. AFP Sport looks, in alphabetical order, at the eight contenders, all of whom have qualified at least once for the Olympics.

ALGERIA: It is 35 years since the North Africans made their lone Olympics appearance and the odds are against them reaching Rio with Egypt and Nigeria the likeliest top two Group B finishers. Winger Zineddine Ferhat from CAF Champions League runners-up USM Alger is a 2015 Africa-based Footballer of the Year finalist and Abdelhakim Amokrane scored the goals that got Algeria to Senegal.

EGYPT: Have competed at 11 Olympics football tournaments and there is no reason why they cannot add to that African record total under 2012 CAF Champions League-winning coach Hossam El Badry. Impressive qualifiers at the expense of Uganda, the star of the squad is consistent-scoring midfielder Mahmoud Abdel Moneim, better known as 'Kahraba', from famed Cairo club Zamalek.

MALI: Apart from Senegal, they should be the team most at home in the hot, humid, windy tropical conditions likely in Atlantic venues Dakar and M'Bour. France-based Adama Niane topped the elimination competition scoring charts with 'Kahraba' and fellow striker Adama Traore was voted best player of the 2015 FIFA U-20 World Cup in New Zealand.

NIGERIA: Boast the best record of African qualifiers for the Olympics, winning the gold medal at Atlanta in 1996 and the silver medal in Beijing seven years ago. The class of 2015 has outstanding strikers in Liverpool signing Taiwo Awoniyi and local Victor Osimhen, scorer of a record 10 goals at the 2015 FIFA U-17 World Cup in Chile.

SENEGAL: Home support and familiarity with the probable sauna-like conditions should assist a side that prepared by the winning another under-23 competition, the African Games, in Congo Brazzaville. The team is full of tall, strong, skilful and innovative footballers, with striker Ibrahima Sory Keita keen to build on outstanding African Games form.

SOUTH AFRICA: Da Gama welcomed a heat wave during training in Johannesburg as it gave his squad a taste of the conditions they are set to encounter in Senegal. Centre-back Rivaldo Coetzee is a senior national team regular and much is expected from captain and midfielder Keagan Dolly, an early-season star in the 2015-2016 South African Premiership.

TUNISIA: Coach and 1996 Olympian Maher Kanzari has tempted his squad by telling them "the Games are even better than the World Cup". He has chosen eight players from Esperance and four each from other top-flight clubs Club Africain and CA Bizertin to bolster cohesiveness. —AFP



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Joe Allen (centre) fights for the ball against Bordeaux's Enzo Crivelli during the Europa League Group B soccer match between Liverpool and Bordeaux at Anfield Stadium, Liverpool on Thursday Nov 26, 2015. —AP

LIVERPOOL, SPURS, BILBAO INTO EUROPA LAST-32; CELTIC CRASH

LONDON: The value of an in-form striker was underlined as Tottenham Hotspur, Liverpool and Athletic Bilbao needed goals from pivotal front men to grab vital wins that booked places in the Europa League last 32 on Thursday. Harry Kane's late strike gave Spurs a 1-0 win at Qarabag, Liverpool needed Christian Benteke to dig them out of a spot of bother in a 2-1 win over Girondins Bordeaux and Bilbao had Aritz Aduriz to thank for a 3-2 comeback victory in Augsburg. Those three sides were among 11 teams, who celebrated reaching the knockout stages of the competition.

FK Krasnodar, Lazio, St Etienne, Basel, Schalke 04, Sparta Prague, Villarreal and Braga will all be in the hat when the draw is made for next round having booked spots with one group game to spare on the marathon route to May's final. Last season's surprise finalists Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk, however, were brought firmly down to earth with an early exit. Dnipro made a surprise run to the final last term but their European adventure ended early this time when a 3-1 defeat at Lazio meant they could not finish in the top two in Group G. There was also disappointment for former European champions Celtic as they lost 2-1 at home to Ajax Amsterdam to end their hopes of reaching the next round.

