

**Kuwait University
Science Faculty
celebrates 50th
anniversary**



**Trump names
Carson as
housing
secretary**



**Islamic finance
gold guidance
emphasizes
real deal**



**'Walking
legend' Brady
seizes all-time
win mark**



KUWAIT FOOTBALL REELS AS CHIEF RESIGNS, TEAM QUILTS

VAGUE DISCIPLINARY RULES BLAMED FOR LATEST CHAOS



Max 22°
Min 11°
High Tide
02:37 & 17:07
Low Tide
10:12 & 22:23

NO SURVEILLANCE OF PRIVATE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

MOI REFUTES REPORTS

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior has denied reports on social media claiming that a new surveillance law dealing with these websites is in effect. "The reports are absolutely baseless and untrue," a statement issued by the ministry yesterday noted, adding that "there hasn't been any new communication law enacted" as these reports allege.

Moreover, the statement noted that the ministry is committed to its security obligations without encroaching on personal privacies. The statement also underscored that a new information technology law in effect since Jan 12 has specified the penalties violators face, noting that the law does not authorize the ministry to intrude on peoples' privacies. It added that social media users are free to utilize the platform as they see fit, and will only face legal action for any infractions of state laws.

Ministry Spokesman Mohammad Al-Awwash said in a later statement that the electronic media law regulates the media profession and is not applicable to personal accounts on social media.

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DOHA: Saudi King Salman (left) waves next to the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani during a welcoming ceremony yesterday. King Salman is on a regional tour to the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. — AFP

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: Kuwait football entered yet another dark tunnel Sunday night after the head of the football association resigned after just over three months in office and one of its top teams withdrew from league competition. Another team is expected to follow suit shortly. Both teams are dropping out after complaints regarding the league's chaotic disciplinary system.

Fawaz Al-Hasawi, the owner of English Championship side Nottingham Forest, was appointed in August after authorities dissolved the Kuwait Football Association amid a clampdown on sports governing bodies that triggered strong international criticism. Hasawi announced his resignation on Twitter late Sunday without giving a reason, but his decision came only hours after the competitions committee at KFA rejected complaints by two league teams over allowing two sides to field suspended players. Social media reports late yesterday said Hasawi had withdrawn his resignation, but this could not be immediately confirmed.

The controversy started two weeks ago, after Al-Arabi Sports Club filed an official protest to the KFA, claiming that rival Kuwait Sports Club fielded a

Fawaz Al-Hasawi

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ANTI-AUSTERITY MPS THREATEN REFORM PLANS

KUWAIT: A parliament packed with lawmakers who oppose wage cuts and taxes, and who want to keep Kuwait's sumptuous welfare state intact, is threatening the government's attempts to close a gaping budget deficit. Opposition candidates won about 24 out of 50 seats last month in a parliamentary election seen by Kuwaitis as a referendum on austerity measures aimed at dealing with the 2016/17 shortfall, forecast at KD 9.5 billion (\$31 billion).

Citizens of the country, one of the world's wealthiest, have bristled at recent fuel subsidy cuts and utility price hikes that the government pushed through the outgoing parliament with relative ease. But the new lawmakers say they are determined to protect basic services and jobs in a public sector, which employs more than 90 percent of workers. Governments across the Gulf - also trying to rein in spending in an era of flagging oil prices - are watching closely as the government tries to pass more reforms, including taxing corporate profits and cutting government wages and benefits.

Kuwait's opposition, which includes the Muslim Brotherhood, liberals, tribal representatives and independents, say the government should trim other costs first, including what it calls "wasted expenses" such as an overseas medical allowance. By law, Kuwaitis, who enjoy the fourth highest gross domestic product per capita in the world, can travel abroad for specialized medical treatment at the expense of the government.

Opposition figures elected to the Assembly say the allowance, which costs an estimated KD 760 million a year, is used to line the pockets of people with ties to government.

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OPPOSITION ISSUES MORE WARNINGS ON MINISTERS

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition MPs yesterday issued more warnings to the prime minister against retaining a number of ministers in the new Cabinet, saying they will spark tensions with the new National Assembly. Opposition Islamist MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei yesterday added Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh to a list of at least six ministers who have already been rejected as potential "crisis makers".

Tabtabaei said on his Twitter account that the return of the finance minister to the Cabinet will trigger a crisis between the Assembly and the government over his role in undermining the "pockets of citizens" and for his major failures in managing Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), the country's wealth fund. Tabtabaei was referring to accusations that Saleh is responsible for a series of measures to reduce subsidies and raise prices.

Several MPs have already issued strong objections to retaining the ministers of interior, health, justice, social affairs and labor and education among others. Tabtabaei also charged that a majority of KIA board members have been in their posts for the past 20 years as if there are no replacements for them in the country.

MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei called on the prime minister not to include any minister that may cause problems with the Assembly, saying this will be understood by the Kuwaiti people as a challenge to their decision in the general election last month. He said the outcome of the election clearly indicates that the Kuwaiti people

want to restore their seized constitutional and legal rights and want development without corruption.

Subaei also said the Kuwaiti people also want measures to safeguard public funds and legislation that require the private sector to shoulder its responsibility in boosting the state's resources instead of those undermining the income of citizens.

Opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani urged the premier to form a government capable of achievement and which will seriously tackle all unresolved issues. He said the latest government austerity measures have overburdened the income of citizens, and as such the economic and financial reform package must be abolished, coupled with curbing squandering of public funds and corruption.

Adasani said that any economic measure must not impact the income of citizens and must not include imposing taxes, reducing subsidies or raising prices. He also called for restoring all citizenships revoked for political reasons and not revoke any citizenship in the future without a final court verdict.

Meanwhile, the constitutional court yesterday received a new petition challenging the general election on the basis that the formation of the election committee to examine the candidates was not in line with the constitution. The court had rejected a similar petition before the elections were held on Nov 26.

The court has already received a petition challenging the election results in the fourth constituency by candidate

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ROME: Italy's Prime Minister Matteo Renzi announces his resignation during a press conference at the Palazzo Chigi following the results of a referendum on constitutional reforms yesterday. — AFP

RENZI PACKS HIS BAGS AFTER REFERENDUM ROUT

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said his goodbyes yesterday after a ruinous referendum defeat that was cheered by populist leaders and sent shockwaves rippling around Europe. "My experience of government finishes here," said a downcast Renzi after accepting a defeat of almost 60-40 percent over his constitutional reform bid. The result, coming on the coattails of Brexit and Donald Trump's US election win, has plunged Italy into a period of political uncertainty and cast a shadow over the short- and long-term future of the eurozone's third-largest economy.

After a first meeting with President Sergio Mattarella to discuss his departure, Renzi posted a link on his Facebook page defending his record since he came to power in February 2014. "1,000 difficult but wonderful days. Thanks to everyone. Viva l'Italia," he wrote.

Renzi, 41, later arrived at the presidential palace in Rome to formally offer his resignation. Mattarella was expected to either accept his resignation, ask him to stay on for a few days in order to pass the country's 2017 budget, or appoint a caretaker leader until elections can be held.

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JAYALALITHAA DIES AFTER LONG ILLNESS

CHENNAI: Jayalalithaa Jayaram, the chief minister of south India's Tamil Nadu state and one of the country's most popular political leaders, died after a prolonged illness, hospital authorities announced late yesterday night. "It is with indescribable grief, we announce the sad demise of our esteemed honorable chief minister of Tamil Nadu ... at 11:30pm (local time) today (December 5)," Chennai's Apollo Hospital said in a statement released to the media.

Doctors had been treating the 68-year-old former film star, who enjoys an almost godlike status in Tamil Nadu. Hundreds of devotees have kept a round-the-clock vigil outside the private hospital in the state capital Chennai since she was first admitted in September suffering from a fever. Their numbers swelled since her condition worsened on Sunday. "Nothing can kill Amma," said one man holding a picture of the leader outside the hospital. To millions of her followers, the chief minister was known simply as "Amma" (mother).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his condolences over her demise. "I will always cherish the innumerable occasions when I had the opportunity to interact with Jayalalithaa ji (honorific). May her soul rest in peace," Modi said on Twitter. Her political party, AIADMK, on Twitter said: "our beloved leader, the Iron lady of India... Amma, is no more."

Jayalalithaa was introduced to politics by her cinema screen partner, M G Ramachandran, another actor-turned politician, and went on to serve as chief minister of Tamil Nadu five times. Jayalalithaa remained hugely popular despite being jailed more than once for corruption. The reclusive leader ran her party with an iron hand with no clear line of succession to govern a state that is home to major auto and IT outsourcing firms.

During her latest illness, her picture was put in a chair at the head of the table at state cabinet meetings. Her ministers have on occasions been seen to prostrate themselves at her feet.

O P Panneerselvam, a cabinet colleague, has stood in for Jayalalithaa in the past, but he has repeatedly made it clear he is not replacing her and pointedly refused to sit in her chair at cabinet meetings. "There is no second line of defense here, and these are emotive times. There is a chance of violence," said T R Ramachandran, an independent expert on Tamil Nadu politics.

The Press Trust of India said police across the state had been put on high alert to maintain law and order, with 2,000 officers stationed at the hospital alone in case emotional crowds of devoted supporters reacted strongly to further developments. Supporters have been known to commit suicide in reaction to bad news. Media reports said some Chennai schools would remain closed, while the US consulate in the city said it had suspended services and warned Americans to exercise caution.

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MUMBAI: Supporters hold a photograph of Tamil Nadu state leader Jayalalithaa Jayaram as they offer prayers for her well-being at a temple yesterday. — AP



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Head of the Board of Trustees of the Arabian Horse Center Alaa Al-Roumi and members of the Board. —KUNA

CROWN PRINCE MEETS ARABIAN HORSE CENTER MEMBERS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Head of the Board of Trustees of the Arabian Horse Center Alaa Hamad Al-Roumi and members of the Board on the occasion of Kuwait National Arabian Horse Festival which was held last November 18-19. The meeting was attended by Chief of Protocol of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. —KUNA

JORDAN ICT MINISTER INAUGURATES ZAIN TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

AMMAN/KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator across eight markets in the Middle East and Africa, announces the successful commencement of its sixth annual Zain Technology Conference (ZTC) yesterday at Le Royal hotel in Amman, Jordan.

Held under the patronage of the Prime Minister of Jordan, Dr. Hani Al-Mulki, the conference was inaugurated by the Minister of Information and Communication Technology, and Minister of Public Sector Development, Majd Shweikeh who made an inspiring keynote address that was appreciated



Zain Group CEO Scott Gegenheimer speaks during the ZTC 2016 conference.



Jordan's ICT Minister Majd Shweikeh delivers her speech.

by all present. The theme of ZTC 2016 is 'Moving Forward', and will focus on Zain's strategy execution as it continues to transform into a digital lifestyle provider of the highest caliber, investing extensively in network and technology upgrades to ensure its individual and enterprise customers receive the best and simplest digital mobile experience.

The event saw the attendance of over 700 telecom professionals made up of Zain technology, innovation and product development personnel from across its eight operations as well as representatives from 60 of the world's

leading technology solution providers. Also in attendance was the President of the Jordan Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, Dr. Ghazi Jbour; Zain Group CEO, Scott Gegenheimer; Zain Jordan CEO, Ahmad Al-Hanandeh; and Zain Group CTO, Hisham Allam.

In her opening keynote address, Majd Shweikeh said, "The holding of this important conference in Jordan by Zain Group, a regional telecom pioneer, reflects the Kingdom's success in the global digital arena and its ever-increasing attraction as a regional hub for digital innovation. Jordan recognizes the importance of the ICT sector as a key driver of economic activity, and this conference's ability to showcase the latest digital innovations will support our strategy and transition to become a knowledge-based, digital economy."

She continued, "Over the last decade, Zain has played an instrumental role in bringing the latest technologies to Jordan and across the region, and we recognize the importance of both the public and private sector working closely together to fully exploit the potential of digitization for the benefit of society at large."

The opening session also saw keynote presentations made by Zain's primary technology partners, Ericsson, Huawei, and Nokia, each of which showcased their strategic technology offerings in support of Zain's digital transformation aspirations. In addition, renowned consulting firms Detecon and Strategy and made presentations focusing on the experiences of global operators in their digital transformation journey. The keynote address presented by Fadi Ghandour, the Co-Founder of courier company Aramex and Executive Chairman of WAMDA Capital was well received and set the tone for the rest of the conference.

Innovation

Highlighting the significance of the event being held in Jordan and the importance of innovation to the company's overall strategy, Zain Group CEO, Scott Gegenheimer said, "Jordan is an appropriate backdrop in which to host ZTC 2016, given the emphasis on innovation that is driven from the Zain operation in the country, notably the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC), and from which digital ideas are being injected into the Group in order to deliver unique digital mobile experiences for our customers."

The CEO continued, "I would like to extend a special thank you to the Prime Minister's Office, as well as the Office of Information and Communication Technology, and of Public Sector Development for their unwavering support of our efforts and the creation of an

enabling environment in which we are able to continue deploying cutting edge technology."

Gegenheimer concluded, "We operate in a highly competitive industry, where the margin between success and failure is very thin. We are required to push ourselves constantly, and together with trusted partners we devise new operating models to deliver the best quality service to customers. This is why events such as ZTC are so important in aligning Zain's ambitions to become a digital lifestyle provider of choice with our technology partners' technology roadmaps and expectations."

Tailored solutions

Zain is utilizing the latest technologies in the development of tailored solutions in areas such as Machine to Machine (M2M) communications, Enterprise (B2B) offerings, and Smart City connectivity, in attracting and offering its customers unique and business enhancing mobile solutions.

"I would like to welcome all delegates to ZTC 2016 and to Jordan. There are numerous groundbreaking developments taking place in this market and over the coming days we look forward to detailing some of them with you. We hope you take this opportunity to network and exchange knowledge, and the desire is for you to leave the event reinvigorated by the prospects that lie ahead," said Ahmad Al-Hanandeh, Zain Jordan CEO.

Hisham Allam, Zain Group CTO said, "We are always enthusiastic to bring our community of technology partners together to discuss industry developments in the context of Zain's plans, strategy, and ambitions, and we are excited about this year's event. The converged communications space is an environment in constant flux, and the ability to take stock as well as peer ahead is crucial to succeeding now and into the future. I hope all participants grasp this opportunity."

ZTC 2016 will comprise seven streams, which extend to Smart Networks; Core Evolution; BSS and OSS; Digital Future; IT Evolution; Quality of Experience; Service Innovation; and Energy Efficiency and Site Optimization, with Zain's three main technical partners - Huawei, Ericsson, and Nokia - offering technical sessions at the ZINC.

A live stream of the opening and major presentations of the event is being provided to 7,000 staff across all Zain Group country operations. The conference is being comprehensively covered live on Zain's social media channels covering many aspects of the event and a dedicated website <https://event.zain.com> has been established.

ALGHANIM INDUSTRIES CONCLUDES ACTIVITIES IN THE 33RD ANNUAL NUKS - USA CONFERENCE

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest private companies in the region, concluded its sponsorship for the 33rd annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) USA branch, which took place from 24 to 27 of November in San Francisco, California, under the slogan 'Youth Awareness for a Lasting Nation'.

The conference was conducted under the patronage of the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Dr. Bader Al-Essa, and was attended by the Ambassador of Kuwait in the United States, Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, as well as a number of prominent media figures and representatives from several private sector companies.

Alghanim Industries participated in the career fair, where representatives of the company hosted a workshop to help students build a strong resume. They were also present at the company's booth during the fair to answer students' questions about the company and available job opportunities. With the conclusion of the conference's activities, Alghanim Industries held a draw as part of the "Night Show", and presented the winners with valuable gifts from X-cite.

Regarding Alghanim Industries' sponsorship of this year's NUKS con-

ference, Head of the Corporate Communications Department at Alghanim Industries, Abdullateef Abdulazeez Al-Sharikh, said: "We participate in this conference every year because it is the largest gathering of Kuwaiti students in the United States, and it gives us an opportunity to interact directly with these exceptional students. We at Alghanim Industries recognize the importance of education, and that is why we dedicate many of our Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives towards it. We also continuously train and develop our employees through our in-house learning and development department. We wish all of our students in the United States the best of luck during their studies and wish them success in their professional careers. Our youth have huge potential, and we would be happy to have them as Alghanim Industries interns or employees in the near future."

The company has been actively working to increase its Kuwaiti workforce through a variety of initiatives. One example is the Alghanim Future Leaders Program, which is a special program to develop the professional skills of talented Kuwaitis who have recently graduated from college. In addition, the Kuwaiti Mentoring

Program gives Kuwaiti employees the opportunity to develop their leadership capabilities through the engagement and counsel of the company's senior leaders. Building a strong Kuwait workforce is a strategic priority for the company, and its participation in the NUKS conference is an important part of these efforts.

The sponsorship of the annual NUKS conference in the United States comes as part of Alghanim Industries' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, which is committed to empowering the underprivileged, supporting education and encouraging entrepreneurship. It is worth noting that the company was the Strategic Sponsor for the fifth annual Tmkeen Youth Symposium, an initiative that provides youth with valuable insights about entrepreneurship from industry leaders, academics and experts, and was held under the patronage of the Emir, H.H. Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah. The company is also the largest supporter for INJAZ-Kuwait, as it encourages its employees to volunteer regularly in INJAZ's different programs. In addition to being a platinum sponsor of "ArabNet Conference" and providing free event tickets to 100 university students in Kuwait.



Alghanim Industries' team is pictured with Ambassador of Kuwait in the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah.



Alghanim Industries' team is pictured with the conference's organizers.

KUWAIT AIRWAYS NETWORK INCREASES TO 37 DESTINATIONS

NEW ROUTES DEMONSTRATE DEMAND FOR EXPANSION

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways, the national carrier of the State of Kuwait, announced yesterday that two new routes have been added to its network of international destinations, with the Munich route having already started (30th of October) and Najaf, Iraq, to be added from 1st December 2016.

As part of the national carrier's five-year transformation plan, Kuwait Airways recently announced that it had introduced a new "Winter Schedule", which saw a revision to its departure and arrival timings across its network, increased frequencies on key routes, and is now seeing the addition of new destinations.

The addition of Munich has added to Kuwait Airways' existing network into Germany, served through Frankfurt, and is now operating three flights per week to the Bavarian capital. Including Frankfurt, this brings the total number of flights to the EU's most populous and largest economy to sev-



en flights per week. Flights to Najaf, Iraq, will start from December 1 and offer a twice-weekly service, every Sunday and Thursday.

"While we have stated that some of the immediate priorities, within Kuwait Airways' five-year transformation plan, are to consolidate and enhance our existing network; a profitable airline must always be in tune with the com-

mercial demands of our passengers," said Rasha Al-Roumi, Chairperson and CEO of Kuwait Airways.

"The addition of these new routes are part of a growth strategy towards a profitable and sustainable business model, as well as contributing to positioning the national carrier as the preferred airline linking Kuwait to the world," Roumi concluded.



A gift is presented to Jordan's ICT Minister Majd Shweikeh.



KUWAIT: (From left) Professors Redha Al-Hasan, Faiza Al-Kharafi, Mubarak Alobeidi, Ali Alshamlan, and Jassim Al-Hasan. — Photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi



Professor Osman El-Desouqi, who has been teaching since the 1960s.



Actor Jamal Al-Radhan (left) and film producer Rashid Al-Mutawa.

KU SCIENCE FACULTY CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

KUWAIT: Kuwait University's Faculty of Science celebrated its golden jubilee at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Theatre in Khalidiya yesterday. The celebration was held under the patronage of KU President Prof Hussain Ahmed Al-Ansari and the current Dean of the Faculty of Science Prof Abdulhadi Bu-Olayan.

The ceremony began with a documentary depicting the journey of the faculty since its inception, and how it was restored after the liberation of Kuwait, followed by its vision of the future and the aspiration to work at the new campus of Kuwait University in Shadadiya. This was followed by a speech about early pioneers presented by Dr Mustafa Marafi, who made the audience laugh with a poem

through which expressed the special connection he has with the Faculty of Science. "The pioneers of science in the Arab world are in fact the reason why we sustain a passion for science - we learned it from them. I see this passion through the love and respect the students give us," he added. Boy scouts of Qais bin Abi Alas School then performed, and the audience cheered them by waving flags. Later, member of the higher committee and media committee Dr Arafat Al-Shuaibi gave a vote of thanks. He gave special thanks to Kuwaiti veteran actor Jamal Al-Radhan and theater and film producer Rashid Al-Mutawa for their outstanding voluntary work for the documentary. The ceremony ended with exhibitions of photography and student activities, followed by lunch.



Professor Mustafa Marafi delivers a speech.



Professors Abdul Hadi Buolayan, Bader Alomar, and Mubarak Alobeidi.



Professor Faiza Al-Kharafi is honored.



Professor Jassim Al-Hasan is honored.



Professor Ali Alshamlan is honored.



The boy scouts of Qais Ibn Abi Alas School.



Professor Fikry Khalaf, who has been teaching since the establishment of the faculty in 1966.



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the outgoing Peruvian Ambassador to Kuwait Heli Castro. — KUNA

FM RECEIVES OUTGOING PERUVIAN ENVOY

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday the outgoing Peruvian Ambassador to the country Heli Castro. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled heaped praise on Castro for his efforts to enhance Kuwait's ties with the

Latin American nation. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's Office Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and other senior Foreign Ministry officials. — KUNA

FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAISES ROLE OF KFH IN SUPPORTING SOCIETY

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah praised Kuwait Finance House (KFH) in recognition of its significant role in supporting the society.

The praise came on the sidelines of the bank's participation in the golden jubilee of College of Business Administration, Kuwait University in presence of former and current deans and professors, not to mention a huge number of students. KFH was accessible through its own booth in this carnival, in addition to a team of Public Relations department. Jubilee celebration is a carnival where numerous booths were set up to display stellar academic achievements of the university.

KFH's participation affirms its ongoing contributions in serving the society, yet reflects the continuing cooperation between the university and KFH as part of the latter's interest in improving the educational process.

Meanwhile, Kuwait University President Dr Hussein Al-Ansari, Dean of College of Business Administration Dr Meshari Al Hajri and officials at the university expressed their appreciation to

KFH for its pivotal role in supporting the students and the activities of the university, indicating KFH is an example for other private institutions to follow suit.

ing KFH is an example for other private institutions to follow suit.



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah honors KFH.



KUWAIT: This photo released by the Interior Ministry yesterday shows two suspects arrested for kidnap and rape yesterday, as well as drugs and 'sorcery material' found with them.

DUO ARRESTED FOR KIDNAP, RAPE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Hawally detectives arrested two citizens who kidnaped and raped a girl in Jabriya. The girl had reported earlier to police about the kidnapping that took place near her house in Salmiya, saying that she was raped in Jabriya. Both suspects had drugs on them along with material used in sorcery, the Interior Ministry said in a statement. The suspects were sent to concerned authorities.

Municipality inspections

Hawally Municipality branch carried out campaigns on stores to check their date of license. A total of 1,225 stores were inspected while 123 tickets were issued. They include 52 violations commencing work before receiving a license, 44 for failure to renew the license, 15 for placing a sign without proper licenses, as well as two violations for practicing work on the roof without a prior license, said Faleh Al-Otaibi, director of inspections and municipality services follow up in Hawally.

38 PERCENT EARLY DETECTION OF COLORECTAL CANCER CASES HEALED

KUWAIT: Head of the National Program for Early Detection of Colorectal Cancer Dr Fahad Al-Ibrahim announced yesterday putting the final touches on the research project dedicated to identify the rates of benign and cancerous colorectal tumors in Kuwait. He added in remarks yesterday that this project will offer a comprehensive analysis of the cancer cases that underwent early inspection in all of the country's governorates.

The rate of benign colorectal cancer cases who underwent early inspection reached 38 percent, as the cases were healed following lumpectomy through the colonoscopy. He pointed to the high turnout in early inspection of colorectal cancer since the beginning of the program till now, as a total of 70,000 nationals were admitted for the detection from various governorates.