Kane strikes

Tottenham's Kane struck in the 78th minute for his ninth goal in his last six

games to ensure the English Premier League club can relax going into their final group outing. The England striker had suffered a drought when he went eight games without a club goal at the start of the season, but questions about whether the 22-year-old could continue last term's prolific scoring run have been long-since silenced. After Tottenham's Son Heung-Min and Dele Alli earlier hit the woodwork, the powerful Kane thumped home a header from a corner to move them to 10 points at the top of Group J. Liverpool were also in need of frontline inspiration after they fell behind at home to Bordeaux when keeper Simon Mignolet was penalised for holding on to the ball too long and Henri Saivet thumped home from an indirect free kick after 33 minutes.

Benteke was hauled down in the area to earn Liverpool a penalty, which James Milner converted after 38 minutes, and the Belgian striker then got on the scoresheet with a superb turn and finish in first-half stoppage time. Aduriz's contribution for Bilbao was even more dramatic. The group stage's most prolific marksman scored twice in the final seven minutes to secure a comeback win in Augsburg that kept the Spaniards top of Group L and moved them safely into the next round. Bilbao have flourished with Aduriz scoring six goals in five group games, while Augsburg and Partizan Belgrade meet on the final matchday to decide who joins the Spaniards in the last 32.

Late drama

There was late drama in Germany where Schalke needed to beat APOEL Nicosia to guarantee qualifying but had to wait until the 86th minute for Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting to snatch a 1-0 win. Having ended a seven-match winless run in all competitions, Schalke stayed top of Group K, ahead of Sparta Prague who also reached the knockout phase with a 1-0 win over Asteras Tripolis.

Basel progressed as Group I winners after they came back from 2-0 down against Fiorentina, managed by the Swiss side's former boss Paulo Sousa, to draw 2-2. The Italians, who took a stranglehold with a double from Federico Bernardeschi, had to play for more than an hour with 10 men after Facundo Roncaglia was shown a first-half red card.

Sousa's Fiorentina now need at least a draw in the final match against Belenenses to make it out of the group stage. Villarreal came into their game at home to Rapid Vienna having already qualified earlier on Thursday after Viktoria Plzen lost 1-0 at Dinamo Minsk. The Spaniards celebrated with a 1-0 win to end the Austrian side's 100 percent Group E record with Bruno Soriano's late goal. Borussia Dortmund, who lost 1-0 at FK Krasnodar, Molde, beaten 2-0 by Fenerbahce, Napoli, 1-0 winners at Club Brugge, and Rapid Vienna had already secured their places in the knockout stage on the previous matchday. —Reuters

Spanish League Preview

MADRID SEEK CLASICO REDEMPTION AT EIBAR

MADRID: Real Madrid will be hoping a change of scenery provides an upturn in fortunes when they travel to Basque minnows Eibar's 6,000 capacity Ipurua tomorrow aiming to make amends for their 4-0 humiliation by Barcelona. Club president Florentino Perez insisted he still has full confidence in coach Rafael Benitez despite both being targeted by the Madrid fans with calls to resign last weekend.

That confidence was unlikely to have been assured, though, by a nervous final 15 minutes in Ukraine on Wednesday as Madrid slipped from cruising into a 4-0 lead away to Shakhtar Donetsk to holding on for a 4-3 win. Benitez made a series of changes in Lviv with Brazilian midfielder Casemiro one of those to come in to add extra bite to the midfield. And he insists they must look ahead in trying to close the six-point gap to Barca at the top of the table rather than dwelling on the problems on and off the field over the past week.

"The defeat to Barcelona is in the past, we need to look forward. Now we have a tough game away from home," he said "I am here for what Benitez tells me to do, he is a great coach. We are with him, with the president and the fans. Staying together I

am sure we will win." However, Madrid can expect an extremely tricky test against an Eibar side that are surpassing all expectations on just their second season in the top flight and currently sit sixth. "It is difficult for any team to play at Ipurua. We are playing really well and have the confidence that we can get something positive from the game," Eibar midfielder Adrian Gonzalez told the club's website.