There are plans for establishing a specialized center to detect colorectal cancer with the capacity of 200,000 patients which is still under study in order to achieve total protection from such a disease. The aim of this national program is to early detect the cancerous tumors and come up with a remedy before it spreads all over the patient's body, he said. Ibrahim stressed the importance of introducing colorectal cancer risk factors and disease symptoms, along with the importance of the early detection of this illness in its early stages, which gives a great hope in total cure. He appreciated the continuous cooperation and coordination between the primary health doctors and digestive tract and endoscopy units' doctors in the hospital as well as the programs' policies of spreading awareness over such a disease in the society, he said.

Better health

In other news, an official at Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), a branch of Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Science (KFAS), reiterated DDI's keenness on establishing partnerships with various Kuwaiti sectors to attain better societal health.

DDI holds various events in cooperation with state and private sectors, and schools in order to raise public awareness in the Kuwaiti society on the importance of healthy lifestyles and diabetes prevention ways, said Dr Ebaa Al-Ozairi, executive chairman for health sector in DDI. Ozairi made her remarks on the sidelines of the "Diabetes and Middle Eastern Diet" conference, held in cooperation with the Italian embassy to mark the Italian cultural week in Kuwait, and in presence of Italian Ambassador Giuseppe Scognamiglio.

Medical physicians and health specialists cannot change societies' health habits as much as the people themselves could, she said, noting that investing time and efforts in raising public awareness on such health issues as diabetes by related organizations would, eventually, result in positive and promising outcomes.

DDI is keen on continued communication with various embassies in the country to bolster mutual cooperation, Al-Ozairi said, recalling one of the Institute's special programs on growing healthy kids that was funded by the US embassy. Meanwhile, the Italian Ambassador stated that his country aims, through the ongoing Italian week, to promote ways of cultural, health, environmental, and technological cooperation with various Kuwaiti sectors. — KUNA

ONLY 1 MP SUBMITTED FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT SO FAR

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Public Anti-Corruption Authority received financial disclosure statements from various state officials on Nov 21 and remarked that the statements so far submitted are still less than 10, said informed sources. The sources added that after the parliamentary elections, 50 new lawmakers assumed office, but only one statement was submitted by MP Abdul Kareem Al-Kandari. The sources highlighted that the deadline for all officials to submit their statements is May 14, 2017, but newly-elected MPs and public servants have to file their statements within a

maximum of 60 days after assuming new positions and within six months for those already in service when the authority's charter was passed.

The statement should be updated within 60 days at the end of three years in the same position and within 90 days after leaving any position. Officials who delay filing their statements will be subjected to penal measures including a KD 500-3,000 fine for delaying the first statement. In case the delay exceeds 90 days following a warning, the official will be dismissed from office. On the other hand, delay in filing a statement update will subject the concerned official to a maximum KD 3,000

fine and up to one year in prison, while a delay beyond 90 days will subject an official to a KD 3,000-10,000 fine and a possibility of dismissal.

New students

Kuwait University Rector Dr Hussein Al-Ansary announced that the university will accept 756 new students for the second semester after it already accepted 5,913 students in the first semester for the academic year 2016-2017. Ansary justified the lower number accepted for the second semester to the university's limited capacity due to limited space and being understaffed.

2018-2019 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FINALIZED

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Secretary General of the Supreme Planning And Development Council Khaled Mahdi said the secretariat teams responsible for the annual development plan have finalized the fourth annual development plan (2018-2019) as a part of the second five-year plan of 2015-2016/2019-2020. After attending the annual meeting with UN organizations operating in Kuwait, Mahdi explained that the projects listed in the third annual plan 2017-2018 will be the same in the fourth annual plan 2018-2019, with the exception of projects that are already completed.

At the UN organizations' annual meeting, Mahdi gave a presentation on the harmony between Kuwait's development plans and the UN's sustainable development goals. Mahdi also disclosed the council's secretariat general's suggestion to work on a methodology which will oblige the private sector to include its achievements in the field of sustainable

development goals within the annual reports.

Session adjourned

For the second time since Nov 21, Municipal Council Chairman Muhalhel Al-Khaled adjourned the council's session yesterday due to lack of quorum after five members resigned to run in the parliamentary elections.

Diplomats acquitted

The court of appeals acquitted two Kuwaiti diplomats at a Kuwaiti embassy on charges of embezzling KD 299,422 yesterday. One of the diplomats had been sentenced to seven years in jail and dismissal from office, while the other had been sentenced to five years in jail and dismissal from office, along with paying back the embezzled sum and twice the amount in fines.

New airport

The Ministry of Public Works' (MPW) Assistant Undersecretary for Construction

Projects Ghaleb Al-Shemmari said Kuwait's new airport will be one of the world's best airports and will have outstanding facilities qualifying it as a pioneer in design, conserving energy and protecting the environment. He added that MPW is keen on using new elements in the project such as modern air-conditioning systems, using natural light, recycling water and reusing it in irrigation as well as using solar power to generate 10 percent of the airport's electricity.

Shemmari said that being a gigantic project, it needs time for preconstruction measures, which includes setting up temporary offices, topographic surveys and building the project's perimeter. In addition, Shemmari said MPW has signed a contract to build a new maternity hospital and that the project will start soon. He also noted that a tender will be offered for building a police hospital. "The ministry is also working on building a hospital for children and one for correctional facilities," he explained.



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahad meets with Head of Iraqi Border Forces Command Hamid Ibrahim and his accompanying delegation. — Interior Ministry photo

MOI COMMENDS SECURITY COOPERATION WITH IRAQ

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahad praised yesterday the joint security cooperation between Kuwait and Iraq under deep and solid bilateral ties. Fahad made his remarks after meeting with the visiting Head of Iraqi Border Forces Command Hamid Ibrahim and his accompanying delegation, stressing the importance of joint and regular meetings in boosting mutual

coordination, MoI said in a statement.

Such meetings also aim at overcoming obstacles and difficulties that hinder ways of cooperation between the two sides, in addition to enhancing the security readiness levels in both countries in light of current security developments in the region, he said.

Fahad conveyed to the visiting Iraqi delegation greetings of Deputy Prime Minister and

Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, pointing out the distinctive Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations. Meanwhile, Ibrahim expressed his gratitude and appreciation of Kuwait for the generosity and well-reception they received while in the country, and the friendly-cooperation atmosphere that Kuwaiti officials provided for the visiting guests. — KUNA

WB SEEKS KUWAIT'S AID TO MOLD ADEPT GENERATION

KUWAIT: It is imperative to cooperate with Kuwait to revamp educational curriculums to create a new generation capable of contributing to the development of a robust economy, the World Bank (WB) said yesterday.

These remarks were made by WB Senior Education Specialist Dr Ayesha Vawda in a statement to the press after a workshop organized by the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the WB and a national center for the development of education.

Moreover, Vawda noted that the pros and cons of an educational reform program have been pinpointed in this workshop, in addition to potential challenges that could encumber this plan.

On Kuwait's approach to educational reforms, she said that the country has developed solid curriculums on the elementary and middle school level, which have been formed with skill and efficiency.

The WB Education Specialist also heaped praise on local school administrations for their efforts to usher in a series of educational reforms, as she noted that these schools belong to some of the world's most preeminent educational systems.

Speaking on potential challenges encountered by teachers, Vawda said some of them have not incorporated new teaching methods in order to ensure a solid education, adding that teachers should be given firm support as they help bring this new curriculum to fruition. "I hope that this new educational reforms program will help pave the way for a vibrant job market and produce students that can meet the needs of the job market," she said.

The educational reforms program is a national project that aims to ameliorate education in the country, part of a broad development plan undertaken by the Ministry of Education. With a timeframe of five years, the project is at a total cost of KD 10.6 million, with an annual KD 2.12 million budget earmarked for educational courses and workshops. — KUNA

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Crime

Report

CAMERA LENSES' THIEVES CAUGHT

KUWAIT: Three Egyptians who stole camera lenses worth KD 50,000 were busted by criminal detectives when they sold the lenses at low prices. A Ukrainian told police about the missing lenses, and detectives found the store was opened by a key and not broken into. They investigated other stores selling similar lenses, which led them to the accused.

Muggers arrested

A bedoon and an Iraqi who attacked expats and stole their money and phones in Hawally and Salwa were arrested in Salmiya following extensive investigations. The victims identified the suspects in a lineup. They will be sent to concerned authorities for further legal action.

Harasser beaten

A citizen beat a man who was harassing his wife in a Jahra mall, until police arrived. Both men were taken to the police station where two cases were lodged - one against the harasser, and another against the two for fighting.

Drugs

The odor of drugs exposed a drug user wanted over a rape case. Ahmadi police noticed a car parked near a checkpoint, and on approaching it, the smell wafted through the open window. The suspect was arrested and taken to the proper authorities to face charges.

Indecent acts

Police arrested a couple in the parking lot of a mall after security men noticed a car shaking in an unusual way. They called the police, who found a man and his girlfriend inside, who were arrested for indecent acts.

KD 40 theft

A Bangladeshi man was attacked with a metal pipe by his compatriot, who caught him stealing KD 40 from him. The injured was taken to Mubarak Hospital while the attacker was taken to Salmiya police station. —Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa



الجريدة

Al-Jarida

A MESSAGE TO THOSE I KNOW

By Ali Mahmoud Khajah

We expect Kuwait's young lawmakers to bring peace, joy, culture and art back to Kuwait through which our nation can prosper. Protect all beliefs, specifically those opposite to yours. Don't become a part of undecided conflict on power which involves unfair methods. Osama Al-Shaheen was born in 1979, Rakan Al-Nisf was born in 1980, Omar Al-Tabtabae was born in 1980, Abdul Wahab Al-Babtain was born in 1985, Youisif Al-Fadhlah was born in 1981, Abdul Kareem Al-Kandari was born in 1981, Ahmed Nabil Al-Fadhil was born in 1977 and Nasser Al-Doussari was born in 1986. It is about these lawmakers who are below the age of 40, that I am going to talk today regardless of their political, sectarian or tribal affiliations, if any exist.

Relating to them is easier because I went to the same school as they did in the same period. I might have even studied with them at university or met them on a football pitch or a park when we were young. We might have even sat a table apart in some restaurant during the 1990s. We might have even shopped from same stores. We share a lot in common which makes it lot easier to address them today.

Willingly or unwillingly, you now represent our thoughts, aspirations and vision of our imminent country. Just like us, you expressed dissatisfaction with the current situations. We shared ups and downs together. That is why I expect a different performance from you. Many people will try to twist your stances to their own interests. They will treat you in ways you might surrender to them turning you into losers.

You will be intellectually intimidated on social media networks in attempts to direct your opinions in favor of theirs. They will try to keep you busy with petty issues concerning tumults, prevention and conflicts that you have nothing to do with. Lead the country in the best possible way because people preferred you to many veteran iconic politicians, so that you could bring some change. You will probably err and make decisions that won't appeal to us, but only if you are not followers or directed in such stances even if they were wrong, you will be respected.

Kuwait will never face any regional threats if you manage to unite the society instead of dividing it. No one will ever succeed in creating a ruckus, if you face such attempts firmly. Work with unity. Think and make decisions together. Your first priority should be our country's future. You can make these dreams come true. Finally, I would like to point that the so-called boycotters have gone leaving no trace. The only remains were a few loyal individuals who still believe it is the only way of salvation, while the others only boycotted showing up at polling centers but worked as campaign members for whoever.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

النهار

Al-Anbaa

NO RIGHTS TO ABUSE

By Salah Al-Sayer

"So what if you are my father. That does not mean you can rob me", that was a famous line said by the iconic Egyptian comedian Adel Imam to his father, Nazeem Sha'rawi in the famous 1970s 'School Rioters' play. Such a remark might sound totally strange to the Arab world whereas in America even inside their homes people are subjected to law. For example, a Muslim husband is held accountable if he assaults his wife even after producing one thousand religious fatwas allowing Muslim husbands to beat their wives.

A while ago, news flew around about celebrity Angelina Jolie's child abuse accusations against her ex-husband Brad Pitt, and claimed that he had beaten up his son as a result of a fight between them on a flight. So, the FBI, the highest investigation authority of that great country, got involved and stated that it was gathering information about the alleged incident. The child and family authority

in Los Angeles interrogated the famous Hollywood star until he was proven innocent. It was almost like the US was on the verge of mobilizing a flight carrier to prevent a father from beating his rebellious kid.

A friend once shared a story with me, saying that when he was young, and whenever he committed a mistake, news about it would reach his neighbors and he would receive double of the penalty he received from his father. This happened because the neighboring parents believed that they were responsible for disciplining all the children in the neighborhood. This meant that, as a child, you had to put up with your parents' double measures and accept child abuse, which, according to WHO, has lifelong physical and psychological impact on children and can act as barriers to socio-economic development in any country.

—Translated by Kuwait Times



GULF BANK WELCOMES RED ACCOUNT'S DRAW WINNER

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank welcomed Mohammad Faisal Mofarej Al-Hajeri, the 9th winner of the monthly cash draw for the Red Account 2016, at the head office at Gulf bank. Manal Barakat, Manager, Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank congratulated him on winning the KD1,000. Commenting on his win, Hajeri stated that "the draw took place on my birthday and I was pleasantly surprised to win the draw."

New Red Account customers who open or transfer their student allowance will be eligible to enter the monthly cash draws for a chance to also win up to KD 1,000. In addition, the quarterly car draw will be for 1 lucky winner who will have a chance to win a new Escalade Cadillac. For further information about Gulf Bank's red account and other prize draws, visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805, or go online at www.e-gulfbank.com.

MODERN HOME 2016 KICKS OFF DECEMBER 21

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Fair Company (KIFCO) started preparations for a new edition of its 'Modern Home 2016' exhibition, which is due to be held in the period of December 21-30, 2016 at the Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref.

Speaking on the occasion, the exhibition's manager Mariam Al-Doussery stressed that modern household items including furniture, bedrooms, beds, mattresses, blankets, kitchens, kitchen accessories, security systems against theft and fires, smoke detectors and surveillance cameras will be displayed during the exhibition.

"The exhibition will be a good chance for companies to compete in displaying their products including furniture, kitchen equipment, gardening gear, aluminum shutters and windows, carpets, curtains, decoration materials, paintings, metal works, swimming pools and illumination from all over the world at very competitive prices," Doussery added. She announced that registration to take part in the exhibition is still open, adding that a huge publicity campaign is planned to promote the event in various media outlets and social media networks.



Mariam Al-Doussery



BURGAN BANK SUPPORTS INT'L DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank proudly announces its second sponsorship of 'The International Day of People with Disabilities', which is being organized by the "Ideal Education School" for students with special needs. This is an annual event being held with an aim to provide a frame for considering how people with disabilities are included in the society by promoting the removal of all types of barriers.

The event involved the participation of students and their parents in a series of programs and entertainment activities,

while the bank was there to show its solidarity and support for people with special needs in Kuwait. The event included displaying the special needs students' handmade arts and crafts which they have been working on during the year. Additionally, the event will be presenting an opportunity to people with disabilities to ensure that their rights, concerns and contributions are fully taken into consideration; this is in addition to helping in removing barriers to create an inclusive and accessible society for all.

It is worth mentioning that Burgan Bank's support to this initiative falls under its recently launched full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.



KUWAIT: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah honored Ahmadi rescue police department officers yesterday for their efforts in serving the governorate's residents.



11 die, 75 injured in Pakistan hotel fire

LIFE AND DEATH - DEFENDING LAND RIGHTS IN INDIA IS DANGEROUS JOB

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ISLAMIC STATE LOSES LIBYA BASTION

TRIPOLI: Forces loyal to Libya's UN-backed government said yesterday they had seized full control of Sirte from the Islamic State group, in a major blow to the jihadists who battled for months to retain their bastion. The battle for the coastal city, which was the last significant territory held by IS in Libya, cost the lives of hundreds of loyalist troops as well as an unknown number of IS fighters. "Our forces have total control of Sirte," Reda Issa, a spokesman for pro-government forces said. "Our forces saw Daesh (IS) totally collapse."

Forces allied with the country's unity government launched an offensive to retake the city on May 12, quickly seizing large areas of the city and cornering the jihadists. But IS put up fierce resistance with suicide car bombings, snipers and improvised explosive devices. "Daesh has totally collapsed and dozens of them have given themselves up to our forces," said a statement on the loyalist forces' official Facebook page. The capture of Sirte boosts the authority of the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), which was launched in Tripoli last March but whose legitimacy is contested by a rival administration based in eastern Libya.

The United States started a bombing campaign in August at the request of the GNA to help local forces recapture the city, seized by jihadists in June 2015. As of December 1, US warplanes, drones and helicopters had conducted 470 strikes. Libya descended into chaos following the NATO-backed ousting of longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, with rival administrations emerging and well-armed militias vying for control of the country's vast oil wealth. The infighting and lawlessness allowed extremist groups such as IS to seize several coastal regions, giving the jihadists a toehold on Europe's doorstep.

Far longer than planned

The fall of Sirte-Gaddafi's hometown located 450 kilometers east of Tripoli-represents a major setback for IS, which has also faced a series of military defeats in Syria and Iraq. Iraqi forces are advancing on the IS stronghold of Mosul, while a US-backed Kurdish-Arab alliance last month launched an offensive to retake Raqa, the Syrian capital of the "caliphate" the jihadists proclaimed in 2014. "Losing it (Sirte) could cause a momentary loss of traction, but a lot will depend on what happens in Syria and Iraq and whether the ungoverned spaces in Libya will remain such," said Mattia Toaldo, a Libya expert with the European Council of Foreign Relations.

Toaldo said IS's failure to hold Sirte was due in part to the group's lack of resources in Libya. "They didn't manage to seize any considerable source of revenue," he said. "What they found in the banks in Sirte was not comparable to what they found in Mosul, nor was there an equivalent weapons stockpile." The fight for Sirte took far longer than originally planned, but signs emerged in recent days that IS fighters were about to capitulate. The Pentagon last week said that IS holdouts were staging a "last stand" in their former stronghold. Pro-GNA forces on Sunday said they had even arrested several jihadists attempting to swim to safety.

Almost seven months of fighting left nearly 700 GNA fighters dead and 3,000 wounded. Issa said in November that the final assault was held up mainly because it would "result in very intense street fighting and Daesh is determined to defend its positions right down to the last square metre." Claudia Gazzini, an analyst with the International Crisis Group think-tank, said that jihadists who escaped from Sirte had likely moved south to Sebha, closer to Libya's borders with Algeria and Niger. Others from the group are believed to be operating in Benghazi and possibly in and around Tripoli. "Despite the demise of IS in Sirte we cannot rule out that they will continue to have cells in other parts of the country," Gazzini said. — AFP

SIRTE - FROM GADDAFI TO IS AND NOW TO GOVT FORCES

TRIPOLI: Sirte, where Libyan pro-government forces said yesterday they seized full control after more than six months of fighting, had been in the hands of Islamic State group jihadists since 2015. Here is background on the city:

Strategic importance

Sirte is on the Mediterranean coast roughly half-way between Libya's capital Tripoli in the west and second city Benghazi in the east. A major port city, it lies just 350 kilometers from the Italian coast. It is also a mere 150 kilometers west of Libya's main oil-producing area and export terminals. Oil is a vital source of income for Libya, and several groups have fought to control its wells and pipelines since the fall of dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The presence of IS in Sirte had raised fears it would

attempt to seize the fields to fund its North Africa operations. The United States on August 1 carried out its first air strikes on the town, at the Libyan unity government's request, with President Barack Obama saying defeating IS there was in America's national interest. US warplanes, drones and helicopters conducted more than 460 strikes.

Gaddafi's birthplace

Gaddafi, who was born in Sirte in 1942, made great efforts to turn his birthplace into the capital of his "Jamahiriya"-a "state of the masses" run by local committees. He created a new province around the town in addition to the three existing regions of Cyrenaica in the east, Fezzan in the southwest, and Tripolitania in the north. In the 1990s, he ordered ministries to be created in Sirte, and even set up a

parliament there, but eventually gave up on his plans. Gaddafi was captured and killed in the town on October 20, 2011.

Black flags

After Gaddafi's ouster, Sirte was largely left to its own devices until it fell into the hands of IS jihadists in June 2015. The black flag of IS was raised over public buildings and jihadists roamed the streets in pickup trucks to check that people were praying at the correct times and women were not venturing out of the home without a male minder.

Population

Sirte used to have about 120,000 residents, most of them in the centre or spread along the coast. Loyalist forces said most had managed to flee following the IS takeover. Most people in Sirte

belong to four major tribes including the Kadhada tribe of Gaddafi.

IS ouster

The forces of Libya's internationally backed Government of National Accord (GNA) launched an offensive to retake Sirte on May 12 and were able to enter the city on June 9. On August 11, pro-government forces captured IS's headquarters at the Ouagadougou conference centre, which Gaddafi erected to host international and African summits and serve his pan-African policy. It was the birthplace of the African Union with the signing of the Sirte Declaration in 1999. Loyalist forces pushed the jihadists into a handful of residential areas, gradually taking them one by one in the face of fierce resistance including a wave of suicide bombings. — AFP

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AS KURDS EYE STATEHOOD, A BORDER TAKES SHAPE

MAKHMUR: The sand berms and trenches that snake across northern Iraq stretch toward Syria, some accompanied by newly paved roads lit by street lamps and sprawling checkpoints decked with Kurdish flags. The fighters here insist it isn't the border of a newly independent state - but in the chaos of Iraq that could change. Construction began in 2014, when this marked the front line between US-backed Kurdish forces, known as the peshmerga, and the Islamic State group, which had swept across northern Iraq that summer, routing the army and threatening the Kurdish autonomous region. Since then, a more permanent boundary has taken shape as Kurdish aspirations for outright independence have grown.

Fault-line of new conflict

The frontier could mark the fault-line of a new conflict in Iraq once the extremists are defeated. A similar process is underway in Syria, where Syrian Kurdish forces have seized large swaths of land from IS. "It was our front line, now it's our border, and we will stay forever," said peshmerga commander and business magnate Sirwan Barzani. He's among a growing number of Kurdish leaders, including his uncle, the Kurdish region's President Massoud Barzani, who say that lands taken from IS will remain in Kurdish hands.

The Kurds have been at loggerheads with the Baghdad government over the so-called disputed territories -

lands stretching across northern and eastern Iraq - since the 2003 US-led invasion. Article 140 of the Iraqi constitution says their fate should be decided by a referendum, but such a vote has yet to be held, and as the Iraqi army collapsed in 2014, the Kurds moved in. They took control of the long-disputed northern city of Kirkuk that summer, ostensibly to protect it from IS. Since then, with the aid of US-led airstrikes, the Kurds have taken territory equivalent to 50 percent of their recognized autonomous region.

"After the defeat of IS, Sunnis will dispute the Kurdish claims, the Shiites in Baghdad will dispute both the Sunni claims and the Kurdish claims, and the possibility of conflict there is real," said Anwar Anaid, dean of social sciences at the University of Kurdistan Hewler. "What happens on the ground depends on the circumstances. There is a real Kurdish wish to go for independence." Peshmerga commander Aref Taymour said that once IS is driven from the northern city of Mosul, the Kurds will negotiate a new border with Baghdad.

Liberated by blood

But he added that "lands that have been liberated by blood, we have no intention to give them back to the federal government." Another Kurdish official, Dishad Mawlod, was even more direct, describing the fortifications as the "future borders of Kurdistan." "We're not violating any



MOSUL: Iraqis who fled fighting between Iraqi forces and Islamic State militants wait next of their pickups to cross to the Kurdish areas through a sand barrier created by Kurdish forces to demarcate their border, in the Nineveh plain, northeast of Mosul, Iraq. — AP

international laws, nor are we occupying anyone's land," he said. Barzani, the regional president's nephew, said the Kurds no longer trust the Iraqi

army to defend the country, after it lost nearly a third of it to IS two and a half years ago. "Of course there will be another Daesh," he said, referring to IS

by its Arabic acronym. "None of the internal Iraqi issues have been resolved," he added, saying the Kurds "will be ready." In the meantime, he

hopes for talks on independence as early as next year. "It's a bad marriage, let's get a divorce," he said. The Baghdad government is staunchly opposed to Kurdish independence, and Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi says he expects the Kurds to abide by an agreement that they withdraw from areas captured since the start of the Mosul operation in October.

"Some Kurdish politicians are saying otherwise. But they are not responsible people and they are not controlling events on the ground," Al-Abadi said in an interview with the Associated Press last week. The two sides have set the dispute aside as they work together to drive IS from Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, but the construction along the frontier is continuing. On one road south of Mosul, peshmerga fighters were building cinderblock stairways leading to offices in trailers, as guard posts were being set up further along the line.

Aware of the sensitivities, Iraqi soldiers and Kurdish fighters stationed along the frontier are reluctant to speak about the matter. "You can't take pictures, and whatever you do, don't call this a border!" a peshmerga fighter said as he came sauntering out of a checkpoint complex along the frontier. He refused to give his name. At a nearby army position, Iraqi soldier Hussein Jasseem acknowledged that "there is a border between us and the peshmerga." He declined to comment further. — AP

FLEEING THE FIGHTING, SYRIANS DESCRIBE TERRIFYING CHOICES

CIVILIANS FEAR BOMBS IN REBEL ENCLAVE, ARREST IF THEY FLEE

BEIRUT: As Syrian government forces advanced into Aleppo's rebel-held Al-Sakhour district, Hasan al-Ali said he faced the choice of staying put and being caught by the army, or fleeing into a shrinking rebel enclave under relentless bombardment. A father of three children, he opted for the latter, though food, fuel, water and medicine are running critically low in rebel-held areas, such as his fear of the Syrian government that insurgents have been trying to unseat for more than five years.

"I didn't take anything with me. I took the kids, ran to my car, and left... We took the decision at the final hour, because the army could have swooped in at any moment," the 33-year-old said, speaking in eastern Aleppo. For Ali and

others, the decision to leave home, even in the face of such deprivation and after a war that began in Syria in 2011 and arrived in their city in 2012, came as a wrench. Mahmoud Zakaria Rannan, a tailor from the city's Sheikh Najjar neighborhood who has six children and owned a small shop, said his family finally decided to leave after he was wounded when their house was shelled. "I had been in my home for 40 years, was I going to leave it in one day?" he said. The family went to the Sheikh Khudr district and then to the Old City. But as clashes continued, they decided to join his brother in government-held Adamiya.

"We have kids, and I'm injured... so we had to walk very slowly," he said. His journey included a two-hour trek through the city starting at 4 a.m. "There was a big group with us. They even fired on us at the airport highway." Some of those trapped inside the rebel sector may still be hoping to escape through a deal between rebels and the government, such as those that allowed thousands to leave Daraya near Damascus for insurgent-held Idlib after years of siege. "I will go to another area, I'll take my family and seek refuge in another area, a liberated area that doesn't have the regime. I have no trust at all in the regime to stay in its areas," said Ali. — Reuters

Escape

For those remaining in districts held by rebels, conditions are worsening, aggravated by the shortage of basic goods and the constant danger of bombardment in civilian areas and fighting near the quickly shifting front lines. "We had a lot of starvation. They were giving us every day or two days a bag of bread, so five loaves of pitta bread," said a woman who gave the name of Um Ali, or 'Ali's mother', who had fled to the government sector from her home in Jeb Al-Qubba district.

After the army has finished checking the identity papers of her and her family, she hopes they can move in with her brother in a western district of Aleppo that is in government hands. Many of those who chose to remain in rebel areas believe that checks of identity papers are a prelude to mass arrests, torture and extrajudicial killing, citing previous media reports of such action - all dismissed by Damascus as fabricated. The Observatory said on Wednesday the government had detained hundreds of people. A Syrian military source denied that, and said that while identities were being checked, nobody was being arrested.

Khalil Halabi, 35, a pharmacist from Al-Shaar district near the new front line, moved with his wife and children to the rebel-held Old City after what he described as 11 days of escalating bombardment. "The destruction is indescribable - the limbs, burnt limbs. Buildings collapsed and were burned down, mosques were destroyed completely," he said. "We lost a lot of people... through barrel bombs and rockets. Some of them died and some of them were permanently injured," he said. Others from his district fled in the other direction, seeking shelter in government areas.



HOMS: An opposition fighter from the Sham brigade guards a position on the front line during clashes with government forces in the village of Teir Maalah in Syria's central Homs province yesterday. — AFP

thousands of others in the areas that fell to the army in recent days, the danger and deprivation of east Aleppo seem a safer bet than the imprisonment or enlistment into the military that they fear if they moved to government areas. But as some fled deeper into Aleppo's remaining rebel districts, others decided instead to risk a perilous crossing of the front lines into government-held parts of the city, seeing it as a safer option than staying with the outgunned rebels.

"I hope Syria will return to the way it was, and people get back security and peace like before," said Abed al-Salam Ahmad, who crossed to the government sector with his wife and six daughters after their house was hit by a shell. The former construction worker said conditions were so bad that even animals would not endure them, and that inhabitants were badly treated by east Aleppo's rebels - something the rebels deny. His family fled at dawn, braving gunfire as they

insurgents after fleeing their territory are acting out of fear of authorities.

Starvation

Since the army swept through the northern part of the rebel enclave a week ago, capturing several large, populous districts, at least 30,000 people have fled across the front lines from the rebel areas, the UN's relief coordinator OCHA said. Thousands of others - the numbers are more difficult to calculate because international bodies are not present in rebel-held east Aleppo - retreated further into the insurgents' sector, including to the dense quarters of the Old City. OCHA estimates 5,000 had been displaced within eastern Aleppo. The UN envoy for Syria said on Saturday there may still be more than 100,000 people in rebel-held areas. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said it could be as many as 200,000.

photographer saw rescue workers and residents trying to pull survivors from rubble at a market.

The monitor reported two additional deaths, one in an earlier strike on Maaret Al-Numan and another in Al-Naqir, also in Idlib. It said six civilians, four of them children, had been killed in a government barrel bomb attack on the town of Al-Tamanah in the same province. Russia, a staunch ally of President Bashar al-Assad's government, began a military intervention in support of Damascus in September 2015. Moscow says it is targeting "terrorists" and has dismissed reports of civilian casualties in its strikes.

Army advances in Aleppo

Following lengthy negotiations with a highly resistant Russia, the UN Security Council will vote on a text-drawn up by Egypt, New Zealand and Spain-calling for a truce of at least seven days in

Aleppo and humanitarian access to residents trapped in the fighting. It remains uncertain whether Moscow will use its veto in the council to torpedo the measure after it proposed a renewable truce of only 24 hours, and for militant groups such as the Al-Nusra Front to be excluded.

In east Aleppo, government forces advanced against rebels, taking three neighborhoods and pushing into a fourth, state media and the Russian defense ministry said. The army and allied forces are nearly three weeks into an operation to recapture all of the city, divided between regime and rebel forces since 2012. Tens of thousands of civilians have fled the offensive, which has made steady gains and threatens to deal Syria's opposition its worst defeat in the five-year civil war. State television said late Sunday the army had captured the districts of Karm Al-Tahan and Myassar and advanced into the Qadi Askar neighborhood. — AFP



ALEPPO: Syrian pro-government troops walk on a street in Aleppo's eastern Karm Al-Jabal neighborhood as they advance towards Al-Shaar neighborhood yesterday during their offensive to retake Syria's second city. — AFP

IN ALEPPO, DREAMING OF HOME BUT FINDING ONLY THE RUBBLE

ALEPPO: Kafa Jawish hadn't slept in days, daydreaming of seeing her home in east Aleppo for the first time in four years, but when she arrived she found little more than rubble. The 36-year-old was among hundreds of Syrians returning to east Aleppo in recent days after the army recaptured large swathes of the city from rebels and encouraged residents to visit neighborhoods and homes they left years earlier.

She could barely contain her excitement as she sat on a government bus heading to her neighborhood of Haydariya in north-east Aleppo, recaptured by the army earlier in the week. "I left my house four years ago and I'm just so happy to be going to see it, I haven't slept for three days because I'm so excited," she said as the bus wound its way from western Aleppo. "I want to ululate with happiness when I see my house safe and sound," she said, dressed warmly in a black coat and headscarf that framed her smiling face.

Stuffed into a bus crowded with other passengers, she and her husband Tajeddin Ahmed discussed their plans to return home, after years living in the Syriac Quarter in central Aleppo. "I'm going to go back to living in my house no matter what condition it's in," she said firmly. "We're tired of paying rent, we miss our house and our families and our neighbors." The couple fled Haydariya in July 2012, when rebels entered the city, leaving at dawn one morning without any of their belongings and moving into the ancient Syriac Quarter. More than half of Syria's population has been displaced internally or abroad by the conflict that began with anti-government protests in March 2011 before spiraling into a war that has killed over 300,000 people.

Shocking destruction

"I want to go back to the house that I lived in with my family and go back to living together safely and happily," said Ahmed, 45. "I'm really hoping we'll find the house in good shape." His phone rang as they talked: An old neighbor who couldn't leave work asked Ahmed to check on his house too. As the bus set out, Jawish expressed hope that her neighborhood might be relatively untouched, reasoning it was far from the frontlines that saw the worst fighting. East Aleppo has seen some of the worst violence of the war, and has

been pounded by the army since it began an operation to recapture the city in mid-November. As the bus edged closer to Haydariya, Jawish's smile dropped away, and she and Ahmed fell silent. Along the road, buildings were partially or fully collapsed, windows long blown out and furnishings destroyed or looted.

The route itself was cratered in places, and the bus bounced as Ahmed stared grimly out of the window, murmuring prayers. Jawish tried to pick out places that held memories, spotting an area she used to picnic with her husband. Growing impatient with the bus's slow, careful progress, she tried in vain to convince her husband to get out and walk the rest of the way so she could get to her house quicker. But when they finally arrived, she burst into tears at the sight of their building, parts of the length of one side of it completely gone, leaving the inside exposed to the elements.

Old life 'a memory'

Most of the windows were blown out, along with their frames, the front door was missing and a stack of broken tiles was piled up in the doorway. Unable to enter the damaged building, the couple stood on tiptoes to peer in through a ground floor window at their old apartment. "We were so optimistic, I thought I was going to ululate when we arrived, but now we've found it like this, uninhabitable," she said tearfully. "We spent years working to make a home, buying things for it, bit by bit, until we had a washing machine and a fridge, and now there's nothing in it and the house is destroyed. Oh God."

She described the concerts that once took place at their house, with people playing the lute and singing. "When I look at the house I remember all those beautiful moments." Ahmed appeared stunned as he looked on, repeating over and over: "Thank God for our health and wellbeing." "We sacrificed so much to make this house our home, how will we start over again?" Jawish asked. "I know that our relatives will all be in the same situation as us, who will help us?" The couple left to walk through the neighborhood, checking on the homes of their neighbors, all similarly damaged and gutted. Their old life, Jawish said, "has become just a memory". — AFP

SYRIAN RAIDS KILL DOZENS

ALEPPO: Suspected Russian air strikes have killed at least 46 people in opposition-held parts of Syria, a monitor said, as the UN Security Council prepares to vote yesterday on a resolution demanding a temporary ceasefire in Aleppo. Syria's government is waging a fierce offensive to recapture all of second city Aleppo, and it has so far captured more than 60 percent of eastern districts that fell to rebels in 2012. In Idlib province, in northwest Syria, at least 26 civilians were killed in suspected Russian strikes on the town of Kafr Nabel, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor said.

An eyewitness told AFP warplanes hit several places in the town, including a market. The Observatory says it determines whose planes carry out raids according to their type, location, flight patterns and the munitions involved. The group said 18 people were also killed in suspected Russian strikes on the town of Maaret Al-Numan, where an AFP

AFTER CASTRO DEATH, RAUL SUCCESSOR WAITS IN THE WINGS

HAVANA: After burying Fidel Castro, Cuba is 15 months away from seeing his brother, Raul, give up the presidency. For the first time in almost 60 years, the president won't be named Castro. The man in line for the job is Vice President Miguel Diaz-Canel, who is relatively young at 56, outside the small circle of guerrilla war veterans and not a family member. The grey-haired Diaz-Canel, who favors jeans or more formal suits and ties, has been a discreet communist party operator who lacks Fidel Castro's charisma and Raul's military experience.

But he has been "a good soldier in the shadows," Christopher Sabatini, an international policy lecturer at New York's Columbia University said. President Raul Castro named Diaz-Canel as his deputy in 2013. While Raul Castro looks healthy at 85, he has vowed to step down in February 2018 during the next communist party congress, though he would likely remain the party's chief. His brother, who was buried on Sunday after dying on November 25 at age 90, clung to power from 1959 until an illness forced him to hand the presidency to Raul in 2006.

Tall and affable, Diaz-Canel lacks the oratory skills of Fidel Castro but Raul gave him a ringing endorsement when he named him vice president in 2013. "Comrade Diaz-Canel is neither a novice nor an improviser," Raul Castro said. The electronics engineer is an advocate of a

more critical press and an opening of the internet on the island, where a tiny fraction of the population has web access. "Today with the development of social media ... and the internet, prohibiting something is almost an impossible pipe-dream. It doesn't make sense," the vice president once said.

Diaz-Canel, who is from the central province of Villa Clara, gradually worked his way up the echelons of Cuba's single party. In 2003, he entered the influential 15-member politburo, a key step for any official with higher aspirations. Six years later, Raul Castro named the former university professor as his higher education minister. In March 2012, he became one of the eight vice presidents on the council of ministers. He rose to the more powerful post of first vice president on the council of state a year later, replacing veteran revolution fighter Jose Ramon Machado Ventura, 86. Since then, Diaz-Canel has often traveled abroad, either with Raul Castro or as the president's representative.

New generation

But he is not the only member of the younger generation to have risen in ranks in recent years. Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez, 58, was a key player in the diplomatic rapprochement with the United States and the European Union. In a sign of his growing influence, Rodriguez appeared with the Castro



HAVANA: Fidel Castro sits as he clasps hands with his brother, Cuban President Raul Castro (right) and second secretary of the Central Committee, Jose Ramon Machado Ventura, moments before the playing of the Communist party hymn during the closing ceremonies of the 7th Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, in Havana, Cuba, on April 19, 2016. — AP

family, top military officers and Diaz-Canel outside the armed forces ministry in Havana last week to watch Fidel's ashes depart on a cross-country trip to his burial place in eastern Cuba on Sunday.

Rodriguez and Diaz-Canel were the only members of the new generation of communist officials at the symbolic farewell. Another relatively young oper-

ator is Marino Murillo, 55, an economist who is in charge of the crucial but modest economic reforms that Raul Castro has implemented. Raul's only son, Colonel Alejandro Castro Espin, 51, is also gaining influence in the interior ministry. All of them are keeping a low profile. Others who appeared too ambitious in the past lost their jobs uncer-

moniously, such as former vice president Carlos Lage and former foreign minister Felipe Perez Roque.

Economy crucial

For Ted Piccone, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Brookings Institution think tank, Diaz-Canel is the natural political heir apparent. "I don't see any other rival. I don't see any other scenario, but we've also seen in the past younger leaders groomed for leadership and they've been eliminated or removed from power," he said. To help his successor, Raul Castro needs to speed up the reforms to fix the troubled economy, Piccone said. "The legitimacy of the post-Raul government will depend on a much better economic performance," he said.

Sabatini said Diaz-Canel faces "three competing pressures": The old guard in the politburo, the "younger generation of party apparatchiks who want change" and the military. But Raul Castro would be watching over him, as he would not be completely retired as party chief. "Raul's and Machado's support can prop him up" as president, said Arturo Lopez-Levy, a Cuba expert at the University of Texas. "Once he is in this position, it will be up to him to navigate successfully the task of building a consensus without humiliating any of the factions that form the Cuban leadership," he said. — AFP



DENVER: US Rep Keith Ellison (D-Minn), addresses a forum on the future of the Democratic Party featuring candidates running to be the next chair of the Democratic National committee in Denver. — AP

DEMOCRATS LOOKING TO RECLAIM MIDWEST

US DEMOCRATS TRYING TO REBUILD POLITICAL 'BLUE WALL'

DES MOINES: With the dust now settled from the election, Democrats are looking to rebuild the political "blue wall" of traditionally Democratic upper Midwest and Great Lakes states that Republican Donald Trump captured with an appeal to white, working-class voters. Hillary Clinton's failure to hold key blocs of these voters helped seal Trump's stunning electoral victory and leaves Democrats with a gaping, perhaps long-term, hole in the party's national battle front.

Trump boasted of his accomplishment at a post-election rally in Ohio. The president-elect crowed: "We didn't break it, we shattered that sucker. We shattered it, man. That poor wall is busted up." Trump carried Michigan and Pennsylvania, where Democratic nominees had

won the previous six presidential elections. Trump also won Wisconsin, carried by Democrats in seven straight tries, and Iowa, carried just once by a Republican over the same period. In each, Trump vastly outperformed 2012 GOP nominee Mitt Romney in rural areas, while also seizing more typically Democratic-voting small cities and working-class suburbs. Should Democratic voting continue to lag behind Republicans in midterm elections, as it did in 2014, the results could be devastating in two years when the party will defend Senate seats in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, and try to retake governorships in Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin.

"Democrats suffered the consequences of apathy and selective amnesia over the past midterms and arrogance over the presidential

electorate," said Haley Morris, a senior adviser to Democrat Gary Peters' Michigan Senate campaign, among the Democrats' few 2014 victories in the region. "We got walloped across the Midwest in 2010 and 2014. Democrats had a glimpse of what the results could look like without Barack Obama on the ticket and ignored it."

Mark Jefferson, the Republican National Committee's Midwest regional political director, said the GOP consistently focused on "blue-collar Reagan Democrats, who were heavily trending toward Trump." County-specific, unofficial national voting data tabulated by The Associated Press shows Clinton received fewer votes than Trump in places Democrats had banked on for consecutive elections, and even decades, such as Dubuque County, Iowa. — AFP

NO STATUES FOR FIDEL CASTRO, BUT HIS IMAGE IS EVERYWHERE

HAVANA: While Cuban President Raul Castro has promised that no monument will be erected in memory of Fidel, his brother's image has been plastered across state media since his death. Castro said the national assembly would fulfill the late communist leader's dying wish by passing a law to prohibit erecting statues or monuments in Fidel's name, or naming streets or parks after him. "The leader of the revolution rejected any manifestation of a cult of personality," he told tens of thousands of people at a rally Saturday night before his brother was buried in the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba. "His attitude was consistent until the final hours of his life, insisting that once he died, his name and his image would never be used to denigrate institutions, plazas, parks, avenues, streets or other public places." His ashes were entombed on Sunday inside a large, round stone with a simple plaque reading "Fidel" during a private funeral at a cemetery where other national icons are buried.

'Eternal comandante'

The sober funeral contrasted with the week-long tributes and the larger-than-life image Fidel Castro projected from the time he swept to power in the 1959 revolution until an illness

forced him to hand power to Raul in 2006. Generations of Cubans grew up watching him on television or in the flesh at the massive rallies he held across the island to deliver hours-long speeches. He was seen cutting sugarcane, showing off his pizza-making skills, playing baseball and monitoring emergency responses to hurricanes.

After he was forced to hand power to Raul following emergency intestinal surgery in 2006, he remained a presence through columns he wrote in the official newspapers. He sporadically appeared in public or in pictures alongside presidents visiting him at his house. But since his death at age 90 on November 25, his image has been ubiquitous. Cuban television has aired around-the-clock footage showing him during the various stages of his life from his bearded rebel days to his aging years, including his famous speeches.

Posters of the bearded revolutionary adorn balconies, windows and walls. A song titled "Riding with Fidel" by the popular singer Raul Torres constantly plays on television and the radio. The communist party newspaper, Granma, called him the "eternal comandante." Hundreds of thousands of people lined the streets of the island, holding his picture and chanting "I am Fidel!" as a convoy took the cedar urn

containing his ashes on a four-day trip from Havana to Santiago's cemetery. Many call him a "father" of the Cuban people. "His memory will cast a shadow over Cuba for a long time," said Ted Piccone, senior fellow at the Washington-based Brookings Institution think-tank.

'I have him at home'

For his 90th birthday in August, the island's media launched a campaign called "Fidel among us" with articles, pictures, documentaries and interviews related to Castro. One university developed an eponymous smartphone app providing biographical information, quotes and famous anecdotes-on an island with very limited internet access. Although none of Cuba's 285 museums is solely dedicated to him, Castro features in several of them, including Havana's Revolution Museum, which contains a sculpture of the late comandante. One plaque in Havana with an image of Fidel Castro flanked by his comrades-in-arms adorns the corner of a building where he once gave a speech, but that's the closest thing to a statue of him. Many Cubans support their maximum leader's refusal to erect a statue of himself. "It was his wish because Fidel was a modest, humble person," said 61-year-old computer technician Tomasa Savatell. — AFP

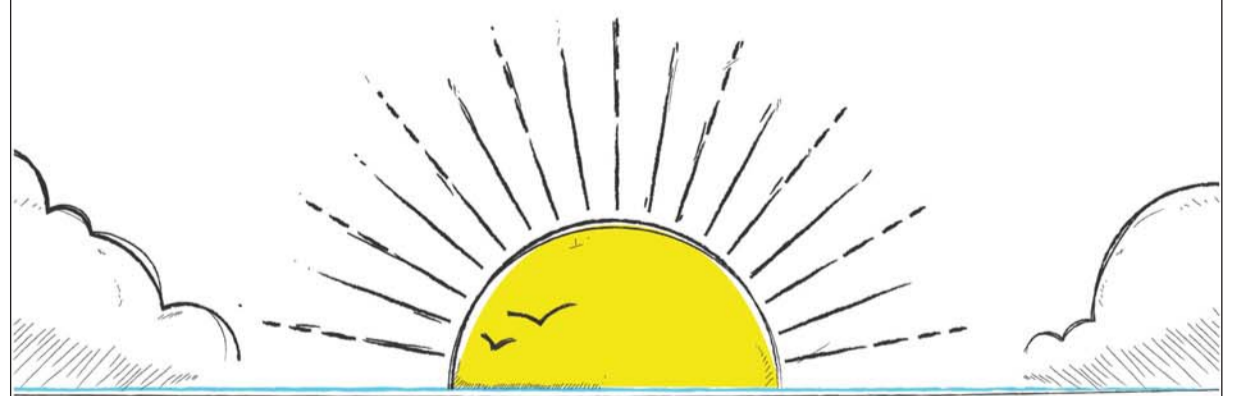


CRUCES: A man with a tattoo of Cuba's late leader Fidel Castro, waits for the arrival of the caravan carrying his ashes during a funeral procession that retraces the path of Castro's triumphant march into Havana nearly six decades ago, in Cruceros, Cuba. — AP



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WHAT EU HAS PREPARED FOR BREXIT TALKS

BRUSSELS: British judges may upset government plans to start Brexit talks soon but whatever the Supreme Court decides after hearings this week, the EU has prepared its side of the unprecedented process.

Timeline and the waiting

Theresa May's formal notification of British withdrawal from the EU treaty under Article 50 is critical. EU counterparts rule out any negotiation before that. Article 50 sets a two-year countdown to Brexit. Without a deal Britain would be out of the EU but with many loose ends. The deadline can be extended, but only if there is mutual consent. May pledged two months ago to trigger Article 50 by late March. That would suit EU leaders who want a deal before an EU parliament election in May 2019. But London judges may upset the timetable, which could revive speculation May might use her power to delay notification to gain leverage in Brussels.

After getting May's letter, European Council President Donald Tusk would convene a summit of the other 27 national leaders within a month or two to deliver a response and agree a mandate for the executive European Commission to negotiate. One issue in arguments in Britain over how withdrawal can be triggered following the non-binding referendum in June is whether London could change its mind

later and stay in. The view in London is not but in Brussels most think it can.

The Brexit three-step

Divorce, transition, future. Barring a "cliff edge" falling out, Britain and the EU would agree withdrawal terms by 2019 and an interim deal to avoid needless disruption during negotiation of a new relationship that may take five more years. While there is a degree of consensus on what must be settled in the withdrawal treaty, which would need only majority backing among EU states, much beyond that is unclear, mainly because it is unclear what Britain will ask for. And any transition deal would depend on having some idea what it was a transition to- and it would probably have to be agreed by the 27 unanimously. Key parts of a future relationship will be terms of access to the EU single market for British-based firms and how far Britain will accept immigration from the continent, arbitration by EU judges and to pay into EU budgets in return for access.