Madrid have mounting injury problems in defence as Raphael Varane came off against Shakhtar with a hamstring problem, whilst Sergio Ramos and Marcelo are also out. Isco is banned after his frustrated kick out at Neymar last weekend. However, Eibar are also without one of their key creators through suspension in Keko Gontan. In contrast to Madrid's woes, Barcelona's week just got better after inflicting a thrashing at the Bernabeu as they stuck six past Roma in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Lionel Messi scored twice on his first start following a two-month injury layoff as did Luis Suarez to take Messi, Suarez and Neymar's combined tally for the calendar year to an incredible 121. Yet, Barca boss Luis Enrique urged for caution amid claims

Barca could go onto repeat their treble winning feats of last season. "These players are very intelligent and they know perfectly that we are in the first third of the season and the best is still to come. "It is a pleasure

when you have the profile of the players we have and things go as you want. I am sure that at some point it will turn in the other direction and you need to be prepared to overcome all the moments." — AFP

SPANISH LEAGUE TABLE

Spanish La Liga table before this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Barcelona	12	10	0	2	29	12	30
Atletico Madrid	12	8	2	2	17	6	26
Real Madrid	12	7	3	2	26	11	24
Villarreal	12	6	3	3	16	12	21
Celta Vigo	12	6	3	3	22	20	21
Eibar	12	5	5	2	17	12	20
Valencia	12	5	4	3	17	9	19
Deportivo La Coruna	12	4	6	2	18	13	18
Athletic Bilbao	12	5	2	5	18	16	17
Espanyol	12	5	1	6	14	23	16
Sevilla	12	4	3	5	17	18	15
Real Betis	12	4	3	5	11	17	15
Rayo Vallecano	12	4	2	6	14	20	14
Real Sociedad	12	3	3	6	14	14	12
Sporting Gijon	12	3	3	6	11	18	12
Getafe	12	3	2	7	12	19	11
Granada	12	2	4	6	13	20	10
Las Palmas	12	2	4	6	10	17	10
Levante	12	2	4	6	10	23	10
Malaga	12	2	3	7	5	11	9

Italian League Preview

NAPOLI TARGET INTER WIN AND SERIE A LEAD

MILAN: Napoli welcome leaders Inter Milan looking to regain top spot as Roma, fresh from another Champions League humiliation, and Fiorentina seek to keep pace with Serie A's current title favorites. Sitting just two points off the pace alongside third-placed Fiorentina, Napoli's title belief has been strengthened by a string of impressive performances at home and in Europe. The Azzurri are unbeaten since losing their league opener away to Sassuolo and, with striker Gonzalo Higuain leading the league on 10 goals, Maurizio Sarri's men have stormed into the Europa League last 32.

It is all a far cry from last

September, when a single victory in their opening five league games left Napoli icon Diego Maradona, the architect of their previous two titles, in 1987 and 1990, publicly lambasting Sarri. Tracksuit-wearing Sarri, a lifelong Napoli fan, took the blow on the chin and since then Napoli have dropped only two points as they forge a path towards a possible third title. "Right now, Napoli are frightening," former Inter and Italy defender Marco Materazzi told Gazzetta dello Sport recently. "They're well organized, they're going really well and they've got Higuain, who is among the top five strikers in the world."

Between them, Higuain and

Lorenzo Insigne have scored 17 of Napoli's 24 goals but, with only eight conceded, Inter have the meanest defense in Serie A. While an Inter win would open up a five-point gap on Napoli, Fiorentina and Roma are expected to remain in hot pursuit, while Juventus, nine points off the pace, travel to Palermo in the hunt for a fourth consecutive win days after beating Manchester City 1-0 to secure their Champions League last 16 ticket. Atalanta have only once away from home this season but must fancy a tilt amid the crisis that has engulfed Roma following their 6-1 humiliation at the hands of Barcelona on Tuesday.

Roma's Camp Nou calamity means they must beat BATE Borisov in their final Group E game to have any chance of qualifying for the last 16. Coach Rudi Garcia, who is still without forwards Gervinho and Mohamed Salah, even took flak from his own players, including Alessandro Florenzi and Maicon—who both played when Roma were humiliated 7-1 at home by Bayern Munich last year. "We did nothing but defend for 90 minutes against a side that had the complete run of the game," said Maicon. "We have another important game on Sunday, let's try and forget everything that happened against Barcelona and focus on the league." — AFP

ITALIAN SERIE A TABLE

Italian Serie A table ahead of weekend fixtures (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Inter Milan	13	9	3	1	16	7	30
Napoli	13	8	4	1	24	8	28
Fiorentina	13	9	1	3	26	11	28
Roma	13	8	3	2	29	15	27
Sassuolo	13	6	4	3	15	12	22
Juventus	13	6	3	4	17	11	21
AC Milan	13	6	2	5	15	17	20
Lazio	13	6	1	6	17	21	19
Torino	13	5	3	5	18	18	18
Atalanta	13	5	3	5	13	15	18
Chievo	13	4	4	5	16	13	16
Sampdoria	13	4	4	5	19	18	16
Genoa	13	4	4	5	14	17	16
Palermo	13	4	3	6	13	17	15
Udinese	13	4	3	6	11	15	15
Empoli	13	4	3	6	15	20	15
Bologna	13	4	1	8	13	17	13
Frosinone	13	3	2	8	11	22	11
Verona	13	0	6	7	8	20	6
Carpi	13	1	3	9	11	26	6

German League Preview

HERTHA LOOKING TO END 38-YEAR WAIT IN MUNICH

BERLIN: Hertha Berlin are looking to end their 38-year wait for a win at Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga when they play at the Bavarians' Allianz Arena fortress today. Runaway league leaders Bayern are eight points clear in the German league table with a tally of 37 from a possible 39. Pep Guardiola's team have won all of their last seven games at home by at least a four-goal margin and are undefeated in Munich this season in all competitions.

A 2-0 win back in October 1977 was the last time fourth-placed Hertha won in Munich, but their coach Pal Dardai says they have nothing to fear. "We will work on things in training so that we at least look good there," he told the Berliner Zeitung newspaper. "They are the best team in the world and it's a good chance for our players to compare themselves. "I have great respect for them, but with 23 points in the table, we have no reason to hide down there." Hertha will have to raise their game substantially after last Sunday's woeful 1-0 win over Hoffenheim in snowy Berlin when they mustered just one shot on goal. Bayern's goal-machine has netted 40 goals in 13 league games so far this season. A simple 1-0 victory to Bayern marks the clubs' last two meetings and Hertha have won their last two away matches. Since Dardai took charge in February, Hertha have conceded just 29 goals in 28 league games—a defensive record second only to

Bayern in that time period. Dutch winger Arjen Robben should be fit having come off in the first-half of Tuesday's 4-0 win over Olympiakos with a slight leg injury but left-back David Alaba is doubtful having picked up an ankle knock after scoring in last Saturday's 3-1 win at Schalke.

Second-placed Borussia Dortmund host strugglers VfB Stuttgart on Sunday with the visitors having sacked coach Alexander Zorniger on Tuesday. Caretaker coach Jurgen Kramny will be on the bench in Dortmund and Stuttgart's 4-0 drubbing at home by fellow strugglers Augsburg last weekend was the final straw. Dortmund will be looking to bounce back after their shock 3-1 defeat at Hamburg last

Friday. Striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has scored in their last seven home games stretching back to last season. He is the league's top scorer with 15 goals in 13 league games.

Extra derby security

Werder Bremen are at home to Hamburg today in the north German derby with tensions running high. Hosts Bremen have won three of their last five games, but are just above the relegation places, and police expect crowd trouble. Hamburg are tenth, while Bremen are 14th, but league form will count for little in the 103rd derby. Travelling Bremen fans caused trouble on a train to last Saturday's 6-0 drubbing at Wolfsburg. — AFP

GERMAN LEAGUE TABLE

German League table ahead of the weekend matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Bayern Munich	13	12	1	0	40	5	37
Borussia Dortmund	13	9	2	2	36	18	29
VfL Wolfsburg	13	7	3	3	23	15	24
Hertha Berlin	13	7	2	4	18	15	23
Bor. Moenchengladbach	13	7	1	5	25	19	22
Bayer Leverkusen	13	6	2	5	17	17	20
Schalke 04	13	6	2	5	17	19	20
Ingolstadt 04	13	5	4	4	10	10	19
Cologne	13	5	4	4	15	18	19
Hamburg	13	5	3	5	14	17	18
Mainz 05	13	5	2	6	18	19	17
Eintracht Frankfurt	13	3	5	5	17	20	14
Darmstadt	13	3	5	5	14	19	14
Werder Bremen	13	4	1	8	13	25	13
Hanover 96	13	3	2	8	13	24	11
VfB Stuttgart	13	3	1	9	17	31	10
Augsburg	13	2	3	8	17	25	9
Hoffenheim	13	1	5	7	12	20	8