The divorce

These are the EU's priorities for the withdrawal treaty: The house, bank accounts and pensions. The British state, businesses and citizens contribute to and receive from the EU budget. Negotiators need to divide the cash. After leaving, London may need to keep paying, for example to cover pensions of



LONDON: Anti-Brexit demonstrators protest outside the Supreme Court building in London yesterday on the first day of a four-day hearing. — AFP

EU staff or previously agreed but yet to be disbursed spending. The EU will resist Britain getting a share of the value of the EU's property-it didn't pay extra when it joined, they say.

The kids

More than 3 million non-British EU citizens live in Britain and more than a million Britons live elsewhere in the EU. Neither side thinks mass deportations are desirable or likely. However, EU lead-

ers' hard line against a quick deal on this shows reluctance to give up a politically powerful card.

The borders

They need to settle customs measures for goods and probably special arrangements for the only UK-EU land border, on the island of Ireland. EU leaders fear upsetting the Irish peace settlement. But are wary lest favours for the Irish let the rest of the UK, or parts of it

like similarly anti-Brexit Scotland, end up better off out of the EU than in it.

Court cases

Among a host of lower-profile issues to be settled will be agreeing how to handle outstanding cases involving Britain at the European Court of Justice.

The negotiators

This is what in EU-speak is called 'Chefsache' - German for 'a matter for the bosses'. Theresa May and her 27 counterparts will take the final decisions. However, the details will first have to be worked on by legions of lesser officials. Council President Tusk, a conservative former prime minister of Poland, will hold the ring for the other 27 states, assuming his mandate is renewed in May. He is expected to set up a Brexit Working Group to keep national leaders in the loop. President Jean-Claude Juncker's European Commission will do the heavy lifting of detailed negotiation and legal drafting. Michel Barnier, a French former minister who irked London when financial services commissioner, runs the Commission's Brexit Task Force. His deputy is German trade expert Sabine Weyand. The European Parliament must approve any deal. It will be represented in talks by Guy Verhofstadt, a liberal former Belgian prime minister seen in London as an arch eurofederalist. — Reuters

SOME BRITISH COMMUNITIES 'WORRYINGLY' SEGREGATED

NEW STUDY EXPOSES 'UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTHS'



LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May leaves 10 Downing Street in London after attending a cabinet meeting there. — AP

LONDON: Some UK communities are "worryingly" segregated and government failure to tackle social and economic isolation, particularly among Muslims, is playing into the hands of extremists, a government-commissioned report warned yesterday. Louise Casey, a senior civil servant, said her study exposed "uncomfortable truths" about the impact of large-scale immigration, in particular discrimination against women in some South Asian communities.

"Inequality within certain communities in these highly segregated areas is getting worse, not better," she told the BBC. Casey highlighted issues in areas which had high concentrations of Muslims of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. She admitted her findings would put further pressure on Britain's 2.8 million Muslims, amid concerns about rising Islamophobia. But in a foreword to the report, she warned: "A failure to talk about all this only leaves the ground open for the far-right on one side and Islamist extremists on the other."

"Every person, in every community, in every part of Britain, should feel a part of our nation and have every opportunity to succeed in it. There can be no exceptions to that by gender, color or creed." Government officials had reportedly sought to water-down the study, which was commissioned by former prime minister David Cameron last year, because of its controversial findings. Casey said that people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin were more likely to live in residentially segregated communities than other ethnic minority groups, pointing to areas where up to 85 percent of residents were Muslim.

She warned that many people in those areas did not have the same opportunities as others across Britain, often because they did not speak English, and also because cultural and religious practices held them back. This was particularly true of women, and Casey warned that domestic abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage remained "all too prevalent" in some communities. "It is the misogyny and the patriarchy that has to come to an end. Leaders that are not Muslim and are Muslim need to unite around unity in this country," she told the BBC.

'Inflammatory, divisive'

Communities minister Sajid Javid said the report was a "valuable contribution". "We need to take a serious look at the facts and must not shy away from the challenges we face," he said. But Mohammed Shafiq, chief executive of the Ramadhan Foundation, a Muslim lobby group, condemned it as "inflammatory and divisive". "Sadly in today's Britain, Muslims are seen as an easy target to attack by politicians, commentators and parts of the media without any regard for the impact this has on communities," he said. "There was no mention about the responsibility of the white community to help with integration, as many white families live in mixed areas as ethnic minorities move into a particular area."

He also noted that the government had cut funding for English language classes-one of Casey's recommendations to improve integration. The report also said immigrants should take an oath of integration with British values and society on arrival in the country, rather than waiting until their final citizenship test. Casey urged the promotion of British laws, history and values within the core school curriculum to build "integration, tolerance, citizenship and resilience". She also called for greater mixing among young people through activities such as sport, and efforts to raise employment levels among marginalized groups. — AFP

GHANA'S CANDIDATES MAKE FINAL PUSH BEFORE ELECTION

ACCRA: With just 48 hours left before voters in Ghana head to the polls, presidential candidate Nana Akufo-Addo said the country's democracy was in a "critical space". Akufo-Addo accused the ruling party of fomenting violence as police turn a blind eye, casting doubt on the country's reputation as beacon of democracy in Africa. "We're certainly in a very critical space," Akufo-Addo told reporters at his house in Ghana's capital Accra after a rally. "It's important that these acts of violence being perpetrated by operatives of the ruling party are dealt with according to the rule of law," Akufo-Addo said. "We have definite reservations about the neutrality of the police." Fears about the erosion of Ghana's democracy have dominated the presidential campaign, with claims of voter intimidation and questions over independence of the Electoral Commission.

An exporter of gold, cocoa and oil, the West African country was once hailed as a regional growth model but has lost its lustre after taking on too much debt. During the bitter presidential campaign, New Patriotic Party (NPP) candidate Akufo-Addo criticized incumbent John Mahama for mismanaging the economy and allowing corruption to flourish. National Democratic Congress (NDC) leader Mahama has painted a radically different picture of Ghana, touting his government as an example of fiscal discipline and promising that tackling corruption will be one of his priorities if reelected.

'Winds of change'

If neither the NDC or NPP win more than 50 percent of votes, a presidential run-off will take place later in December. Elections in Ghana are often down to the wire-Akufo-Addo has lost narrowly twice before-but the economic crisis may swing voters his way. At a final NPP rally in Accra, there were echoes of Barack Obama's seminal 2008 campaign, with jubilant supporters waving huge blue "hope" flags and blowing plastic horns. Many in the crowd said they were "suffering" without jobs, describing Akufo-Addo as an "incorruptible" leader who could restore the economy and help Ghana compete with regional star Ivory Coast.

"The winds of change are blowing the whole of Africa, all the corrupt leaders are being taken away," said 40-year-old Bernard Owusu. "It happened in Gambia, it happened in Nigeria, and other parts of Africa, and it's time for Ghana." When Akufo-Addo took the stage, the crowd unleashed an ear-splitting roar as fireworks popped overhead. "NDC is corrupt," said Margaret Darkwah, a 55-year-old decked out head-to-toe in NPP paraphernalia. "So we are throwing them out." Mahama has worked to take the high road in the campaign, playing the part of statesman. "Let's continue to ignore all forms of provocation," Mahama said in a statement on Twitter over the weekend, urging Ghana to vote and peacefully "wait for the results." — AFP



ACCRA: A supporter rides a bicycle wearing outfit designed with colors of the opposition New Patriotic Party during the grand campaign rally of the party in Accra. — AFP



VIENNA: Austrian Presidential candidate Alexander Van der Bellen celebrates with supporters at a post-election event in Vienna. Austrian far-right candidate Norbert Hofer on Sunday congratulated his opponent in presidential elections after projections indicated that he had lost. — AFP

AUSTRIA, ITALY ELECTIONS - MIXED BAGS OF EMOTIONS FOR POPULISTS

VIENNA: Europe's populists greeted with glee yesterday the demise of Italy's premier but their enthusiasm was tempered by the failure of Austria's Norbert Hofer to become the EU's first far-right president. Topping off a 2016 that saw the shock election of Donald Trump as US president and Britain's decision to leave the EU, Matteo Renzi quit Sunday after a crushing referendum defeat.

"My experience of government finishes here," Renzi told a press conference. Many mainstream politicians were uneasy about Renzi's proposed constitutional reforms, while Italians fed up with the economy saw the vote as a chance to ditch him. But it was also a clear victory for Italy's xenophobic Northern League and the anti-establishment Five Star movement, whose leader Beppe Grillo hailed Trump's win as a "massive screw you".

Grillo, who supports a referendum on Italy leaving the euro-zone-and therefore potentially the EU-on Sunday demanded that elections be called "within a week". Anti-establishment figures across Europe, both on the left and the right, hailed Renzi's demise. The result "adds another people to the list of those wanting to turn their backs on Europe's absurd policies (that are) plunging the continent into misery," said Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Front, who is expected to make it into the runoff in France's presidential election in May.

'Our time is coming'

Brexit figurehead Nigel Farage tweeted that the "vote looks to me to be more about the Euro than constitutional change". Far-right Dutch MP Geert Wilders, topping polls ahead of national elections in March, tweeted "Congratulations Italia!" Centre-left German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said that while Renzi "did the right thing", his topping is "not a positive message to Europe at a difficult time". Mainstream politicians reacted with relief to Austria's eurosceptic Norbert Hofer failing to become the EU's first far-right president. Hofer,

like populists elsewhere, had stoked concerns about immigration and globalization, vowing to "get rid of the dusty establishment" and fight "Brussels centralizing power". Experts said the winner, ex-Greens chief Alexander Van der Bellen, exploited Hofer's ambivalent stance on Austria's EU membership in the wake of Brexit.

"Trump and Brexit had a reverse effect in Austria," Carnegie scholar Stefan Lehne said. "The idea of Austria's possible EU exit scared them and made them choose a candidate who is not from the establishment per se but mainstream and much more pro-European." He said the election casts doubts on the "inevitability of the triumph of populism". European Parliament president Martin Schulz tweeted that the result was a "heavy defeat of nationalism and anti-European, backward-looking populism". French President Francois Hollande said Austrians "chose Europe and open-mindedness".

Impossible to deliver promises

But Hofer came close, winning 46.7 percent of the vote in the best ever national result for his Freedom Party (FPÖ) after a bitter and polarizing 11-month race. Hofer called it a win for Austria's "political system". He said he would stand as an MP in the next elections and run again for the presidency-a largely ceremonial but highly coveted position-again in 2022. "Yesterday we wrote history," said Freedom Party leader Heinz-Christian Strache, who has called German Chancellor Angela Merkel "the most dangerous woman in Europe" for her open-door refugees policy.

"2017 will be the Freedom Party's year! Our time is coming!" he said on Facebook. Le Pen congratulated Hofer for "fighting bravely" and said the FPÖ would win the next general elections, due in 2018 or perhaps sooner. Frauke Petry from the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD), which has won opposition seats in 10 of Germany's 16 states ahead of federal elections in 2017, said the same. — AFP

MLADIC A CENTRAL FIGURE IN GENOCIDE

THE HAGUE: Former Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladic was a central figure in the 1995 massacre of thousands of Muslims from Srebrenica, prosecutors said yesterday in closing arguments in his genocide trial. Rather than the "marginalized figure" his defense attorney made him out to be, Mladic helped orchestrate the killings, prosecutor Alan Tieger told judges at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). "Mladic walked into Srebrenica and vowed that the time had come to take revenge on the Turks," Tieger said.

On July 11, 1995 Mladic promised to give the city to the Serbian people. In the following days, nearly 8,000 "Srebrenica men and boys, boys as young as 12 years old, had been systematically murdered," he said. Prosecutors were making their closing arguments in Mladic's trial, the last major war crimes case at

the tribunal, which is winding down its work after more than 20 years. Mladic, 74, faces up to life imprisonment for two counts of genocide and nine counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes. The final hearings run through Dec 15 and a judgment is likely in 2017.

"If Mladic hadn't come to Srebrenica my son Nermin, whose birthday it is today, would still be alive, all of our families would be alive," Munira Subasic, a member of the Mothers of Srebrenica group, said outside the courtroom. Mladic was charged alongside former Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadzic, who was sentenced to 40 years in prison in March. Prosecutors say they masterminded a conspiracy to "ethnically cleanse" large parts of Bosnia of Muslims and Croats and carve out a Serbian state during the violent breakup of federal

Yugoslavia in the 1990s. According to the Karadzic judgment, Mladic shared a goal to "permanently remove Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats from Bosnian-Serb claimed territory". Tieger quoted Mladic as telling the Bosnian Serb assembly in 1994 they had an historic opportunity to create "not any kind of state, but an all Serbian state with as few enemies as possible".

Karadzic and Mladic were indicted shortly before the end of Bosnia's war, which claimed up to 100,000 lives, but spent more than a decade on the run in Serbia before their arrest. When Mladic was caught in 2011 he was in poor health after a series of strokes, but the court found he was fit to stand trial. Established in 1993, the tribunal indicted 161 individuals from all sides of the conflict and 83 have been convicted. — Reuters

11 DEAD, 75 INJURED IN PAKISTAN HOTEL FIRE

KARACHI: A pre-dawn inferno at a four-star hotel in Pakistan's Karachi killed 11 people yesterday and wounded 75, police said, with desperate guests jumping from windows and scrambling down knotted bedsheets to escape. The blaze at the Regent Plaza Hotel in the centre of the port megacity broke out when many guests were still asleep, with a lack of fire alarms and emergency exits leaving many trapped in their rooms. At least two Pakistani international cricketers were among the guests, one-dayers Sohaib Maqsood and Hamad Azam, though they were not believed to be seriously injured.

"The hotel had no fire safety system and no fire exit to evacuate people, they had no fire alarm," Karachi mayor Waseem Akhtar told reporters at the site. "Trapped people showed courage and made ropes of bed sheets and came out one by one, many people have been injured," hotel guest Saeed ur Rehman, himself wounded in the

fire said. Guests were left helpless, he said, for hours. Police have said it took up to three hours to bring the fire under control. "We have received 11 dead bodies and 75 injured, four women were among the dead," Semi Jamali, a doctor at Karachi's Jinnah hospital said.

Many of the victims had suffered from smoke inhalation or suffocated, Jamali said, but others had cuts or fractures suffered as they leapt from the eight-storey hotel's upper floors to safety. Some trapped by the spreading blaze had knotted bedsheets together in a desperate attempt to climb out from their rooms, with the makeshift ropes seen dangling from windows at the site.

Police Senior Superintendent Saqib Memon confirmed the death toll and said the cause of the fire was not clear, with an investigation launched. Building fires in Pakistan are often caused by faulty wiring or electrical short-circuits. — AFP



Combo photo shows (Left to right) Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen, US President-elect Donald Trump and China's President Xi Jinping. With Trump's latest tweets touching on sensitive issues, China must decide how to handle an incoming American president who relishes confrontation and whose online statements appear to foreshadow shifts in foreign policy. — AP



KARACHI: Guests are gather outside a Regent Plaza Hotel following a fire in the Pakistan's port city of Karachi yesterday. — AFP

BEIJING FACES DECISION ON HOW TO RESPOND TO TRUMP'S TWEETS

BEIJING: Chinese leaders face a challenge: How to deal with Donald Trump. Weeks before taking office, the incoming American president is riling Beijing with confrontation and online statements that appear to foreshadow a tougher foreign policy toward China. China awoke yesterday to sharp criticism posted by Trump on Twitter, days after Beijing responded to his telephone conversation with Taiwan's president by accusing the Taiwanese of playing a "small trick" on Trump.

Trump wrote, "Did China ask us if it was OK to devalue their currency (making it hard for our companies to compete), heavily tax our products going into their country (the US doesn't tax them) or to build a massive military complex in the middle of the South China Sea? I don't think so!" That was

apparently prompted by China's response to Trump's talk Friday with Tsai Ing-wen, the first time an American president or president-elect is known to have spoken to a Taiwanese leader since the US broke off formal diplomatic relations in 1979.

Open hostility

So far, China has avoided responding with open hostility. Yesterday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said China would have "no comment on what motivated the Trump team" to make the tweets, but said he believed both sides would continue to support a "sound and a stable bilateral relationship." "For us, for China, we do not comment on his personality," Lu said. "We focus on his policies, especially his policies toward China." — AP

WHO COLLECTS COSTS FOR TRUMP'S TAIWAN CALL?

US-CHINA COOPERATION AT RISK

BEIJING: There are many pressure points China can push to express its anger at Donald Trump's call with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen last week, including luring away more of Taiwan's diplomatic allies and ramping up military deployments in the Taiwan Strait. China's irritation with the call, the first by a US president-elect or president since President Jimmy Carter switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979, has mostly been directed at the self-ruled island China claims as its own.

But it could also make life difficult for the United States and its allies in the region. Shi Yinong, head of the Centre for American Studies at Beijing's Renmin University, who has advised the government on diplomatic issues, said China was still in a wait-and-see period when it came to Trump, noting Beijing's reaction to the call had been quite restrained. But that would change if Trump continued like this in office, Shi said. "Without a doubt, if the Chinese government judges a president Trump wants to challenge the 'One China' principle followed since President Carter, China will definitely make a very strong response."

That could include policy towards North Korea, where China has been working with Washington to rein in Pyongyang's nuclear program, or in the disputed South China Sea. "Everything is possible," he said. Beijing could, for example, ease up on United Nations sanctions on North Korea, providing economic succor to a country developing missiles that could target the United States, or take a more aggressive stance to US freedom of navigation patrols in the South China Sea, where it has so far limited itself to verbal warnings.

Washington and Beijing have also cooperated on the multilateral agreement to limit Iran's

nuclear program and on climate change, areas that Trump has said he wants to revisit to get a better deal for the US. The status of Taiwan is an unresolved issue from China's civil war, when defeated Nationalist forces fled there in 1949, posing a pointed challenge to the Communist Party's claim to rule all of China. Beijing has never renounced the use of force to bring what it calls a "renegade province" under its control, and Taiwan estimates that China has hundreds of missiles targeting the island over the narrow straits that separate them.

Punishing Taiwan

The Global Times, an outspoken and influential tabloid published by the ruling Communist Party's official People's Daily, said punishing Taiwan was the best way to convey a message to Trump. "The Chinese mainland can let Taiwan lose one or two diplomatic allies as a punishment as well as a warning. The mainland can also strengthen its military deployment," it said in editorials in its Chinese and English editions. The number of countries maintaining formal ties with Taiwan, which until 1971 held China's seat at the United Nations, has since been whittled away by China to just 22, mostly poor nations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

An unofficial diplomatic truce between China and Taiwan ended earlier this year after Tsai was elected in January, when China established ties with former Taiwan ally Gambia. Last week a large Chinese business delegation visited Panama, another Taiwan friend. Tsai says she wants peace and stability with China, but China fears she wants to push the island's formal independence, one of the core principles of her Democratic Progressive Party. China could also step up its divide-and-rule policy favoring pro-China politi-

cians in Taiwan with trade and access deals, while excluding those from the ruling party.

"Terrible precedent"

The People's Daily overseas edition said the Trump-Tsai call set a "terrible precedent" for China-US ties and put a big question mark over a smooth transition in the relationship. Jia Qingguo, dean of the School of International Relations at Peking University and a government advisor, said the incident would help Chinese leaders get past initial uncertainty about Trump and better understand what his administration could mean for China, but "in a negative way."

"Donald Trump is hurting the relationship, and that will also hurt US interests. If he continues this when he is in office, I assume we will have more frictions - over trade, over Taiwan. This is bad for both countries," Beijing also has to bear in mind the opinion of a Chinese public brought up to insist on sovereignty over Taiwan. "Taiwan is simply a province of our China," said one user on Weibo, China's answer to Twitter. "Anywhere, anytime we can bring things to a conclusion. Have no worries about that."

China and Taiwan have nearly gone to war three times since 1949, most recently ahead of the 1996 Taiwan presidential election. Then, China carried out missile tests in waters close to the island, hoping to dissuade people voting for Lee Teng-hui, whom it suspected of harboring pro-independence views. Lee won by a landslide. In the intervening 20 years, Chinese wealth and power have grown. "China is much stronger now," said Jia, the academic and advisor. "Presumably a U.S.-China confrontation over Taiwan would have a much more negative impact on the international order and relations between the two countries." — Reuters



FREIBURG: Flowers and candles sit in front of a tree close to the Dreisam river in Freiburg, Germany, where the body of a student was found. A 17-year-old Afghan migrant, who entered Germany last year as an unaccompanied minor, has been arrested in connection with the killing. — AP

AFGHAN MURDER-RAPE ARREST REIGNITES THE REFUGEE DEBATE

BERLIN: The German government pleaded for calm yesterday after the arrest of a teenage Afghan asylum seeker for the alleged rape and murder of a German student triggered fresh criticism of the country's liberal refugee policy. The anti-migrant AfD party blamed the crime on the "uncontrolled" influx of foreigners, while the head of a police union warned of the "dangers that always go along with massive immigration."

But Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel said the murder of the 19-year-old medical student should not be used to whip up hatred against all refugees. "Such horrible murders already happened before the first Afghan or Syrian refugee arrived here," Gabriel told the Bild newspaper. "We will not allow incitement after such violent crimes, no matter who commits them." The 17-year-old suspect, who arrived in Germany in 2015

as an unaccompanied minor, was arrested in the southwestern town of Freiburg on Friday after his DNA was found at the crime scene and he was identified on CCTV. The victim was found dead on a river bank on October 16. An autopsy found that she had drowned. News of the arrest triggered strong reaction on social media with some people saying an ironic "thank you" to Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose open-door asylum policy brought a record number of migrants and refugees into Germany last year.

"Warnings written off"

The chairman of the DPolG police union, Rainer Wendt, said the killing could have been prevented. "We wouldn't have this victim, and so many others, if our country had been better prepared for the dangers that always go along with massive

immigration," he said. AfD co-chief Joerg Meuthen, whose party has made gains on rising discontent over the flood of refugees, said: "We are shocked by this crime and at the same time we see that our warnings about the uncontrolled arrival of hundreds of thousands of young men from Islamic-patriarchal cultures are written off as populist."

Germany received 890,000 asylum requests in 2015, although that rate slowed to 213,000 from January to September 2016 following a deal with Turkey and a series of border closures on the Balkan route. Public anger about the refugee arrivals has been stoked by some high-profile crimes involving migrants. During the last New Year's Eve celebrations, hundreds of women reported sexual assaults in Cologne and other German cities, with the attacks blamed largely on Arab and North African men. — AFP

LIFE AND DEATH - DEFENDING LAND RIGHTS IN INDIA IS DANGEROUS JOB

MUMBAI: Bhupendra Vira, an activist who tried to expose political links to illegal land dealings in Mumbai, was watching television at his suburban home one evening in October when he was shot dead. Vira, 61, had sought information under India's Right to Information Act on encroachments of public land and illegal land dealings in a city that has among the world's priciest real estate. The arrest of a former civic official and his son in connection with the killing shocked the city.

A couple of weeks later in another case, Nandini Sundar, a Delhi University professor, was charged in the killing of an indigenous villager in the restive Bastar region. Sundar had just written a book on indigenous people losing land to mining firms in eastern Chhattisgarh state. The ensuing outcry led the state to assure the Supreme Court that those charged would not be arrested before an investigation, and that it would give advance notice to them before proceeding.

The two cases highlight harassment and deadly violence against land rights activists in India, campaigners say. Land is increasingly sought in India for industrial use and development projects, as one of the world's fastest growing major economies expands. "More land is being acquired for industry by the government, sometimes forcefully, while per capita land available is declining," said E A S Sarma, an activist and former bureaucrat who has campaigned against several land-acquisition projects.

"Meanwhile, people are also more aware of their rights and civil society is more active, even as states introduce new laws to speed up acquisitions. So the conflict level has risen in recent years," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Home ministry spokesman KS Dhatwalia said the ministry is aware of the incidents, including those involving Vira and Sundar, and "is taking all necessary actions as per procedure."

Of the 185 murders documented in 16 countries, India was among the top 10, with six deaths last year. The cases involving Vira and Sundar are just the better known ones, say campaigners. "Crimes against city-based activists receive more attention, so we have heard more of the professor and the Mumbai activist," said Colin Gonsalves, founder of the Human Rights Law Network. "But every day, many more are risking their lives in villages, in forests. They are fighting against the state and powerful corporations, and it is only going to get worse as our demand for land grows," he said. India is home to more than 104 million indigenous people, the largest such population in the world. Its fast-growing economy has led to increased demand for land for infrastructure and development, as well as for resources to feed its industry.