RECORD CHASING VARDY IN SPOTLIGHT AGAINST UNITED

LEICESTER: All eyes will be on Leicester striker Jamie Vardy today when he tries to become the first player to score in 11 consecutive Premier League games in a top-of-the-table showdown with Manchester United. Vardy equalled the record held since 2003 by former Manchester United striker Ruud van Nistelrooy when he took his scoring streak into double figures with one of Leicester's goals in their 3-0 win at Newcastle last Saturday. Fittingly, England international Vardy, 28, who joined Leicester from Fleetwood Town in 2012, will set the new mark if he scores against United when his league leaders host second-placed United at the King Power Stadium.

While Vardy can't stop scoring, with 13 goals in the league so far this season, United are struggling to find the net. Their 19 goals in 13 league games is the lowest total in the top seven and their struggles in front of goal are threatening to undermine their hopes of winning a first trophy since 2013. United's failure to score against Championship side Middlesbrough saw Louis van Gaal's side go out of the

League Cup on penalties last month and, potentially more seriously, another blank on Wednesday against PSV Eindhoven could prove costly to their Champions League prospects.

Victory over the Dutch champions would have taken United into the last 16, but following a 0-0 draw, their fourth such result in seven matches, they must now win their final Group B game away to Wolfsburg to guarantee going through. "Of course I am worried," admitted van Gaal about United's lack of potency in front of goal. United captain Wayne Rooney, the club's leading scorer with six goals, of which only two have come in the Premier League, is equally concerned and he added: "I think we need to score more goals as a team."

Lack of potency

United could not point to injuries as an excuse for their latest low-key performance in midweek as Rooney, Anthony Martial and Marouane Fellaini all returned from

missing last weekend's 2-1 Premier League win at Watford which took them up to second place. Van Gaal's perceived style of play, lacking tempo and a creative edge, has come in for criticism from supporters and pundits.

But a victory at Leicester, who have lost just once at home this season, would ease some of the tension by taking United above Claudio Ranieri's side to the top of the league. United winger Ashley Young is confident of a positive result to ease the disappointment of failing to advance in Europe. "Leicester are the leaders, so this is a top-of-the-table clash. We'll be looking to keep up the good form we've shown in the league over the last few weeks, and hopefully get the three points," Young said. "We've just got to pick ourselves up now and go again at the weekend." Vardy was Leicester's only injury concern but he has shaken off a persistent hip problem and is expected to start against United as he looks to break the record.—AFP



Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Aston Villa v Watford	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Bournemouth v Everton	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Crystal Palace v Newcastle	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Man City v Southampton	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Sunderland v Stoke	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Leicester v Man United	20:30
beIN SPORTS	

SPANISH LEAGUE

Barcelona v Real Sociedad	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Atletico v Espanyol	20:15
beIN SPORTS	
Malaga v Granada	22:30
beIN SPORTS	
Las Palmas v Coruna	0:00
beIN SPORTS	
Vigo v Gijon	0:05
beIN SPORTS	

ITALIAN LEAGUE

Torino v Bologna	20:00
beIN SPORTS	
Milan v Sampdoria	22:45
beIN SPORTS	

GERMAN LEAGUE

Bayern Munich v Hertha Berlin	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Werder Bremen v Hamburger	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Hannover v Ingolstadt	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Hoffenheim v Borussia	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Mainz v Frankfurt	17:30
beIN SPORTS	

FRENCH LEAGUE

Paris Saint v Troyes	19:00
beIN SPORTS	
Nantes v Bastia	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Angers v Lille	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Toulouse v Nice	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Reims v Rennes	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Ajaccio v Lorient	22:00
beIN SPORTS	



Leicester City's English striker Jamie Vardy

ROONEY CONCERNED AS VARDY EYES RECORD AGAINST MISFIRING UNITED

LONDON: Wayne Rooney says misfiring Manchester United should follow the example of record-chasing Jamie Vardy in their summit meeting with surprise Premier League leaders Leicester today. Leicester striker Vardy will make history at the King Power Stadium if he scores for a Premier League record 11th successive match and his record bid couldn't come at a more uncomfortable time for the struggling Rooney and United's other out-of-form forwards. With 13 league goals this season, Vardy has scored more than all of United's strikers combined and fittingly it is former Old Trafford great Ruud van Nistelrooy whose record he will break if he finds the net this weekend.

Rooney and his fellow United forwards have only nine league goals to their credit and they drew a blank again in midweek with a 0-0 draw against PSV Eindhoven that left them in danger of missing out of the Champions League knockout stages. United captain Rooney is well aware of the threat posed by Vardy after linking up with the prolific 28-year-old on England duty and he wants his team-mates to start showing the kind of composure and predatory instincts displayed by the Leicester star.

"No, we're not," Rooney said when asked if his team were ruthless enough. "I think we need to score more goals as a team. I feel we showed a lack of compo-

sure which put ourselves under pressure a lot of times. "It's a learning curve for us, but we can't go on saying it's a learning curve. We have to start turning these games into victories." If Vardy does break van Nistelrooy's record it will continue a remarkable rise for a player who was in non-league football with Fleetwood only a few years ago and last season scored just five goals for Leicester.

Hot property

After firing Leicester in contention for a European berth less than a year after they were battling relegation, Vardy is such a hot property that Leicester manager Claudio Ranieri this week felt compelled to plead with the forward to ignore offers from bigger clubs in the January transfer window. "At the moment we're very happy and also Jamie is happy with us and he can continue to show his strength with us," Ranieri said.

"Jamie is now a champion. He has to take confidence in this. He's a strong character because he comes from non-league." A win for United, who have failed to score in four of their last seven matches, would take them to the top of the table, but a draw would open the door for Manchester City to regain first place. From a position of strength at the top a week ago, City suddenly face a test of their staying power against Southampton.—AFP

MAN CITY FACE A TEST OF LEADERSHIP CREDENTIALS

MANCHESTER: From a position of strength at the top of the Premier League a week ago, Manchester City suddenly face a test of their staying power against Southampton today. City's shock 4-1 defeat at home to Liverpool last Saturday saw them surrender the lead in the title race, with manager Manuel Pellegrini admitting the performance had been the worst he had seen since his arrival at Eastlands two-and-a-half years ago.

A chance to bounce back in the Champions League on Wednesday was then passed up as City missed a number of decent goalscoring chances and lost 1-0 to Juventus in Turin. As a result, they are no longer guaranteed top spot in Group D with one game to go ahead of next month's draw for the last 16. And, worryingly, goalkeeper Joe Hart sustained a hamstring injury that forced the England international to be replaced by Willy Caballero.

Hart is crucial to City's fortunes and his injury is the latest to afflict Pellegrini's squad, which suddenly looks vulnerable. Captain and defensive leader Vincent Kompany has been badly missed and faces another fortnight out with a calf problem. David Silva's absence has been just as badly felt, with the Spaniard's creativity in tandem with top scorer Sergio Aguero, who is yet to play 90 minutes since returning from a seven-match spell out with a hamstring injury, denying City a major weapon. In addition, Samir Nasri is out long-term following an operation on his hamstring, while striker Wilfried Bony could miss the visit of eighth-placed Southampton.

Severely stretched

Defenders Pablo Zabaleta and Eliaquim Mangala were also absent for the midweek European tie to leave City's squad severely stretched. But Ivory Coast midfielder Yaya Toure is not looking for excuses and he knows City are capable of going back to the head of the Premier League with the top two of Leicester and Manchester United playing each other this weekend. "We have a fantastic squad. We had quite a lot of injuries from important players but we have to live with that," Toure said. "We have to forget this game (at Juventus) and try to bounce back in the league."

Ronald Koeman's Southampton, beaten at home by Stoke last weekend, have seen their hopes of increasing the pressure on the top six take a blow after Jay Rodriguez was told he faces another lay-off following foot surgery. The striker only recently returned to full fitness after missing the whole of last season with a knee ligament injury and will now be sidelined for two months. "Jay had the surgery last Tuesday and we are happy about that, because that was the best to do. That was a good final decision to do that, but then you know he's maybe out for seven to eight weeks," Koeman said.