Conflicts related to land and resources are the main reason behind stalled industrial and development projects in India, affecting millions of people and putting billions of dollars of investment at risk, a report by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences said last month. "Unfortunately, the government believes that activists who speak for land rights or defend tribal communities are obstructing development," said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "Instead of addressing concerns and providing proper rehabilitation and sustainable livelihoods to affected people, the state treats human rights defenders as irritants ... (and) deems any criticism as anti-national," she said.

New battleground

In the fight for land and the environment, which UK-based watchdog Global Witness calls "a new battleground for human rights", communities worldwide are locked in deadly struggles against governments, companies and criminal gangs exploiting land for products including timber, minerals and palm oil. In 2015, more than three people a week were killed defending land, forests and rivers against industries in the deadliest year on record, according to Global Witness.

Atmosphere of fear

Sundar's book, "The Burning Forest: India's War in Bastar", published earlier this year, details the decade-long conflict between the state and Maoist rebels who claim to fight for the rights of poor farmers and landless indigenous people. Sundar was also a petitioner in an earlier suit that led the Supreme Court in 2011 to order the disbanding of state-backed vigilante group Salwa Judum, which had been accused of human rights violations against indigenous people in Chhattisgarh. This year, lawyers with a local legal aid group and journalists were harassed into leaving Chhattisgarh, while chemicals were flung at activist Soni Sori's face, campaigners said. "An atmosphere of fear has prevailed for many years ... now, there's an impunity that has emboldened police and politicians," said Supriya Sharma, who has reported on the region for more than a decade. — Reuters

ABE TO MAKE HISTORIC TRIP TO PEARL HARBOR

FIRST JAPANESE LEADER TO VISIT PEARL HARBOR

TOKYO: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is to become the first Japanese leader to visit Pearl Harbor, announcing yesterday a trip to Hawaii this month for talks with US President Barack Obama. Abe, who will be in Hawaii on December 26 and 27, will visit the site of the surprise Japanese attack on December 7, 1941, that began World War II in the Pacific. The Hawaii visit comes after Obama in May journeyed to Hiroshima, the Japanese city where a US plane dropped the world's first atom bomb in the closing chapter of the war. Nagasaki was bombed several days later. In Hiroshima 140,000 people died in the immediate blast on August 6, 1945, or later from radiation exposure. The Nagasaki bomb, dropped on August 9, killed more than 70,000 people.

Obama gave a soaring speech in Hiroshima that, while it offered no apology, was generally well received in Japan as it focused on the suffering of the atomic bomb victims. "We come to ponder a terrible force unleashed in the not-so-distant past," Obama said in his speech at a cenotaph in the now thriving city, as a handful of surviving victims looked on. "We come to mourn the dead." Obama had insisted before the trip that he would not revisit decisions made by then-president Harry Truman at the close of the brutal war, thus



TOKYO: Local television news displays Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaking to reporters at his official residence in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

quashing any possibility of an apology. But as a flame flickered behind him, he said leaders had an obligation to "pursue a world without" nuclear weapons.

'Reconciliation'

Abe on Monday hailed Obama's May speech. His "message towards a nuclear-

free world during his visit to Hiroshima remains etched into Japanese hearts," Abe said. "I'd like to make it (meeting with Obama) an opportunity to send a message to the world that we will further strengthen and maintain our alliance towards the future," he said. "And at the same time, I want to make it an opportunity to signal

the value of Japan-US reconciliation."

Obama's trip had sparked speculation that Abe could visit Pearl Harbor in response, though the government previously denied that was under consideration. Abe's wife Akie visited Pearl Harbor in August and said on Facebook that she offered flowers and prayers at the USS Arizona Memorial. On the day of the attack 75 years ago, Japanese planes swept low over the US naval base, killing more than 2,400 American troops and civilians, a date which then-president Franklin Roosevelt declared would live in "infamy".

The two-hour bombardment of the US Pacific Fleet at anchor sank or damaged some 20 ships and destroyed 164 planes. Abe's planned visit to Pearl Harbor was the top item on public broadcaster NHK's evening news bulletin, with social media in Japan reacting positively to the premier's announcement. "I think it's a good thing," said @CNBLUE_6569 on Twitter. "After seeing President Obama's visit to Hiroshima, I felt strongly that I wanted a Japanese prime minister to visit" Pearl Harbor. "President Obama came to Hiroshima so Prime Minister Abe should go to Pearl Harbor," Twitter user @chikazoemakoto said. "I think Abe made a really good decision." — AFP

SCANDAL HEARINGS PUT SOUTH KOREAN TYCOONS IN HOT SEAT

SEOUL: South Korea lawmakers yesterday kicked off an unprecedented series of hearings that will see the country's business elite grilled over a corruption scandal engulfing impeachment-threatened President Park Geun-Hye. The powerful heads of family-run conglomerates, or "chaebols," such as Samsung and Hyundai will be among those testifying before a parliamentary investigation ahead of an impeachment vote to remove the president on Friday.

The hearings opened on the back of a series of mass anti-Park demonstrations in Seoul that have seen millions of people take to the streets. Park is accused of colluding with her long-time friend, Choi Soon-Sil, to strong-arm giant corporations into "donating" nearly \$70 million to two dubious non-profit foundations. Choi has been indicted for coercion and abuse of power, and is accused of syphoning some of the donated funds for personal use. She denies all criminal charges.

Choi had been summoned for questioning at the televised hearings, but made it clear yesterday she would absent herself, citing health grounds. Lawmakers said she faced jail time for contempt if she failed to appear. Tuesday's testimony will be devoted to interrogating the corporate tycoons, including Samsung group scion Lee Jae-Yong, Hyundai chairman Chung Mong-Koo and seven heads of other conglomerates like LG, Lotte, Hanjin and CJ. They are among the wealthiest and most powerful people in the country, but the "Choi-gate" scandal has taken the lid off simmering public resentment over their influence and perceived sense of privilege at a time of slowing economic growth.

Tycoon tutorials

According to company sources cited by the largest-circulation newspaper, Chosun Ilbo, many of them have been going through frantic preparations to avoid any

public humiliation, holding mock question and answer sessions with aides and memorizing responses to sensitive issues. Some researched subway and bus fares in case they are asked to prove their common-touch credentials, while others sent managers on reces to the national assembly-timing the walk to the hearing room and working out routes to avoid the press, Chosun said.

Chaebol heads are unused to being questioned or held accountable-even to their shareholders. "It is part of the deep-rooted, twisted corporate culture in South Korea to treat founding family members as if they are royalty," said Shim Jung-Taik, an author of several books on Samsung and its corporate culture including a biography of its ailing chairman, Lee Kun-Hee. "None of them would have attended these hearings in normal times. But the public fury shown at recent mass rallies was too much to ignore even for these royals," Shim said.

Samsung woes

Samsung's South's largest business group-made the biggest contributions of 20 billion won (\$17 million) to Choi's foundations, followed by Hyundai, SK, LG and Lotte. Prosecutors have raided the headquarters of Samsung and other groups for any evidence that they received policy favors in exchange for their contributions. Samsung is separately accused of funneling millions of euros to Choi to bankroll her daughter's equestrian training in Germany. As part of the widening probe, prosecutors are also investigating whether Samsung lobbied officials at the state pension fund for their support over a contested merger deal last year. Park has not been summoned for questioning by lawmakers. Yesterday's session involved several presidential aides who were grilled over some of the more lurid elements uncovered by the case-including the mass purchase by Park's office of Viagra pills. — AFP



SEOUL: National Security Office chief Kim Kwan-Jin (left) and other presidential aides take an oath during a hearing on South Korean President Park Geun-Hye's corruption scandal at the National Assembly in Seoul. — AFP



OSAKA: Japanese Kuniyoshi Takimoto, who was a Japan Navy aircraft mechanic during Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941, looks on at the doorway of his home in Osaka. — AFP

JAPANESE VETERAN RECALLS PEARL HARBOR 75 YEARS ON

OSAKA: Navy aircraft mechanic Kuniyoshi Takimoto watched as Japanese planes roared off the aircraft carrier Hiryu to attack Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The shock assault 75 years ago Wednesday in Hawaii sparked patriotic celebration in Japan but left Takimoto feeling uneasy. "I wondered if such a poor country would be all right fighting such a big one," the former real-estate agent, now 95 and one of the few Japanese participants still alive said at his home in Osaka.

This attack brought America into World War II though it was already well underway for Europe, and China. This year's anniversary comes after President Barack Obama's visit in May to Hiroshima, the Japanese city pulverized by a US atom bomb in the closing days of the conflict. Japan's Pearl Harbor blitz fired up resolve in the US, with president Franklin Roosevelt declaring the day would "live in infamy".

"It was just a start... and more or less a deceptive attack," Takimoto said, stressing that given its surprise nature some success was virtually guaranteed. He and other crew members were stunned when first informed of the mission after their flotilla departed towards Hawaii. Reaching an area 460 kilometers from target, the first wave of some 180 planes, including nimble Zero fighters, roared off the Hiryu and other carriers, followed later by a second swarm.

'Rolling the dice'

Pilots and mechanics were phlegmatic throughout, as aircraft took off one by one minus any special rituals or even "banzai" cheers. "What you see in kamikaze movies never happened on aircraft carriers," Takimoto said firmly. "We had to do our jobs, rolling the dice against death." Despite his

misgivings about the risks of attacking the US, Takimoto was proud to support the pilots. "We built relations of trust that went beyond words," he said. Japan also attacked the Philippines, Hong Kong, Guam, Singapore, Malaya, Burma and the Dutch East Indies, in one fell swoop overturning what had seemed an eternal Western colonial order. But despite such initial success, the tide was fated to quickly turn-confirming Takimoto's fears. In June 1942 at the epic Battle of Midway a US aerial blitz engulfed the Hiryu in massive flames. A thousand crew members died, while 500 survivors, including Takimoto, were barely rescued by nearby Japanese ships, a scene he described as "hell".

Tunnel vision

After Midway, US-led forces began to reconquer the Pacific, island by island on battlefields in Guadalcanal, Saipan, the Philippines, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Japan finally surrendered but only after the US dropped two atomic bombs-the second on Nagasaki-and the Soviet Union declared war. Takimoto has no plans to personally commemorate Pearl Harbor this year, calling it just one of many momentous episodes in the war. For himself, he calls Midway "much more important." Indeed, Pearl Harbor draws little attention compared with annual events marking the atomic bombings, solemn, nationally televised memorials attended by the prime minister. Among the few instances of remembrance are brief fireworks in Nagaoka, the hometown of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, who masterminded the attack but was killed after the US targeted his plane in 1943. In the US, meanwhile, every December 7 is National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, while the atomic bombing anniversaries are not officially commemorated. — AFP

News

in brief

Spain smashes fake police ring that robbed tourists

MADRID: Spanish police said yesterday they had smashed a criminal gang who preyed on tourists in Madrid by posing as police officers. Eight suspected members of the gang, all of them Iranian and Pakistani nationals, were arrested on November 22, police said, describing a grab-and-game game to take cash, jewelry and smartphones. The gang would approach tourists and ask to see their documents and wallets "with the pretext of checking to see if they had drugs or counterfeit money," police said in a statement. "Once they had the wallet in their possession, they would remove the cash or would yank any object of value and flee at great speed." Police suspect the ring is behind at least 21 robberies carried out in the Madrid region in recent months but say the number is likely higher many victims, visiting Spain briefly, did not file complaints. Among the loot recovered during the arrests in three suburban Madrid homes, included 10 high-end watches, 15 smartphones, jewelry as well as 1,000 euros (\$1,070) in cash.

Sri Lanka to make heroes out of British-era 'traitors'

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka announced plans yesterday to rescind a list of 19 nationals described as "traitors" for leading an insurrection against colonial rule nearly 200 years ago. Keppetipola Disawe, a local leader, and his men were declared traitors over the 1817 rebellion against British rule. "A recommendation was made to President Maithripala Sirisena to rescind the January 1818 gazette which declared 19 nationals, including Keppetipola Disawe, as traitors and make a fresh proclamation making them national heroes," Justice Minister Wijeyadasa Rajapaksa said in a statement. The announcement came after the minister met hard-line nationalists from the majority Sinhalese community, who have pressed for the scrapping of colonial-era decrees against those who resisted British rule. Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon, won freedom in 1948, a year after Britain quit neighboring India.



DHAKA: Bangladeshi activists from an Islamic organization protest against the treatment of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, in Dhaka. — AFP

Dozens of Rohingyas missing as boat sinks

DHAKA: Dozens are missing and feared drowned after a boat packed with Rohingyas fleeing violence in Myanmar and trying to reach Bangladesh sank in a border river yesterday, reports and a Bangladeshi fisherman said. Thousands of Rohingyas, a stateless ethnic minority, have arrived in Bangladesh after an outbreak of violence in western Myanmar, where the military is alleged to have committed mass rape and murder and burned villages. A Bangladeshi fisherman said he had rescued one woman who told him her "overcrowded" boat had sunk in the Naf river after it was chased by a Myanmar army speedboat. "We heard a woman's desperate cry for help in the morning while we were fishing in the Naf. We quickly paddled to the spot and saw she was fighting to stay afloat," fisherman Suman Das said by phone. "The woman told us that their boat was overcrowded with Rohingyas villagers who tried to cross the river to enter Bangladesh." The woman did not know what had happened to the others and Das could not say how many people were on the boat.

Man fires rifle inside Washington's eatery

WASHINGTON: A man has been arrested after firing an assault rifle inside a popular pizzeria in Washington that was the target of a fake news story during the presidential election campaign, police said. No one was injured in the incident on Sunday at the Comet Ping Pong restaurant in the upmarket Chevy Chase neighborhood. A 28-year-old man from North Carolina was taken into police custody. The pizzeria was the subject of a bogus report published in October that alleged it was at the center of a child sex ring organized by Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. As the story spread online, fanned by right-leaning conspiracy theorists on discussion sites 4chan and Reddit, the restaurant owner received hundreds of threatening messages on his Instagram account. The eatery's Facebook page also was flooded with negative comments. It was one of a number of fake news stories that emerged ahead of the November 8 poll. The man arrested on Sunday told police he went to the eatery to "self-investigate" the conspiracy theory dubbed "pizzagate".

POPULAR NEW ZEALAND PM JOHN KEY RESIGNS

WELLINGTON: Popular New Zealand Prime Minister John Key announced his shock resignation yesterday, saying he was never a career politician and it was the right time to go after eight years in the job. The former Merrill Lynch currency trader called it "the hardest decision I've ever made", with no plans on what to do next other than spend more time with his family. "Being leader of both the party and the country has been an incredible experience," he told a regular weekly news conference. "But despite the amazing career I have had in politics, I have never seen myself as a career politician." Key recently marked his eighth anniversary as prime minister and 10th year as leader of the centre-right National Party, which is set to meet next week to elect his successor.

His deputy Bill English, who led the party to its worst result in the 2002 election, is widely seen as favorite to take over and was endorsed by Key, although he did not immediately confirm he wanted the role. "Certainly, I wouldn't stand if there wasn't strong caucus support for me standing," he said, adding that since the 2002 flop he had received "a masterclass every day from John Key about how to do politics". As discussion about Key's decision to walk away swirled around social media, the down-to-earth politician-once voted the leader most New Zealanders would love to have a beer with-insisted he was "not the kind of guy that has to hang on to power for power's sake".

Opinion polls had consistently pointed to him becoming the first political leader in New Zealand history to win four con-

secutive elections when the country votes next year, but he said records were not a consideration. "If you're staying for the record of the time you're staying for the wrong reason," he said. "It's been an incredible experience and it's been a real privilege and I'm going to die happy-I hope that's a long time in the future-but I'm going to feel really proud of what we've done," he said.

'Say it ain't so bro'

Key came into politics relatively late, entering parliament in 2002 and assuming leadership of the National Party four years later. By 2008 he had ended nine years of Labor Party rule, ousting then-prime minister Helen Clark. He won plaudits for his leadership during a string of crises in his first term, including a devas-

tating earthquake in Christchurch in February 2011 which claimed 185 lives.

The 55-year-old also steadied the economy after the global financial crisis without resorting to hard-line spending cuts, instead taking a steady, pragmatic approach that saw the budget return to surplus in the 2015-16 financial year for the first time since 2008. When he heard the news, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull sent him a brief text message: "Say it ain't so bro", telling reporters in Melbourne he considered his close friend "one of the most outstanding national leaders in the world today". New Zealand opposition Labor Party leader Andrew Little acknowledged Key's popularity but said he understood why he was walking away. "Politics requires much sacrifice. We may all be politicians, but not all

our lives are politics," Little tweeted. Former Prime Minister Clark, now the head of the UN Development Program, praised Key for working "tirelessly to promote New Zealand and its interests". Key felt he was "going out on top", and wanted to spend more time with his wife Bronagh and children Stephanie and Max. "It would be easy to say I have made this decision solely to rediscover the personal and family life I once had, and that is a factor, but it is one among many," he said. "Over the years I have observed many leaders who, in a similar position, fail to take this step.

I can understand why. It is a hard job to leave." The New Zealand dollar dipped slightly but economists expected it to be a short-term blip as Key's endorsement of English as his replacement meant there would be little change to economic policy. — AFP

JAYALALITHAA DIES AFTER LONG ILLNESS

Continued from Page 1

Several of her supporters resorted to self-harm when she was briefly jailed in 2014 on charges of corruption. Jayalalithaa earned the loyalty of many voters in Tamil Nadu with a series of highly populist schemes...

Successful Tamil language film industry went on hunger strike to demand her release. The AIADMK and its bitter rival, the DMK, are the main parties in Tamil Nadu, and both are built around a personality cult of their leaders...

RENZI PACKS HIS BAGS AFTER REFERENDUM ROUT

Continued from Page 1

Mattarella will then be charged with brokering the appointment of a new government or, if he is unable to do that, ordering early elections.

Initial market reaction was subdued. The euro briefly sank to a 20-month low as investors fretted that political instability could scupper efforts to resolve a long-running banking crisis...

Traders were reassured in part by the result of Europe's other crucial vote this weekend, which saw Austria reject a far-right candidate for president. The next steps are far from clear for Italy and traders are not panicking yet...

Populists across Europe rejoiced at Renzi's downfall, with the founder of Italy's own anti-establishment Five Star movement Beppe Grillo calling for an election 'within a week'.

Observers varied widely in their interpretation of the vote. Britain's eurosceptic Nigel Farage, who spearheaded

the 'Brexit' campaign, said it looked 'more about the euro than constitutional change'. But former Bank of Italy economist Lorenzo Codgno insisted: 'The outcome of the referendum is much more complex and nuanced than just another wave of protest across the globe.'

Giovanni Orsina, Professor of Politics at Rome's Luiss university, said four out of five voters had cast their vote politically rather than on the merits of the reform.

Poll data showed the No vote was strongest in areas with high unemployment, in the relatively poor south of the country and amongst youth, pointing to a correlation with levels of disaffection.

The most probable scenario is a caretaker administration dominated by Renzi's Democratic Party taking over to complete the electoral reform before an election that has to take place by March 2018.

KUWAIT FOOTBALL REELS AS CHIEF RESIGNS...

Continued from Page 1

suspended player during a match between the two sides as part of the VIVA Football League. Kuwait won 2-1. Kuwait's defender Fahd Al-Hajri had received a red card during a Nov 2 match between Kuwait and Kazma Sports Club...

be followed. As a result, the disciplinary committee rejected Arabi's claim, the committee's chief Saad Al-Bughaili explained to the press.

After losing the appeal, Arabi announced on Sunday that it was officially withdrawing from the VIVA League. 'We are convinced that honorable people in Kuwait's sports scene have become fewer, and therefore we officially announce withdrawing from the VIVA League,' said Abdulaziz Ashour, Arabi's Vice President...

'Justice and equal opportunities do not exist in your federation,' Arabi also wrote on its Twitter account addressing Hasawi. 'Your presence in the temporary committee tarnishes your sportive history.'

The turmoil comes just months after the dissolution of KFA's previous board of directors. On Aug 28, the Public Authority for Sports dissolved the board and appointed a temporary management committee led by Hasawi.

TRUMP NAMES CARSON AS HOUSING SECRETARY

MOGUL MEETS FORMER VP GORE

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Donald Trump yesterday chose Ben Carson, the mild-mannered retired neurosurgeon who challenged him for the Republican nomination, to turn around troubled US inner cities as secretary of housing and urban development.



Ben Carson

'Ben Carson has a brilliant mind and is passionate about strengthening communities and families within those communities,' Trump said in a statement. 'We have talked at length about my urban renewal agenda and our message of economic revival, very much including our inner cities.'

Trump also met former Vice President Al Gore, an environmental activist who has devoted years to fighting climate change. 'I had a lengthy and very productive session with the president-elect,' said Gore...

'I grew up in the inner city,' Carson told Fox News last month. 'And have spent a lot of time there. And have dealt with a lot of patients from that area.'

The Seventh Day Adventist had presented himself as an alternative to the bombastic Trump, preaching tolerance and compromise but sometimes unleashing blunt rhetoric. These included many references to Nazi Germany, such as his suggestion that Jews would have fared better in the Holocaust had they been armed.

Carson nevertheless endorsed the real estate billionaire after withdrawing from the race in March, describing his former rival as 'a very intelligent man who cares deeply about America'.

NO SURVEILLANCE OF PRIVATE SOCIAL MEDIA...

Continued from Page 1

He denied allegations that the new law aims at tightening the noose on the freedom of Twitter users and those with personal accounts on digital networks.

Awwash said. On July 20, 2016, the ministry of information issued ministerial resolution 100/2016 stipulating executive legislations of law 8/2016 regulating electronic media.

OPPOSITION ISSUES MORE WARNINGS...

Continued from Page 1

Faraj Al-Arbeed, who came in the 11th place, saying that the votes he received should have placed him

among the 10 winners. Former MP Mubarak Al-Waalan, who failed to win a seat last month, is planning to file a petition to challenge the counting of votes and other things, he said on his Twitter account.

ANTI-AUSTERITY MPS THREATEN REFORM PLANS

Continued from Page 1

'The Assembly wants the government to rationalize unnecessary expenditures before heading to the citizen,' investment fund Kuwait Farabi's CEO, Fouad Al-Hadlaq, said. 'The MPs were saying in their campaign 'we have no problem to pay money but we are not first in the line... We want to see a rationalization from the highest (levels of officials)''

Health Minister Ali Al-Obaidi has denied accusations that government officials siphoned off public money through contracts related to overseas medical treatment.

The National Assembly has the right to grill government ministers, including the prime minister and block legislation and is frequently at loggerheads with the Cabinet. The government has had a rare smooth ride since 2012, and has been trying for years to approve a new strategy aimed at diversifying the economy away from oil.

the economy, increasing the role of the private sector, trying to get citizens to invest in public projects and reforming the labor market.

'Theoretically, the document is positive. ... But, practically, the acceptance of it by the representatives of the Kuwaiti people is difficult, because there is waste in other things,' Al Joman Center for Economic Consultancy general manager Naser Al-Nafisi said, calling the amount spent on foreign medical treatment 'an astronomical figure'.

The impasse has implications for parliament too, however. The constitution gives HH the Amir the right to dissolve the parliament. During the past 10 years, since Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah came to power, none of the parliaments has completed its constitutional 4-year term.

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Focus

TRUMP ADVISORS AIM TO PRIVATIZE INDIAN RESERVES

Native American reservations cover just 2 percent of the United States, but they may contain about a fifth of the nation's oil and gas, along with vast coal reserves. Now, a group of advisors to President-elect Donald Trump on Native American issues wants to free those resources from what they call a suffocating federal bureaucracy that holds title to 56 million acres of tribal lands, two chairmen of the coalition told Reuters in exclusive interviews.

The group proposes to put those lands into private ownership - a politically explosive idea that could upend more than century of policy designed to preserve Indian tribes on US-owned reservations, which are governed by tribal leaders as sovereign nations. The tribes have rights to use the land, but they do not own it. They can drill it and reap the profits, but only under regulations that are far more burdensome than those applied to private property.

"We should take tribal land away from public treatment," said Markwayne Mullin, a Republican US Representative from Oklahoma and a Cherokee tribe member who is co-chairing Trump's Native American Affairs Coalition. "As long as we can do it without unintended consequences, I think we will have broad support around Indian country." Trump's transition team did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

The plan dovetails with Trump's larger aim of slashing regulation to boost energy production. It could deeply divide Native American leaders, who hold a range of opinions on the proper balance between development and conservation. The proposed path to deregulated drilling - privatizing reservations - could prove even more divisive. Many Native Americans view such efforts as a violation of tribal self-determination and culture.

"Our spiritual leaders are opposed to the privatization of our lands, which means the commodification of the nature, water, air we hold sacred," said Tom Goldtooth, a member of both the Navajo and the Dakota tribes who runs the Indigenous Environmental Network. "Privatization has been the goal since colonization - to strip Native Nations of their sovereignty."

Reservations governed by the US Bureau of Indian Affairs are intended in part to keep Native American lands off the private real estate market, preventing sales to non-Indians. An official at the Bureau of Indian Affairs did not respond to a request for comment. The legal underpinnings for reservations date to treaties made between 1778 and 1871 to end wars between indigenous Indians and European settlers. Tribal governments decide how land and resources are allotted among tribe members.

Leaders of Trump's coalition did not provide details of how they propose to allocate ownership of the land or mineral rights - or to ensure they remained under Indian control. One idea is to limit sales to non-Indian buyers, said Ross Swimmer, a co-chair on Trump's advisory coalition and an ex-chief of the Cherokee nation who worked on Indian affairs in the Reagan administration. "It has to be done with an eye toward protecting sovereignty," he said.

\$1.5 trillion in reserves

The Trump-appointed coalition's proposal comes against a backdrop of broader environmental tensions on Indian reservations, including protests against a petroleum pipeline by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and their supporters in North Dakota. On Sunday, amid rising opposition, the US Army Corps of Engineers on Sunday said it had denied a permit for the Dakota Access Pipeline project, citing a need to explore alternate routes. The Trump transition team has expressed support for the pipeline, however, and his administration could revisit the decision once it takes office in January.

Tribes and their members could potentially reap vast wealth from more easily tapping resources beneath reservations. The Council of Energy Resource Tribes, a tribal energy consortium, estimated in 2009 that Indian energy resources are worth about \$1.5 trillion. In 2008, the Bureau of Indian Affairs testified before Congress that reservations contained about 20 percent of untapped oil and gas reserves in the US.

Deregulation could also benefit private oil drillers including Devon Energy Corp, Occidental Petroleum, BP and others that have sought to develop leases on reservations through deals with tribal governments. Those companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment. — Reuters

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EU SUFFERS ITALIAN BLOW, BIGGER TESTS LOOM

The resounding "no" from Italian voters to Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's referendum on constitutional reform was not a rejection of the European Union and its single currency, as jubilant populists from across the bloc claimed yesterday. But the vote, which pushes Renzi out of office, does represent a significant setback for Europe at a time when its leaders are scrambling to mount a credible response to Brexit, the election of Donald Trump in the United States and their stubborn economic woes at home.

In one fell swoop, it adds another country to the list of EU members that are likely to be pre-occupied by domestic politics in 2017, a year in which the Dutch, French, Germans, and possibly the British, will go to the polls. And it sends a warning to other European reformers like Francois Fillon, the conservative frontrunner for the French presidency, who has promised no less than five referendums to push through his domestic agenda if he is elected next spring.

More immediately, despite the relatively calm reaction of financial markets yesterday, the vote will deepen concerns about Italy's under-funded banking sector and the economic prospects of the euro zone's third biggest member state. That, in turn, could complicate the calculus for the European Central Bank, which meets on Thursday to decide on the future of its controversial bond purchase program. "This won't push Italy back into crisis for now," said Marcel Fratzscher, head of the DIW economic institute in Berlin and a former top official at the European Central Bank. "But it means lost time for a country that faces huge problems with its banks, its enormous public debt levels and high unemployment. There is a significant danger that the reform course will now slow."

Brexit parallel

Renzi, seen by his European partners as an anchor of stability in a country where political upheaval has been the norm for decades, won just over 40 percent of the vote in the referendum, a far worse result than polls had predicted. His defeat comes only days after deeply unpopular French President Francois Hollande, also a leftist, bowed to political realities and announced he would not seek a second term.

Renzi's departure could lead to early elections in Italy next year. It increases the risks of the anti-euro 5-Star Movement gaining power, although the prospect of that remains slim. After the Brexit vote went bad for David Cameron in June, it is the second time in half a year that the leader of a major EU member state tied his future to a referendum and lost, a development that was seized upon by the region's anti-EU firebrands. "The Italians rejected Renzi and the EU," Marine Le Pen of France's far-right National Front said on Twitter. "This vote looks to me to be more about the euro than constitutional change," added Nigel Farage of the UK Independence Party (UKIP).

But unlike Britain, polls show that a solid majority of Italian voters are in favour of both the EU and the euro.

They were encouraged to vote "no" by all of the major parties in Italy outside of Renzi's Partito Democratico (PD). His defeat therefore, which came on the same day that Austrian voters sent a far-right candidate to defeat in a presidential run-off, looks less like a rejection of Europe and the political establishment, and more like a serious miscalculation on the part of Renzi.

"When a prime minister who will always be remembered for taking office through an old-style party coup calls a national referendum in a country that's still struggling to emerge from a triple-dip recession, he can expect an unfavorable result," said Nicholas Spiro of Lauressa Advisory.

Crunch time

That won't cushion the impact for Europe, whose leaders have promised to unveil their post-Brexit vision for the EU in the Italian capital next March, the 60th anniversary of the bloc's founding Rome treaty. Who will host that summit is now an open question. The same month, Dutch voters will go to the polls and British Prime Minister Theresa May is expected to invoke Article 50 of the EU treaty, triggering a tight two-

year countdown to Brexit - a timeline made all the more challenging by Europe's heavy election calendar.

Only a month later, the first round of the French election will take place. Polls suggest that will produce a showdown between Le Pen and Fillon, the headline conservative who is advocating a radical overhaul of the French economy through deep cuts in public sector jobs and the scrapping of the 35-hour workweek. Fillon has proposed a total of five referendums: one to enshrine a balanced budget law in the constitution, a second to overhaul French territorial authorities, a third to unwind France's generous pension regimes, a fourth on immigration quotas and a fifth - in an echo of Renzi's own referendum - to reduce the number of parliamentarians.

Far more than the Italian referendum, the French vote is shaping up as a make-or-break moment for Europe and its political mainstream. Fillon, no doubt, will be watching what is now unfolding in France's southern neighbor as he girds for battle. "The French election will be the crucial test for Europe," said Dominique Moisi of the Institut Montaigne. "To counter Le Pen, Fillon may have to move to the center. He will have to put quite a bit of water in his traditionalist wine." — Reuters

RELIEF AND ANGER AFTER BITTER AUSTRIA ELECTION

After an ugly and deeply polarizing presidential campaign in normally tranquil Austria, whooping and relief on one side Sunday night was matched by disdain and anger on the other. Independent candidate Alexander Van der Bellen had already won the contest once, back in May - the election had to be held again because of procedural problems - so in theory the 72-year-old could do it again.

But a lot has happened since May to boost the confidence of populists like his far-right rival Norbert Hofer, not least Britain's shock decision in June to leave the EU and Donald Trump's US election victory last month. "Today I was totally surprised because after Trump and Brexit I was really not sure what this meant for Austria," diplomat Wolfgang Pietrisch, 69, said at Van der Bellen's election party. "I was hugely surprised and my confidence, which was rather low in the past couple of days, went up - skyrocketed," Pietrisch told AFP.

At the same event, artist Natalia Nadasma, 21, said that Brexit and Trump had motivated many activists to make sure that the Austrian election wasn't yet another political shock. "A lot of people from civil society decided to be active, to go onto the streets in order to convince people to vote for liberalism, to vote for openness, to vote for diversity," Nadasma said. Student David Sheata,

20, said he had been worried that after being asked to vote no fewer than three times this year - and for what is a largely ceremonial job - voter fatigue would set in. But not a bit of it. The result was "a big surprise because we all thought that Hofer will win because Austrians lost their trust in the election process. But now, after the first result, we are very happy."

In fact, according to Van der Bellen, turnout was around 75-76 percent - higher than in May. Political analyst Peter Hajek said that Van der Bellen's supporters did a good job in the past few weeks getting people out to vote. Campaigners used Brexit and Trump to say to people "if you don't want to end up also wondering what happened, then go out and vote, and vote Van der Bellen," Hajek said.

Sandra Edelmann, 30, a corporate consultant waving a rainbow flag and wearing a "Fan der Bellen" T-shirt, said she had never given up hope. "I believed and hoped that Austria would be clever enough to vote Van der Bellen, and they were," she told AFP. "In the last 11 months I have been very active in the campaign. Last night I was in the pubs till 2:00 am, talking to people, motivating them," said social worker Christoph Krottmayer, 35. "I am very relieved. It was all worth it. Later I think I might cry out of relief." — AFP

5 THINGS WE LEARNED FROM RETURN OF WOODS

Five things we learned from the return of Tiger Woods to competitive golf at the Hero World Challenge invitational event at par-72 Albany Golf Club in the Bahamas:

Tiger Woods isn't ready to win yet

There were moments you wanted to fit him for another green jacket. There were moments you wanted him to give it up for good. Woods flashed brilliance and horror and finished on four-under par 284. He shot the worst round of anyone at 76. He led in birdies with 24. He fired a bogey-free 65 in round two that was his best round since the last time he won at the WGC event in Akron back in 2013.

He needs more work. He will put in more work. He needs to find consistency. He needs more events to be tournament fit and avoid fading late in rounds. He was able to make great starts. That could put him ahead in some ways if he can solve other issues. He's older Tiger, not the Tiger of old. And Albany is not the typical US PGA Tour stop. It's not going to offer the tension of a Sunday in a major. It's 18 guys not a full field. It's not many of those players that Tiger inspired that now block his path to a triumphant return.

Tiger had more friends than he knew

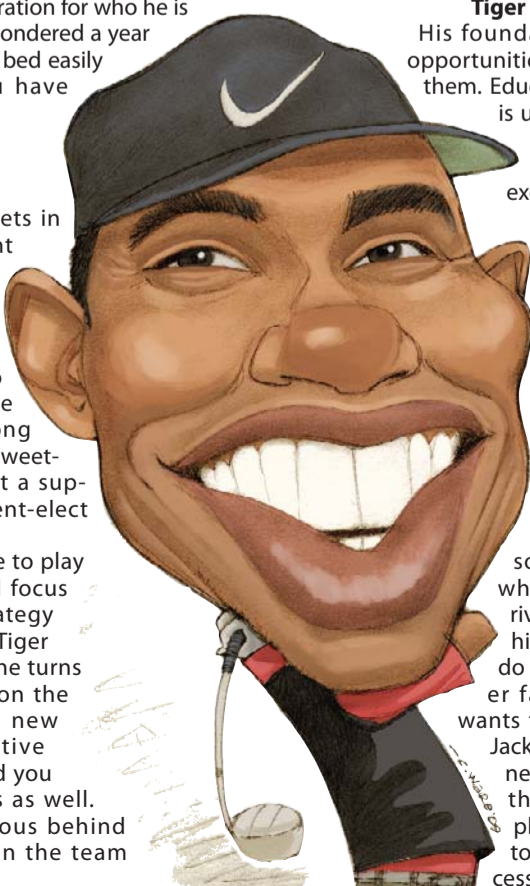
"It blew me away." That's what Woods said about so many fellow pros offering their support, advice and even just company for a night out. After nearly 20 years of focus and grinding, wins and an intimidating aura, Tiger has learned the man behind the 14 majors and 79 career wins has earned more respect and admiration from his rivals than he ever imagined. Players gave their time to be in his charity events that benefit his foundation. Beyond Tiger Inc., beyond those who can make money with him, Woods

has inspired friendship and admiration for who he is as a person. For someone who wondered a year ago if he might never get out of bed easily again, it's nice to know you have friends.

Tiger is a Trump-esque tweetmeister

Woods fired off lots of tweets in his role as Ryder Cup assistant captain. One story told by a rival spoke of how players began tweet-comparing trophy cases and Tiger chimed in with the all-time winner, only to be told he didn't count. There was a camaraderie built among players and Woods was big on tweeting his thoughts. He even got a supportive tweet from US President-elect Donald Trump.

It helped that he was unable to play at the Ryder Cup, so he could focus on players and holes and strategy to help the US victory. But as Tiger becomes an elder statesman - he turns 41 on Dec 30 - he has a role on the Ryder Cup committee and a new way to channel his competitive golf nature. Beware Europe and you Presidents Cup Internationals as well. Tiger might be more dangerous behind the scenes than as a player in the team events.



Tiger has a solid foundation

His foundation does wonders giving kids opportunities who otherwise would not have them. Education. Dreams. His business world is united under the TGR umbrella, and one venture was showcased this week. He's a partner in Albany, the exclusive Bahamas area that is remote but growing. Ernie Els helped start it. Justin Rose lives there. Joe Lewis, whose Tavistock Group owns English football side Tottenham Hotspur, helped start it. And it just had a week of free global advertising on golf telecasts of Tiger's comeback. He's not worried about lunch money.

Tiger's body needs extra care

He's taking cold baths. He's not running so much or lifting weights so much - all those things he did when he was younger that forced rivals to do the same to keep up with him. He's going to face guys who can do those lifts and runs and can recover faster between rounds. And he wants to win four more majors to catch Jack's record. He will have to figure out new ways of winning. You could see the process start this week as he played up at times, trying new ways to negotiate the course and be successful. — AFP

STEVE COOK ELATED AT LIVERPOOL REDEMPTION

LONDON: Bournemouth's Steve Cook believes he has redeemed himself with a stellar performance in Sunday's seven-goal thriller against Liverpool following his error against Arsenal last week. Bournemouth came from behind twice and scored four second-half goals to edge past Liverpool 4-3 in the Premier League contest against the Reds. Cook's right-footed volley from the centre of the box levelled the score 3-3 in the 79th minute before Liverpool goalkeeper Loris Karius spilled another Cook shot, allowing Nathan Ake to score the injury-time winner. "It's nice for me because I made a mistake last week so I've been dreaming about having an impact... and fortunately I have done," Cook told the club website (www.afcb.com). The 25-year-old made a defensive error against Arsenal, allowing Alexis Sanchez to score the first goal in Bournemouth's 3-1 away loss. "We were poor in the first-half but it shows how far we've come. We feel that we can mix it with the best and we can keep pushing," Cook said of Sunday's match. "We want to finish in the top half this year and these sort of results are definitely going to help that." Tenth-placed Bournemouth travel to Burnley for their next league game on Sunday. — Reuters

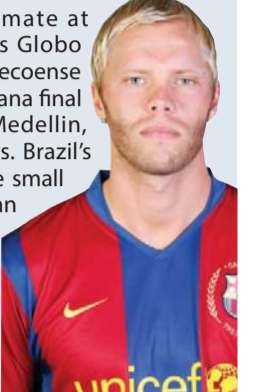


BILIC SET FOR TALKS WITH OWNERS: REPORTS

LONDON: West Ham United manager Slaven Bilic will meet club officials and owners following their 5-1 home drubbing by Arsenal, British media reported yesterday. The loss left West Ham 17th in the Premier League table and Bilic questioned the "intensity and dedication" of his squad. Striker Andy Carroll, however, said the players had faith in their Croatian manager to steer them away from the relegation zone. "Everyone has stood by the manager and he is a great manager," Carroll told the club website (www.whufc.com). "We are in this as a team together and all the lads are disappointed with the result and the way things are going. I am very confident that we are going to pull ourselves out of this." West Ham, who finished seventh last season, have gone five league games without a win and have not settled in their new home ground, London Stadium. Bilic joined West Ham from Besiktas in 2015, replacing Sam Allardyce. He has also coached Croatia, with whom he reached the 1998 World Cup final as a player. West Ham travel to third-placed Liverpool on Sunday. — Reuters

GUDJOHNSEN OFFERS TO PLAY FOR CHAPECOENSE

SAO PAULO: Former Chelsea and Barcelona striker Eidor Gudjohnsen has offered to play for Brazilian team Chapecoense following the air crash in Colombia last week in which most of their players died. The 38-year-old Iceland international is a free agent after being released by Norwegian club Molde in August. "Out of respect I would play for @ChapecoenseReal if they have a place for me! If not just to play with @10Ronaldinho again," Gudjohnsen said on Twitter. Ronaldinho, Gudjohnsen's former team mate at Barcelona, also wants to help the stricken club, Brazil's Globo Esporte news reported last week. Only three of the Chapecoense players who flew north from Brazil for the Copa Sudamericana final against Atletico Nacional survived the crash outside Medellin, Colombia, which killed 71 passengers and crew members. Brazil's top-flight soccer teams have offered to loan players to the small southern club for next season and have asked the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) to give Chapecoense a three-year exemption from relegation. Chapecoense have been told they will be named Copa Sudamericana champions by South American football's governing body CONMEBOL, the TV Globo website (http://globoesporte.globo.com) reported on Saturday. — Reuters



RENAULT AL BABBAIN MAIN SPONSOR OF 2016 NBK WALKATHON

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain Co., the exclusive agent of Renault in the state of Kuwait was the main sponsor of the 22nd NBK walkathon titled, 'We Are Stronger With each Step'. Organized by National Bank of Kuwait and sponsored by Renault Al Babbain for the second consecutive year, Renault Al Babbain took part in this initiative showing support of the organization's passion for life, healthy living and sports.

NBK's Walkathon spreads excitement and encourages a healthy lifestyle. Al Babbain has always proudly worked with key local partners, who like them; share the responsibility of spreading awareness on the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Al Babbain was thrilled to support the Walkathon, which is by far the most popular and awaited walkathon in the country, that continues to grow year after year.

Participants entered a draw for three exciting prizes three 2016 Renault Captur vehicles. The three lucky winners that won the 3 Renault Capturs offered are: Amira Noran Al Qina, Ofzar Yamaboa, and Engy Ahmed. The Renault models were displayed at the finish line with many valuable gifts that were given to the participants and their kids during the ceremony.

The participants reached record numbers as over 8,000 people participated this year. Isam Al Sager, NBK Group CEO, Ms Shaikha Al Bahar, NBK Deputy Group CEO, Emdad Ahmed Al Ablani, NBK General Manager, Human Resources Group, and Mohammed Al Othman, NBK's Deputy General Manager, Consumer Banking Group attended the event from NBK's management. On the other hand Saleh Abdul Mohsen Al Babbain, Al Babbain Group CEO, Mohammad Shalabi Al Babbain Group COO and Makram Khater Group General Manager Marketing from Al Babbain group.

The sponsorship continues Al Babbain's long-standing tradition of contributing to a wide variety of local sporting activities. Thousands viewed the event through Renault's social media accounts which you can follow through Facebook and Instagram : @renaultkwt



HIDEKI MATSUYAMA ENDS HIS YEAR ON A BIG ROLL

NASSAU: It started with a victory at home in the Japan Open. It ended with another trophy in the Bahamas against a short but strong field. Five tournaments. Four victories. The

way Hideki Matsuyama is playing, he might wish the Masters started next week. Or maybe not. "I'm kind of glad it's not," he said with a broad smile, "because I don't think I

could win next week." Winning must be exhausting for the 24-year-old Japanese star, and no one has been more proficient at it over the last two months. Even more alarming is that Matsuyama is making it look easy, although getting through the final nine holes at the Hero World Challenge felt as heavy as walking through the beach sand of the Bahamas. Coming off seven-shot victories in the HSBC Champions and the Taiheyo Masters, he had a seven-shot lead over Henrik Stenson going into the final round at Albany Golf Club. Matsuyama didn't make another birdie after the ninth hole, and his lead was reduced to two shots with two holes to play when he closed with two pars for a 1-over 73 and a two-shot victory.

"I can't say that I played well today," he said. "But I did win Tiger's tournament, and what a great honor it is."

Matsuyama said Tiger Woods has been his golfing idol as long as he can remember, and as much as he enjoyed winning, he was just as happy to see Woods back in competition. Woods led the field with 24 birdies, but six

double bogeys contributed to a 15th-place finish in the 17-man field.

The first time he heard of Woods was when Matsuyama was 5 and watched video - "over and over and over again," he said - of Woods winning the 1997 Masters. Three years later, Woods won 10 times around the world, including the final three majors in what is considered his best season.

"Unfortunately, I wasn't able to see all those wins because they didn't have the broadcast in Japan," Matsuyama said. "But I knew Tiger was winning, and I knew he was very good. And I almost expected him to win every tournament." Perhaps he is starting to appreciate what it's like to get on a roll.

"I'm not even close to being mentioned in the same sentence as Tiger," he said. "But I am working hard, and hopefully, little by little, I'll get better and better." Matsuyama isn't the first player to get on a hot streak. Last year, Jason Day won four out of six tournaments against the strongest competition in the world, including the PGA Championship and a pair of FedEx Cup playoff events.—AP



NASSAU: Hideki Matsuyama, right, of Japan, poses with Tiger Woods and the trophy after winning the Hero World Challenge golf tournament Sunday, in Nassau, Bahamas. — AP



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FORMULA ONE RETURNS TO FRANCE AFTER 10-YEAR ABSENCE

PARIS: The French Formula One Grand Prix will return in 2018 after a 10-year absence with the race scheduled to take place at the Circuit Paul Ricard in southern France, regional politician Christian Estrosi said yesterday. "We and those who are with me are very proud...it's a great victory," Estrosi told reporters.

Named after the local pastis alcohol magnate who financed it, and also known as Le Castellet, the track last hosted a grand prix in 1990. The coun-

try's most recent Formula One race was at Magny-Cours, in central France, in 2008. France hosted the first recognised grand prix near Le Mans in 1906, and was also part of the first world championship season in 1950 with a race at Reims. The five-year deal was agreed with the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur (PACA) region in association with the city of Toulon, department of Var and the French motorsport association (FFSA).

PACA president Estrosi, an ex-mayor

of Nice and a former car and motorcycle racer who finished fourth in the 1978 French 500cc Grand Prix at Nogaro, said the event was likely to happen in the European summer. He declined to say how much it had cost to bring back motor racing's elite competition, but said the contract was in the normal price range for a grand prix in Europe.

"Losing the grand prix left a real scar on the country," Estrosi said.

Germany has been axed from the

2017 calendar for financial reasons, despite the country having world champions in dominant Mercedes, but Hockenheim still has a contract to host the loss-making race in 2018.

Le Castellet, which features the long Mistral straight, has been fully renovated and is now owned by Formula One supreme Bernie Ecclestone's family trust.

The Briton told Reuters last week that the trust was not involved in the race and would be leasing the facility to "the

people that are going to be the promoters." France currently has two drivers on the starting grid, Romain Grosjean and Esteban Ocon, while French manufacturer Renault has its own team and provides engines to former champions Red Bull and Toro Rosso.

The showcase Monaco Grand Prix, a few hours' drive from Le Castellet, has been a fixture on the calendar since 1950 and the closest thing to a home race for French drivers in recent years. —Reuters

DOPING INCREASES OLYMPIC THREAT

LAUSANNE: Weightlifting is buckling under the burden of a drug-taking culture that has made it one of the most notorious Olympic events. The sport that first appeared at the Olympics in 1896 accounted for 48 of the 104 positive tests detected in new analyses on samples from the 2008 Beijing Games and 2012 in London.

It could get worse as not all the results of the 1,243 samples have been revealed. Top of the sorry list was Kazakhstan's Ilya Ilyin, a four-time weightlifter of the year who was stripped of his Beijing and London 94kg titles. The London 94kg podium has been devastated by doping. Russia's Alexandr Ivanov has had to hand in his silver medal and Anatoly Ciricu of Moldova his bronze.

The doping merry-go-round is now so farcical that Saeid Mohammadpour of Iran, who came fifth, is now in line for gold. The bronze medal could go to Tomasz Zielinski of Poland who came ninth on the day. "Weightlifting is clearly a sport at high risk of doping," said Olivier Niggli, director general of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). "This was clearly proved by the number of cases detected by the International Weightlifting Federation with WADA at the 2015 world championships in Houston and by the retesting of analyses by the International Olympic Committee."