"But we don't have other injuries and the team is fit, the team is doing good training sessions and that's always important to have a good feeling for the today game." With Graziano Pelle also missing while he serves a one-match suspension, Koeman's forward options will be stretched for the trip to Eastlands. But Southampton captain Jose Fonte said: "We have other players in the team, so we need to deal with it. Obviously Graziano is an important part in our team and it is going to be difficult without him. "But we have trust in the other players as well. We all know the philosophy that we have and we'll try and play our game there." — AFP

Sports



Ashwin spins India to series victory

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TEXAS: Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton, is upended and lands in the end zone at the end of a running play, scoring a touchdown against the Dallas Cowboys during the second half of an NFL football game on Thursday, Nov 26, 2015. —AP

PANTHERS REMAIN UNBEATEN, ROMO HURT

LOS ANGELES: Cam Newton ran for a touchdown and Carolina's defense scored two more on interceptions as the Panthers improved to 11-0 with a 33-14 rout of the Dallas Cowboys on Thursday. Graham Gano kicked four field goals, including one from 50 yards, for Carolina who were playing on the US Thanksgiving holiday for the first time in franchise history. The Detroit Lions hammered the Philadelphia Eagles 45-14 and in a later game the Green Bay Packers hosted the Chicago Bears as the NFL scheduled three holiday contests on Thursday.

The Dallas loss is compounded because star quarterback Tony Romo had to leave the game in the third quarter favoring his left arm following a hard hit by Panthers

linebacker Thomas Davis. Carolina's defense stifled the Cowboys' attack which included two interceptions by Panther linebacker Luke Kuechly in the second quarter. Carolina safety Kurt Coleman and Kuechly scored interceptions in the first half to give the Panthers a 23-3 lead heading into the third quarter. Panther coach Ron Rivera said they practice plays like those and this time it worked out.

"One of the things we do work on is, 'Hey, we score with the ball,'" Rivera said. "We try to create that picket fence going down one side or the other. 'Kurt just made a great cutback and was able to put it in the end zone. Luke knew immediately where he was supposed to go and he picked up a row of blockers.'" Newton was

superb, connecting on 16-of-27 passes for 183 yards and rushed for 45 yards and a touchdown. Newton led the Panthers on a 14-play, 80-yard touchdown drive to ice the game late in the third quarter. He capped the drive with a four-yard touchdown run with 18 seconds left in the quarter, putting the Panthers ahead 30-6. Romo completed 11-of-21 passes for 106 yards and three interceptions before he left the game. Romo missed seven weeks with a broken clavicle earlier this season and the team said he reinjured the left clavicle. Dallas was 0-7 with Romo out of the lineup.

BEARS 17, PACKERS 13

Jay Cutler threw for 200 yards and a score as Chicago held off Green Bay on

fourth-and-goal from the 8 with 22 seconds left. Aaron Rodgers' throw to the end zone deflected off receiver Davante Adams' hands on the rain. James Jones couldn't hang on to a potential touchdown catch on third down. Cornerback Tracy Porter intercepted Rodgers' pass with 3:19 left at the Bears 45 on the Packers' previous drive. The highlight of the night for Green Bay turned out to be the return of Brett Favre, whose name and No 4 was unveiled at halftime next to the team's other retired numbers. Chicago (5-6) has won three of its last four. The Packers (7-4) lost a second straight home game. Jeremy Langford ran for a touchdown for Chicago.

LIONS 45, EAGLES 14

Matthew Stafford equaled a career high with five touchdown passes, three to Calvin Johnson, as Detroit routed Philadelphia for its third straight victory. Stafford threw for more than 200 yards and three touchdowns without a turnover in the first half to help the Lions (4-7) take a 24-7 lead. He finished 27 of 38 for 337 yards. The Eagles (4-7) have lost three straight. They have allowed at least 45 points in two straight games in one season for the first time in team history. Mark Sanchez started for Philadelphia with Sam Bradford inactive because of a shoulder injury. Sanchez was 19 of 27 for 199 yards and two touchdowns.—Agencies