The IWF barred serial performance-enhancing offenders Russia and Bulgaria from competing at the Rio Games. The IWF said that Russia's test results were "shocking". It adopted a resolution in June that said any country which returns three or more positive drugs tests from the reanalysis of samples from the last two Olympics would be suspended for a year.

But the IOC is keeping a close eye on the sport, according to experts close to the Olympic movement.

"Weightlifting's problems are nothing

new," said Jean-Loup Chappelet, a professor at the IDHEAP Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration at the University of Lausanne. He said Richard Pound, first president of WADA, had spoken of excluding weightlifting from the Olympics before the agency was created in 1999. Chappelet, a specialist on the Olympic movement, said it would be possible if the IOC wanted to send a "strong signal" against doping. But it would be difficult as weightlifting is so popular in Eastern Europe. "There are always people who would like to see weightlifting and some other sports expelled," IWF director general Attila Adamfi told AFP. "Yes weightlifting is in danger but I believe that weightlifting is in danger just like every other sport."

But Adamfi said every sport is in danger because the IOC's Agenda 2020 recommends a bigger rotation of the sports, disciplines or events. "We know some sports where manipulation and corruption is an issue, so I think there are many issues in many sports federations." The IOC is to carry out a review from 2017 of sports that will be included in the 2024 Games. Events at the Rio Games this year, as well as previous Olympics, will be considered.

The IWF anti-doping policies are bound to be studied. Marc Andrieux, head of the French weightlifting federation, said several national chiefs had been worried about the sport's Olympic status four years ago when Tamas Ayan was elected IWF president. Andrieux says that the Hungarian Ayan took many of the criticisms on board.

"A lot of work has been done over the past four years. "At every world or European championships, busloads of cheaters are kicked out."

Niggli said that the IWF has a "solid" anti-doping programme. "But it still has lessons to learn from the many recent doping cases," he added. —AFP

GUT STORMS TO LAKE LOUISE SUPER-G WIN

LAKE LOUISE: World Cup overall champion Lara Gut claimed the season opening women's super-G race at Lake Louise on Sunday, one day after finishing runner-up in the downhill. Gut, who won the bronze medal in the downhill at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, clocked a time of one minute, 02.68 seconds, finishing 0.10 seconds ahead of Tina Weirather of Liechtenstein. Italy's Sofia Goggia was third in 1:03.27. Overnight snow flurries and poor visibility delayed the start of the race 75 minutes so organizers could make sure the track was safe to ski on. Gut had to plough through some thick snow for her win but it turned out to be the perfect storm for the 25-year-old from Lugano, Switzerland. She not only took advantage of the organizers' decision to shorten the super-G course because of the bad weather, but the flat terrain that makes Lake Louise one of the least demanding speed courses on the circuit-suited her game plan.

"I am finally leaving Lake Louise with a full smile," Gut wrote on her Twitter account. "And the slope didn't get any steeper, hehehe." Gut showed steady improvement as the first speed races of the 2016-17 FIS Ski World Cup season kicked off in the Canadian Rocky

Mountains with a pair of downhill followed by the super-G.

In the back-to-back downhill she finished fourth on Friday and second on Saturday behind Ilka Stuhec.

"Yesterday and the last days, I had the feeling I was finally starting to build something," Gut said.

"I wasn't skiing really well at the top. So I understood that I should change something, and from the middle on I tried to keep a really straight line and be aggressive. I'm happy it paid off."

Weirather skied from the fifth starting position and set the early pace. She said her first podium finish of the young season has given her a confidence boost.

"I was pretty angry after yesterday, so I tried to put that anger into skiing today," she said of her ninth place finish in Saturday's downhill. "That helped me for sure and now the confidence is up and I hope to keep it going."

Slovenia's Stuhec, who also won Friday's downhill race, finished fifth in the super-G with a time of 1:03.42.

Sweden's Kajsa Kling was fourth with a time of 1:03.38. Kling placed a surprise third in Friday's downhill. The ladies now head to Sestriere, Italy, for a giant slalom on Saturday. —AFP



OKLAHOMA: Oklahoma City Thunder guard Victor Oladipo, left, and New Orleans Pelicans guard Jrue Holiday (11) go after a loose ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, Sunday. Oklahoma City won 101-92. —AP

WESTBROOK'S FIFTH STRAIGHT TRIPLE-DOUBLE LIFTS THUNDER

OKLAHOMA: Russell Westbrook collected his fifth consecutive triple-double in leading the Oklahoma City Thunder to a 101-92 victory over the New Orleans Pelicans on Sunday at the Chesapeake Energy Arena. Westbrook posted 28 points, 17 rebounds, 12 assists and 10 turnovers in his 10th triple-double streak of the season. His streak of five in a row is the longest of his career and the longest in the NBA since Michael Jordan posted seven straight in 1989 with the Chicago Bulls. Thunder center Enes Kanter recorded 17 points and 10 boards. Victor Oladipo added 15 points for Oklahoma City (13-8). Anthony Davis led the Pelicans (7-14) with 37 points, 15 rebounds and four blocked shots. Rookie Buddy Hield broke out of a slump with 16 points, all in the second half. Jrue Holiday and E'Twaun Moore each scored 10 points for New Orleans.

MAGIC 98, PISTONS 92

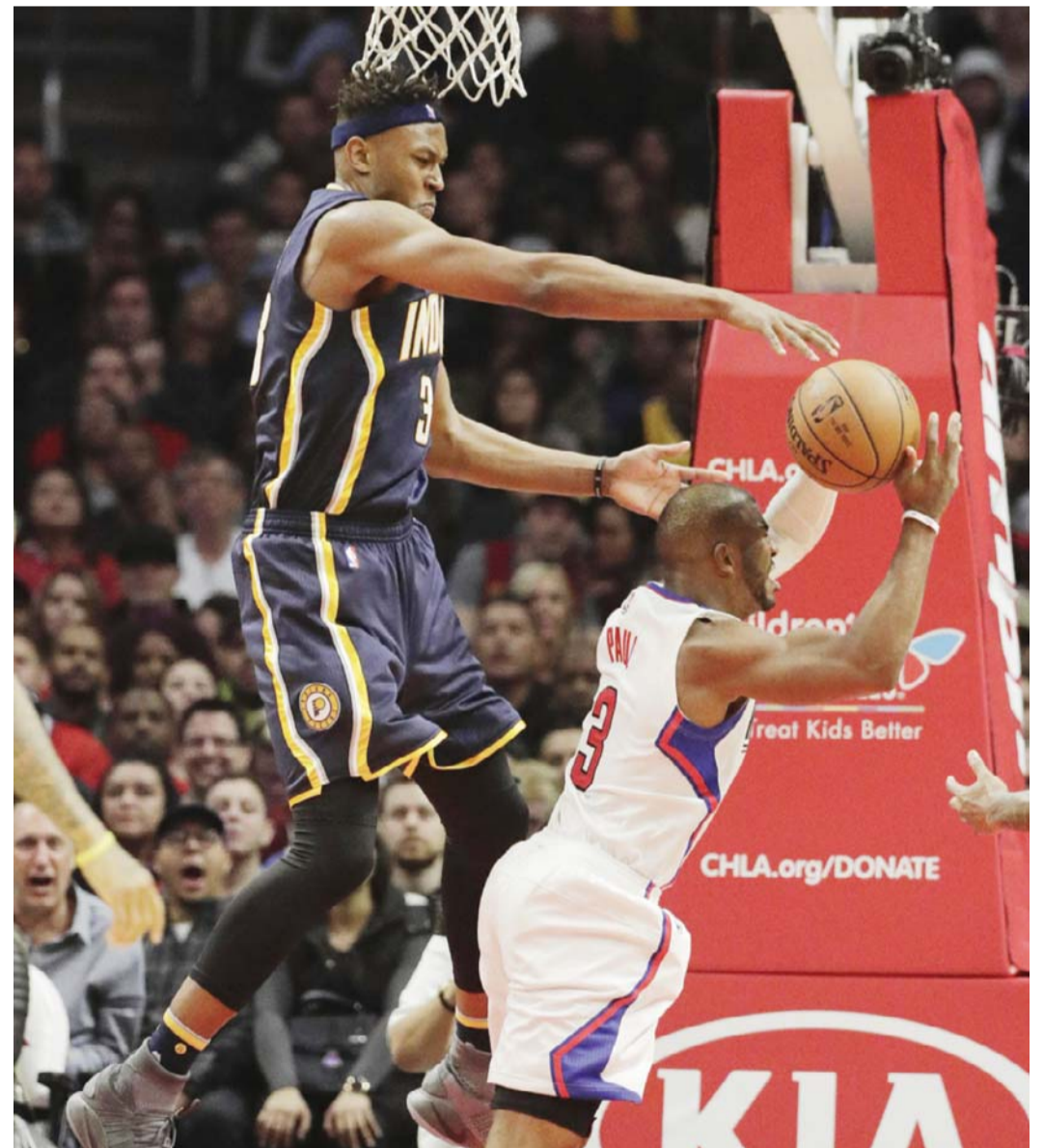
Serge Ibaka piled up 21 points, seven rebounds, four assists, four blocks and three steals, and Orlando ended a seven-game losing streak to Detroit. Nikola Vucevic supplied 16 points and eight rebounds off the bench for the Magic, who hadn't defeated Detroit since Nov. 17, 2014. Jeff Green added 14 points, five rebounds and three assists and D.J. Augustin contributed 12 points and three assists for Orlando. Marcus Morris scored 16 of his team-high 21 points in the first half for the Pistons, who saw their three-game winning streak snapped. Detroit point guard Reggie Jackson had 18 points and four assists in 23 minutes in his season debut. He had been sidelined since training camp with left knee tendinitis. Andre Drummond added 10 points and 10 rebounds.

KNICKS 106, KINGS 98

Derrick Rose and Carmelo Anthony scored 20 points apiece to lead New York past Sacramento. Rose hit the 20-point mark for the third time in his past four games. Brandon Jennings scored a season-high 19 points, and Kristaps Porzingis contributed 15 points, 14 rebounds and four blocked shots for the Knicks, who are 9-3 at the Garden. Sacramento lost its third straight, all on the road. DeMarcus Cousins paced the Kings with 36 points, 12 rebounds and three blocked shots. It marked the 10th time Cousins has poured in at least 30 points this season. He was 14 of 16 from the foul line, and he picked up his league-leading seventh technical foul. Rudy Gay added 22 points and nine rebounds for Sacramento.

PACERS 111, CLIPPERS 102

Thaddeus Young scored 17 points, and Paul George and Rodney Stuckey contributed 16 apiece, helping Indiana beat Los Angeles. George, who missed six of the previous seven games with an ankle injury, also collected seven rebounds and five assists. Jeff Teague added 15 points and Monta Ellis chipped in 14 for Indiana, which won for the third time in four games. All five Pacers starters and two reserves reached double figures. Blake Griffin scored 24 points and grabbed 16 rebounds for the Clippers, who fell for the fourth time in six games. Chris Paul had 18 points and 11 assists for Los Angeles, while J.J. Redick scored 15 points on five first-half 3-pointers. — Reuters



LOS ANGELES: Indiana Pacers' Myles Turner, top, defends Los Angeles Clippers' Chris Paul during the second half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, in Los Angeles. The Pacers won 111-102. — AP

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MEETS PENN STATE IN 103RD ROSE BOWL

PASADENA: Southern California and Penn State followed two difficult paths to reach a remarkable reunion eight years later in the Rose Bowl. The Trojans will face the Big Ten champions on Jan. 2 in the 103rd edition of the Granddaddy of Them All. The rematch of the 2009 game showcases two venerable football programs that have emerged from bad times since their last trip to this traditional postseason destination for their conferences.

"I can't think of a better reward for our football team after this season," USC coach Clay Helton said. "These are the things you dream about as a little kid." USC (9-3) will meet Penn State (11-2) in a rematch of the Trojans' 38-24 victory eight years ago - the last trip to the Rose Bowl for either team. Since then, both programs were rocked to their foundations by scandals and NCAA sanctions. But both capped years of progress with breakthroughs this fall, recovering from similarly slow starts to become two of the nation's top teams. Coach James Franklin's Nittany Lions have won nine straight games, culminating in a 38-31 victory over Wisconsin on Saturday night in the Big Ten championship game. Penn State finished fifth in the final

College Football Playoff rankings, just ahead of Michigan. "How humbled and honored we are to have this opportunity," Franklin said. "I think this is a game and a bowl that players and coaches grow up dreaming about having an opportunity to play in and be a part of one day."

Helton's Trojans have won eight games in a row, capped by back-to-back victories over top rivals UCLA and Notre Dame. The Trojans barely missed out on the Pac-12 title game between Washington and Colorado - who were both beaten convincingly by USC - but overtook the Buffaloes in the final playoff rankings to snag their record 34th Rose Bowl berth. Penn State will make its fourth appearance in the Rose Bowl, including three against USC. The Rose Bowl berth is another milestone in the program's revival after the scandal surrounding former defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky, who was indicted on 40 counts of sex crimes in 2011.

USC has played in far more Rose Bowls than any other team. The Trojans' downtown campus is 15 miles from the stadium, which became the program's second home during the dominant years of coach Pete Carroll. —AP



LAKE LOUISE: Switzerland's Lara Gut stands in the finish area following her win at the women's World Cup super-G ski race in Lake Louise, Alberta, Sunday. — AP

QATAR 2022 ATTACKS 'MALICIOUS': ORGANISER

DOHA: Qatar's much-criticised 2022 World Cup has been the victim of "malicious and unwarranted attacks", a senior tournament official in the Gulf said yesterday.

Nasser Al-Khater, assistant secretary general of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, the body overseeing the organisation of the tournament in Qatar, also claimed that many of the country's critics had not "set foot in the

country".

"We've responded to our critics for a very long time to the detriment of the local people and local media," he told a Soccex Asia forum meeting in Doha.

"We were under a lot of criticism we were under, I would say, malicious and unwarranted attacks."

Since being controversially chosen to host football's biggest event almost exactly six years ago, Qatar has received

a barrage of international criticism.

These have mostly focused on corruption allegations to secure the tournament in the first place and its poor human rights record, in relation to the almost two million migrant workers in the Gulf state.

Qatar is the subject of an ongoing Swiss Attorney General investigation into corruption claims over the bidding process for the 2022 tournament, allega-

tions always denied in Doha.

It was also accused earlier this year by Amnesty International of using "forced labour" at one World Cup site.

Qatar has tried to counter such claims by saying it is in the process of bringing in significant labour reforms.

Later this month, the gas-rich state is expected to announce the end of its controversial "kafala" laws, which place restrictions on workers' ability to change

jobs and travel.

In addition, last month the Supreme Committee announced that it would allow international trade union inspections of tournament stadium sites from next year.

Khater added that he thought critics were being silenced. "I think it's time critics started to listen to us. I think they are coming round to the fact that Qatar is not a bad idea," he said. — AFP



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Brazilian midfielder Fernandinho (L) and Manchester City's French defender Bacary Sagna attend a training session at the City Football Academy in Manchester, northern England, yesterday. Manchester City are due to play Celtic in UEFA Champions League Group C football match today. — AFP

UNSETTLED MANCHESTER CITY TARGET CELTIC REACTION

LONDON: Pep Guardiola's Manchester City will look to turn the page on their turbulent weekend defeat by Chelsea when they entertain Celtic in their final Champions League group game today. City's 3-1 loss on Saturday left them four points below Chelsea, who top the Premier League table, and saw Sergio Aguero and Fernandinho dismissed for losing their heads in stoppage time.

Guardiola's side are already assured of a place in the Champions League last 16, while Celtic cannot even reach the Europa League, but goalkeeper Willy Caballero says the hosts still have a point to prove. "Just hearing the anthem of the Champions League is a big motivation. It is the most important competition in the world," the Argentine said during a pre-match press conference yesterday.

"With this, it is enough. We have to respect this kind of game. We are going to play against a champion team and be focused and play in the same way we did against Borussia (Moenchengladbach) and Barcelona. "We lost at home. We need to recover the feeling of a winning team and the only way to do that is to win tomorrow."

Caballero is expected to start in goal in place of Claudio Bravo as Guardiola rotates his starting XI for the Etihad Stadium encounter. With Aguero banned from domestic football until New Year's Eve, Guardiola must decide whether to hand him a last pre-Christmas run-out or give his deputy, Kelechi Iheanacho, a chance to get up to speed. "There will be changes tomorrow, definitely," Guardiola said. "I am so happy to give minutes to people who deserved to play the last games. Whether Sergio will play or not, I will decide tomorrow." Fernandinho received a three-game domestic ban for manhandling Chelsea's Cesc Fabregas and will not feature against Celtic due to a one-game European suspension.

ROBERTS RETURNS

Captain Vincent Kompany remains sidelined with a knee problem and Raheem Sterling is not expected to feature, having missed the Chelsea game after taking a knock to his knee.

But midfielder Fabian Delph is thought to be close to a return to first-team action after over three months out with a groin injury. Guaranteed to finish bottom of Group C, Celtic have only pride to play for, but they will hope to bow out with a performance akin to their fine showing in their 3-3 draw with City in September.

The Scottish champions have not won a game in Europe's top-level competition proper since October 2013, while the last of their three victories in England dates back to 2003. But they have had a memorable 10 days, claiming the Scottish League Cup to bring up a century of trophies, and go into the game on the back of a last-gasp 4-3 win at Motherwell on Saturday.

"It was definitely a day to remember," said Australian midfielder Tom Rogic, who netted a 90th-minute winner at Fir Park. "We are certainly champions for a reason and it is days like those when you are up against it, it tests your character as a group and as a unit and when you come through it, it is pretty pleasing."

"It was a new challenge and it showed the strength of the team." One visiting player hoping to catch the eye will be 19-year-old winger Patrick Roberts, who joined Celtic from City last February on an 18-month loan deal.

Former City winger Scott Sinclair and left-back Kieran Tierney have been ruled out due to hamstring and ankle injuries respectively. But manager Brendan Rodgers said centre-back Erik Sviatchenko and striker Leigh Griffiths "should be fine" after they sat out the trip to Motherwell due to illness. — AFP

KLOPP DEFENDS LIVERPOOL AFTER BOURNEMOUTH SHOCKER

BOURNEMOUTH: Jurgen Klopp has been forced to defend Liverpool's character and title credentials after their incredible meltdown in a stunning 4-3 defeat at Bournemouth. Liverpool's shock loss on Sunday came at a time when they looked set to move to within a point of leaders Chelsea and go into the Christmas period as one of the favourites to finish as champions for the first time since 1990. However, the nervous manner of the team's late collapse against a Bournemouth team who had never won against Liverpool in their history, has opened up a debate over whether Klopp's squad is ready for such pressure. Next weekend sees Liverpool face lowly West Ham at Anfield, but the Christmas fixture list also throws up far tougher games against Merseyside rivals Everton and title rivals Manchester City, with star player Philippe Coutinho missing all of them because of an ankle injury. Klopp, however, sees no reason for panic despite his team conceding three goals in the last 14 minutes to turn a 3-1 lead into a 4-3 loss. "We have no attitude or character problem," he said. "No-one is born a winner. Not in the first two or three months. You have to learn it. "It doesn't feel too good right now but sometimes we need it. So I'm not angry. These things happen and you cannot be champions in December. "I would say we were 100 percent before now. Now we are 99 percent. But it's quite simple to go back to 100 percent."

"Nothing happened today apart from losing three points. Everything else is ok."

NO CONCERN

Klopp did admit he wasn't happy with

certain aspects of Liverpool's performance, however - accusing his team of opening the door for Bournemouth in the latter stages of a match in which Liverpool scored excellent goals through Sadio Mane, Divock Origi and Emre Can. But Klopp refused to place any blame at the door of goalkeeper Loris Karius, who spoiled Steve Cook's stoppage-time shot to gift Nathan Ake the winner - and was then heavily criticised by television pundit and former Liverpool player Jamie Carragher for his mistake. "No, I have no concern," Klopp insisted. "No problem. If you make mistakes you get criticised. That's what happens in life. "I'm sure people criticised Jamie Carragher in his career. It has no influence on what I do to my team. It says nothing about him as a goalkeeper. It happens. We go on."

In contrast, Bournemouth players are celebrating a famous victory, having never previously beaten Liverpool in nine fixtures going all the way back to 1927.

The result takes them up to 10th, with matches against struggling Burnley and Leicester next on the agenda. Their comeback was inspired by a match-winning performance from 22-year-old substitute Fraser, who only came on because of an injury to teammate Junior Stanislas in the second half with his team trailing 2-0. The Scottish winger won a penalty with his first touch, scored Bournemouth's second at 3-1 and set up his team's equaliser as the game was turned on its head.

Bournemouth manager Eddie Howe, whose team were playing in England's fourth tier as recently as six years ago, said: "I don't think I'll ever forget this game. It was a right contrast of emotions. — AFP

FLAWLESS ATLETICO HUNT PERFECT SIX AT BAYERN

BERLIN: Atletico Madrid can make club history at Bayern Munich today as the Spaniards look for a record sixth group stage win with both teams through to the last 16.

Diego Simeone's men arrive in Munich as the only side with a 100 percent record in Europe after five wins from five. The Group D leaders are six points clear of second-placed Bayern, who they beat 1-0 in Madrid in September, thanks to Yannick Carrasco's first-half winner.

Only five teams have achieved the feat of winning all six Champions League group stage games: Real Madrid (twice, 2011/12, 2014/15), AC Milan (1992/93), Paris Saint-Germain (1994/95), Spartak Moscow (1995/96) and Barcelona (2002/03).

Bayern have their own record run to maintain in Munich as their 4-1 victory over PSV in October was their 14th straight home win in the Champions League—a competition best.

The match at Munich's Allianz Arena is a dead rubber and regardless of the result Atletico will progress as group winners with Bayern second. Regardless, Bayern want a good performance after their 3-2 defeat at Rostov last time out.

"We want to play at a high level," insisted Bayern midfielder Thiago Alcantara. "It's not just a matter of prestige, we want to decide the game for ourselves." Bayern also have a score to settle after September's defeat in Madrid and semi-final exit last season at the hands of Atletico and Antoine Griezmann.

Atletico lost last season's final to neighbours Real in Milan on penalties having squeezed past Bayern in the semis. Madrid beat Bayern 1-0 at home and although the Germans won the return 2-1 in Munich last May, Griezmann's crucial away goal knocked the Bavarians out on a night when Thomas Mueller and Fernando Torres had penalties saved.

"The semi-finals were painful, but it's a thing of the past. Now we want a good performance," said Thiago. Atletico's contrasting domestic and European fortunes so far this season continued as they were held to a 0-0 draw by Espanyol at



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's Italian headcoach Carlo Ancelotti attends a press conference in Munich, southern Germany, yesterday, on the eve of the UEFA Champions League group D match between FC Bayern Munich and Atletico Madrid. — AFP

home on Saturday. The result leaves them nine points adrift of runaway Spanish league leaders Real Madrid.

Atletico have at least recovered their defensive solidity with four consecutive clean sheets following a 3-0 reverse to Real two weeks ago.

Simeone has named a full strength 20-man squad for the trip to Germany, but key players like Diego Godin, Carrasco and Griezmann could be rested for their crucial La Liga match at Villarreal next Monday.

Having won the Bundesliga title for each of the last four seasons—a German league record—Bayern find themselves in the unusual position of second in Germany's top flight, three points adrift of leaders RB Leipzig.

Head coach Carlo Ancelotti experimented for

Friday's 3-1 win at Mainz. He switched Thomas Mueller from the wing to the attacking midfield and opted for a 4-2-3-1 formation, rather than his preferred 4-3-3, which paid off as Robert Lewandowski netted either side of an Arjen Robben goal. It was a return to winning ways after Ancelotti admitted his side made too many mistakes in the defeat to Rostov and 1-0 league loss at Borussia Dortmund last month.

"When we look at the stats, we haven't conceded many goals, but there were many individual mistakes we made and we're working on that," said Ancelotti.

The Italian says centre-back Jerome Boateng is out with a shoulder injury, while Arturo Vidal will feature at some point after returning from a leg injury he picked up playing for Chile. — AFP



MEXICO CITY: Alex Mina Ibarra (R) of America vies for the ball with Jairo Gonzalez of Necaxa during their Mexican Apertura 2016 tournament second leg semifinal football match at Azteca stadium in Mexico City, Mexico, on Sunday. — AFP

UNITED VICTIMS OF DOUBLE STANDARDS, SAYS MOURINHO

LIVERPOOL: Jose Mourinho claimed he is being judged unfairly by critics after Manchester United conceded a late Leighton Baines penalty in a damaging 1-1 draw at Everton.

Mourinho's team have won just twice in the league since the end of August, a run which has featured numerous draws and has derailed United's hopes of winning a title in their manager's debut season at Old Trafford.

However, Mourinho, who earned a reputation for not always winning in the most attractive style when in charge of Chelsea, insists his side is playing well and that he is being held to a double standard. "You have to make a decision because when my teams are playing pragmatic football and winning matches and winning titles, you say it is not right and nice," Mourinho said. "When my teams play very, very well, there is a huge change in relation to the past two or three years. Now you say what matters is to get result, no matter what."

"At the moment teams are getting results, defending with 11 players, keeping the ball and playing on the counter-attack. You have to make a decision." The last comment may have been a thinly-disguised reference to Chelsea and their current style of play.

But, in any case, United had only themselves to blame for their latest disappointment as late substitute Marouane Fellaini tripped Idrissa Gueye and Baines struck the equalising penalty.

Mourinho, whose side are 13 points behind leaders Chelsea, did not take kindly to questions about his decision to bring on the Belgian and said: "I thought you would know more about football than you do." "It is obvious. Everton is not a passing team. They play direct. Everything is direct. "When a team is losing it plays direct, when you have a player on the bench with two metres (height) you play that player in front of the defensive line to win the match."

EMOTIONAL

Baines's penalty cancelled out the opening goal from Zlatan Ibrahimovic and a strong spell from United who also saw Ander Herrera hit a post. "It was another game with a very good performance in a very difficult place to play," said Mourinho. "A very emotional stadium against a team with very good players."

"We are playing very well at home, being super dominant. We are playing very well away controlling matches and performing really well with some amazing performance but not get-

ting the results we deserve." United defender Phil Jones, who continued his impressive recent form after returning from injury problems, articulated the frustration in the visitors' camp. "It's happened too many times, we've dropped too many points," said Jones. "That's four or five games I can think of where we have completely dominated and didn't win. It's happened again." United might have had greater problems had defender Marcos Rojo been dismissed in the first half, instead of earning a yellow card, for a horrific lunge at Gueye, although Everton manager Ronald Koeman refused to criticise the Argentinian.

"It's difficult," said Koeman who made three excellent substitutions to rescue the point.

"Maybe if the referee could watch it back, maybe it would be a red card. We always have discussions about red or yellow, if it's a penalty, but finally it's a fair result. Both teams didn't deserve to lose. "We can fight back, we showed that today. It was disappointing to go 1-0 down but we didn't deserve to lose the match."

"We showed that commitment and qualities and the three subs had a big impact on the game. We deserved it because we were dangerous in the second half." — AFP

Sports

Gut storms
to Lake Louise
Super-G winFlawless Atletico
hunt perfect
six at Bayern

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BLATTER SUFFERS ONE LAST DEFEAT OVER FIFA MISCONDUCT Page 17



SEATTLE: Seattle Seahawks' Ahtyba Rubin pressures Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton as Newton gets off a pass in the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, in Seattle. — AP

BRADY SEIZES ALL-TIME WIN MARK

LOS ANGELES: Tom Brady became the NFL's career leader in victories by a quarterback, earning his 201st by throwing for 269 yards and a touchdown. Brady, who was 33 of 46, had tied Peyton Manning last week in a win over the New York Jets. His lone touchdown came on a 14-yard pass to Chris Hogan in the first quarter. LeGarrette Blount scored the game's first touchdown, rumbling for a 43-yard, ankle-breaking score in the first quarter while spinning around safety Maurice Alexander in the process. He finished with 88 yards on 18 carries. The Patriots (10-2) have won seven of their last eight. On the same day that Los Angeles coach Jeff Fisher and general manager Les Snead were given contract extensions, the recently relocated Rams (4-8) proved they still have a long way to go after losing for the seventh time in eight outings.

OAKLAND 38, BUFFALO 24

Derek Carr threw for 260 yards and two touchdowns to rally the Oakland Raiders to their biggest comeback in 16 years with a 38-24 victory over the Buffalo Bills on Sunday. After falling behind 24-9 following touchdowns on the first two drives of the second half for Buffalo (6-6), the Raiders (10-2) took the game over with 29 straight points and won their sixth straight to remain one game ahead of Kansas City in the tough AFC West. Oakland scored touchdowns on three straight drives, including scoring strikes from Carr to Michael Crabtree and Amari Cooper for his sixth fourth-quarter comeback of the season. This was the biggest comeback for the Raiders since overcoming a 21-point deficit to Indianapolis to win 38-31 on Sept. 10, 2000. The defense also tightened by forcing three straight three-and-outs and then getting a turnover when Khalil Mack deflected Tyrod Taylor's pass that Nate Allen intercepted.

SEAHAWKS 40, PANTHERS 7

Thomas Rawls ran for 103 yards and two touchdowns in the first half. Tyler Lockett took a reverse 75 yards for a score to open the second half and Seattle routed Carolina. Another prime-time game in Seattle was clouded with odd story lines right from the outset when Carolina quarterback Cam Newton was benched for the first play, only to watch backup Derek Anderson throw an interception. The Seahawks (8-3-1) rolled up a season-high 534 yards and kept a three-game lead over Arizona in the division with four remaining. Rawls finished with 106 yards on 15 carries, quiet in the second half after briefly being checked for a concussion. Russell Wilson was 26 of 36 for 277 yards and a touchdown. Seattle safety Earl Thomas broke a bone in his lower left leg during a first-half collision with teammate Kam Chancellor while trying to intercept Newton's pass. X-rays revealed a "cracked tibia," coach Pete Carroll told Seattle's radio broadcast. Carolina dropped to 4-8.

CHIEFS 29, FALCONS 28

Eric Berry returned an interception for a touchdown, and then brought back another pick for a 2-point conversion that gave Kansas City an improbable victory over Atlanta. The Falcons (7-5), rallying from a 27-16 deficit, went ahead 28-27 on Matt Ryan's 5-yard touchdown pass to Aldrick Robinson with 4:32 remaining. Atlanta decided to go for 2, looking to stretch the margin to a field goal. But Berry stepped in front of Ryan's pass and ran 99 yards the other way to give the Chiefs (9-3) their winning margin. It came after Denver won a game in similar fashion last month, returning a blocked PAT for the winning points at New Orleans. Berry had another huge play with less than a minute to go in the first half, picking off Ryan's pass over the middle and bringing it back 37 yards for a touchdown. After

reaching the end zone, the suburban Atlanta native handed the ball to his mother sitting in the stands at the Georgia Dome. Those weren't the only big plays for the Chiefs.

CARDINALS 31, REDSKINS 23

Carson Palmer threw for 300 yards and three touchdowns and David Johnson scored twice. The loss by the Redskins (6-5-1) clinched a playoff spot for the 11-1 Dallas Cowboys. Palmer's 25-yard touchdown pass to Johnson with 11:09 to play put Arizona ahead 24-20, the fourth lead change of the second half. After a Washington field goal, Palmer's 42-yard pass to J.J. Nelson with 1:56 padded gave the Cardinals (5-6-1) a 31-23 lead. Washington drove to the Arizona 28-yard line before Patrick Peterson's interception of Kirk Cousins' pass with 41 seconds left sealed the victory. Johnson, who also scored on a 1-yard run, became the second player in NFL history to top 100 yards from scrimmage in the first 12 games of a season. Edgerrin James was the other.

STEELERS 24, GIANTS 14

Ben Roethlisberger passed for 289 yards and two touchdowns, Le'Veon Bell rolled up 182 yards of total offense, and Pittsburgh's resurgent defense harassed Eli Manning into a flurry of mistakes. Antonio Brown edged good buddy Odell Beckham Jr. in their personal showdown, catching six passes for 54 yards and an acrobatic scoring grab at the back of the end zone. Tight end Ladarius Green added six receptions for 110 yards, both career highs, and a touchdown as the Steelers (7-5) won their third straight to keep pace with Baltimore atop the AFC North. Manning completed just 24 of 39 passes for 195 yards with two touchdowns and two picks in the red zone for the Giants (8-4), whose six-game run ended with a thud. Beckham was largely a non-factor despite a game-high 10 receptions for 100 yards.

BUCCANEERS 28, CHARGERS 21

James Winston threw a go-ahead, 12-yard touchdown pass to Cameron Brate midway through the fourth quarter and Keith Tandy intercepted Philip Rivers in the end zone with 2:56 left to give the Buccaneers their fourth straight vic-

tory. Rivers had the Chargers on the move in the final minutes before Tandy got in front of a pass to Dontrelle Inman and picked it off. Tandy's momentum carried him into the end zone, giving the Bucs the ball on their 20. They ran out the clock. The Bucs (7-5) pulled into a tie with Atlanta atop the NFC South. Rivers threw two second-half interceptions, including Lavonte David's pick-6. The Chargers (5-7) were trying to get back to .500 for the first time since Week 2.

PACKERS 21, TEXANS 13

Aaron Rodgers threw for 209 yards and two touchdowns, and the Packers pulled away with two fourth-quarter touchdowns. The Packers (6-6) weathered snowy conditions at Lambeau Field, making just enough plays on the cold turf. Brock Osweiler connected with DeAndre Hopkins for a 44-yard touchdown pass with 1:51 left to get within eight for Houston. Nick Novak missed the extra point, with footing slippery at Lambeau. The Texans (6-6) had one last shot after the Packers failed to run out the clock. But Osweiler's last-ditch pass-and-lateral play from Houston's 12 with 4 seconds left failed, handing Houston its third straight loss and dropping it into a tie with Tennessee atop the AFC South. Nelson finished with eight catches for 118 yards and a touchdown for Green Bay.

LIONS 28, SAINTS 13

Matthew Stafford passed for 341 yards and two touchdowns. Golden Tate exploited a coverage breakdown on third-and-long for a 66-yard touchdown early in the fourth quarter when Detroit (8-4) was clinging to a six-point lead. The Lions, who've won seven of eight, dominated statistically, but four opportunities inside the New Orleans 20 ended with Matt Prater field goals, allowing the Saints (5-7) to stay close until the fourth quarter. This time, however, the Lions pulled away for their most comfortable victory of the season after seven previous victory margins of one to seven points. The Lions also became the first team in 60 Saints home games to stop Drew Brees from completing a touchdown pass, although tight end Coby Fleener had a pass bounce off his hands at the goal line.

RAVENS 38, DOLPHINS 6

Joe Flacco threw for 381 yards and four touchdowns, and the Ravens overwhelmed the Dolphins in the first half to end Miami's six-game winning streak. Baltimore (7-5) led 24-0 at halftime behind Flacco and a dominant performance from the league's second-ranked defense. Flacco went 27 for 34 for 258 yards and three scores over the first 30 minutes, and the Ravens yielded only 115 yards and intercepted a Ryan Tannehill pass. That was enough to provide the Ravens with their fourth win in five games. Miami also is 7-5. Flacco finished with a franchise-record 36 completions in 47 attempts, by far his most impressive outing in an uneven season. He entered with 11 TD passes and 10 interceptions.

BRONCOS 20, JAGUARS 10

Bradley Roby returned an interception 51 yards for a touchdown, helping the Broncos gain ground in the AFC playoff picture. Roby picked off Blake Bortles' wobbler across the middle in the third quarter and went untouched the other way. Star linebacker Von Miller hit Bortles as he released the ball. It was the 11th pick-6 of Bortles' three-year career and his third in the last four games. Houston and Detroit also returned interceptions for touchdowns in games the Jaguars lost by less than seven points. The latest one resulted in a seventh consecutive loss for Jacksonville (2-10) and secured another miserable milestone for the small-market franchise. The Jaguars became the fifth team in NFL history to post double-digit losses in six consecutive seasons, joining Tampa Bay (1983-94), Detroit (2001-06), Oakland (2003-09) and Cleveland (2008-13). Jacksonville had a chance to tie in the final minutes, but Bortles fumbled trying to make a play in the pocket. The Broncos (8-4) rebounded from an overtime loss against Kansas City, and with Miami's loss at Baltimore, moved into position to get one of the conference's wild-card spots.

BENGALS 32, EAGLES 14

Andy Dalton threw a pair of touchdown passes and Cincinnati finally got its depleted offense moving without receiver A.J. Green. The Bengals (4-7-1) got their first win since Oct. 23, beating a team that's in a swoon of its own. The Eagles (5-7) opened the season with three straight wins, but have dropped seven of nine. Dalton had completions of 50, 44, 29, 23 and 21 yards. The Bengals scored on each of their first six possessions for a 29-0 lead, reinventing themselves with Green and running back Giovani Bernard sidelined by injuries. The previous time they scored on their first six possessions was 2009 against the Bears. The only bad moment: Mike Nugent missed another PAT kick wide to the right, his fourth miss in a span of five tries. Nugent made field goals from 32, 33, 26 and 38 yards, the last one deflecting off the left upright.

BEARS 26, 49ERS 6

Jordan Howard ran for 117 yards and a career-high three touchdowns and the Bears handed San Francisco its 11th straight loss. The 49ers (1-11) extended their franchise-record losing streak and set a club low with 6 yards net passing on a day when Colin Kaepernick got lifted for Blaine Gabbert. The Bears (3-9) finished with a season high in points and picked up a rare win in a matchup between two of the NFL's worst teams.

Matt Barkley, making his second start with Jay Cutler sidelined by a season-ending shoulder injury, went nearly the entire first half without a completion. But he led a touchdown drive near the end of the second quarter and finished 11 of 18 for 192 yards. — AP

NFL results/standings

Kansas City 29, Atlanta 28; Detroit 28, New Orleans 13; New England 26, Los Angeles 10; Denver 20, Jacksonville 10; Green Bay 21, Houston 13; Cincinnati 32, Philadelphia 14; Baltimore 38, Miami 6; Chicago 26, San Francisco 6; Oakland 38, Buffalo 24; Pittsburgh 24, NY Giants 14; Arizona 31, Washington 23; Tampa Bay 28, San Diego 21; Seattle 40, Carolina 7.

American Football Conference

	East				
	W	L	T	OTL	PF PA
New England	10	2	0	.833	319 207
Miami	7	5	0	.583	254 278
Buffalo	6	6	0	.500	305 273
N.Y. Jets	3	8	0	.273	196 266
North					
Baltimore	7	5	0	.583	256 206
Pittsburgh	7	5	0	.583	290 235
Cincinnati	4	7	1	.375	245 259
Cleveland	0	12	0	.000	197 352
South					
Houston	6	6	0	.500	206 256
Tennessee	6	6	0	.500	308 296
Indianapolis	5	6	0	.455	270 301
Jacksonville	2	10	0	.167	223 313
West					
Oakland	10	2	0	.833	345 299
Kansas City	9	3	0	.750	280 241
Denver	8	4	0	.667	286 230
San Diego	5	7	0	.417	334 319

National Football Conference

	East				
	W	L	T	OTL	PF PA
x-Dallas	11	1	0	.917	333 228
N.Y. Giants	8	4	0	.667	244 237
Washington	6	5	1	.542	302 295
Philadelphia	5	7	0	.417	268 244
North					
Detroit	8	4	0	.667	275 250
Minnesota	6	6	0	.500	231 208
Green Bay	6	6	0	.500	295 302
Chicago	3	9	0	.250	204 269
South					
Atlanta	7	5	0	.583	386 331
Tampa Bay	7	5	0	.583	277 285
New Orleans	5	7	0	.417	347 335
Carolina	4	8	0	.333	283 321
West					
Seattle	8	3	1	.708	264 194
Arizona	5	6	1	.458	276 250
L.A. Rams	4	8	0	.333	180 262
San Francisco	1	11	0	.083	233 370



KIB AWARDED 'BEST BANKING VISION IN KUWAIT'



BRUSSELS: Eurogroup finance ministers wait prior to take part in a Eurogroup finance ministers meeting at the European Council in Brussels yesterday. —AFP

ITALIAN BANKS ON KNIFE EDGE AS RENZI QUILTS
INVESTORS FEAR THREAT TO RECAPITALIZATION PLANS

MILAN: The fate of key Italian banks was up in the air yesterday as investors feared that Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's resignation will threaten their recapitalization plans. Concern focused on Italy's third-biggest bank, Monte dei Paschi di Siena (BMPS), which analysts said is one of the country's most vulnerable large lenders. Banking stocks went through a rollercoaster ride on the Milan bourse following Italian voters' rejection of constitutional reform that prompted Renzi's announcement that he would quit. They opened sharply lower Monday, and then recovered, before plunging again, with UniCredit down 3.2 percent, Banca popolare di Milano 2.4 percent, Banco popolare 2.0

percent and Mediobanca 1.3 percent approaching midsession. BMPS, which is the world's oldest bank, has lost 84 percent of its market capitalization since the start of the year. It also emerged as the worst performer from European Banking Authority (EBA) stress tests in July. To ensure its survival, the bank has launched a plan involving the spinoff of 27.6 billion euros (\$29.4 billion) worth of non-performing loans, combined with a capital increase of up to five billion euros. But the question is now whether lingering political uncertainty will scare investors off. "If there is no solution to the government crisis within a couple of weeks, financial markets will start getting jittery again," said

Lorenzo Codogno, a former Italian Treasury official and now a professor at the London School of Economics. "Probably the capital increase of Monte Paschi will be postponed or outright cancelled, and all other operations would be stalled." While investors focus mostly on BMPS for now, the rest of the sector is far from immune to further panic, analysts said, pointing to the Milan's FTSE All-Share banking index, which has lost 47 percent of its value since January. The referendum result is adding to deep worries about the failure of the Italian banking sector—which features no fewer than 700 banks—to make meaningful progress towards consolidation. And this, despite non-performing loans on their books amounting to a com-

bined 360 billion euros, roughly a third of the eurozone's total bad debt. **'A step back'** Ahead of the referendum, BMPS managed to raise one billion euros via a voluntary conversion of bonds into capital. But all bets are off for the remaining four billion. "The real risk lies with Monte dei Paschi di Siena. It's easy to imagine that investors who wanted to take part in the capital increase will now take a step back," said Umberto Borghesi, fund manager at Albemarle Asset Management. "What is needed is a clear response on any government intervention, bail-in decision or any other solution," he said. A "bail-in" forces

existing creditors to write off part of their claims. "No political formation can shoulder the responsibility of Monte dei Paschi failing," Borghesi said. If investors really get cold feet, then UniCredit, Italy's biggest bank, could be the next giant to feel the pain, analysts said, as it undergoes a massive strategy review. It hopes to raise up to 13 billion euros of fresh capital early next year and analysts agree that the outlook for UniCredit is still favourable as it could also sell assets to fill capital gaps. In the meantime, smaller banks like Carige or Veneta Banca are in much more immediate danger of falling victim to the ongoing crisis, analysts say. —AFP

AFTER TWO YEARS, WHY AN OPEC DEAL NOW?

LONDON: OPEC has finally agreed to cut production, but only after two years of fruitless negotiations. So what changed to make an agreement possible now, after it had eluded negotiators at previous OPEC meetings? The intense diplomatic manoeuvring behind the deal has been capably chronicled by my colleagues at Reuters ("How Putin, Khamenei and Saudi prince got OPEC deal done"), Bloomberg ("OPEC deal hinged on 2 am phone call and it nearly failed") and the Financial Times ("Saudi prince's ambition for life beyond oil forces OPEC deal"). The common theme in these accounts is the personal intervention of top political leaders, which overcame the obstacles which had stalled negotiations at technical level. But the context was a change in oil market conditions that made it more attractive for Saudi Arabia and other members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to reach a deal. For the first time since 2014, the kingdom can afford to cut output without too much risk that other producers would fill the gap by raising their output in the near term. The signal for the November 2016 agreement came when Iran was no longer able to increase its oil production further over the summer. Saudi officials have long stated that it would only be possible to reach an OPEC agreement once Iran had normalized its output following the lifting of sanctions. **Saudi shift** Saudi Arabia, the organization's most influential member, has been seen as relatively unenthusiastic about a deal until the last few months. But Saudi Arabia's veteran oil minister Ali al-Naimi, seen as a skeptic, was replaced by Khalid Al-Falih in May, who has been more sympathetic to exploring the opportunities for an agreement. The Saudi economy has also continued to deteriorate, with a substantial increase in unpaid government and business bills, and a further fall in foreign reserves, all of which increased pres-

sure for a deal. And the kingdom's "Vision 2030" economic transformation program and planned share offering in the national oil company, announced in 2016, both depend for their success on higher oil prices. Saudi Arabia's willingness to strike a deal shifted at some point between the unsuccessful OPEC meeting held in June 2016 and the successful OPEC meeting held in September 2016. By September, Saudi negotiators went to OPEC's meeting in Algiers eager to reach a deal and willing to show sufficient flexibility to get one done. The provisional agreement concluded in Algiers was then turned into a final accord in Vienna this week. **Indispensable nation** Saudi Arabia is not like other members of OPEC. Saudi Arabia has always been the indispensable nation without which no agreement is possible. "Saudi Arabia is more influential than other OPEC members," wrote Anas Alhajji and Michael Huettnner in what remains the classic short study of the organization. "Saudi Arabia meets all the characteristics of a dominant producer by having relatively large market share, excess capacity, flexible behavior (and) the ability to move its price by increasing or decreasing production." "No other OPEC member has similar behavior. Therefore Saudi Arabia should be treated on its own within OPEC," they concluded. "Some of the confusion surrounding OPEC behavior has been caused by mistakenly assigning the power of Saudi Arabia, along with its Gulf allies, to OPEC (as a whole)."

Market power Saudi officials have usually assumed, with justification, that other OPEC and non-OPEC members will cheat on any production agreement if they can. But sometimes other OPEC and non-OPEC countries are unable to cheat because of war, sanctions, social unrest or lack of investment, which makes deals possible. Between 2014 and 2016, Saudi Arabia had no incentive to cut production because other countries were likely to respond by increasing their own output. Riyadh would have been left with lower output and unchanged or lower prices, resulting in lower revenues. Output cuts were not an optimal strategy for the Saudis. But with Iran's output apparently peaking in the summer of 2016, opportunities for cheating have become more limited. Most other OPEC members are struggling to maintain current production and have few options to raise output. The main challenge comes from further increases in output from Iraq and Russia, and both countries have agreed to freeze or cut their output under the November agreement. Given output from other sources is now maximized or frozen, Saudi Arabia's optimal strategy is to reduce output and secure an increase in prices. —Reuters

GULF SLIPS AS GLOBAL SHARES WOBBLE

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Most stock markets in the Gulf fell yesterday as the mood on global exchanged darkened because of the 'No' vote in Italy's referendum on constitutional reform, while Egypt's most heavily traded stock sank on news its chief executive would step down. Riyadh's main index fell 0.3 percent to 7,106 points, but it closed 83 points above its intra-day low and is still up 3.2 percent year-to-date. Trading volume shrank slightly but remained healthy compared to this year's average, and fund managers characterized the selling of stocks as profit-taking rather than a reversal of the strong uptrend of the last few weeks. A purchasing manager's index released yesterday showed growth in Saudi Arabia's non-oil private sector picked up in November from a record low in October. Petrochemical shares were a mixed bag. Yanbu National Petrochemical fell 1.0 percent but the biggest company, Saudi Basic Industries, added 0.3 percent. Most banks dropped, with heavyweight Al Rajhi Bank slipping 1.2 percent. Dubai's index pulled back 0.3 percent as trading volume fell by roughly a half from Sunday. Profit-taking in some large caps which had gained strongly on the previous day was the main drag, with Emaar Properties dropping 0.6 percent. But Commercial Bank of Dubai, which is usually sparsely traded, added 5.1 percent in unusually active volume. Abu Dhabi's stock

index swung 0.9 percent higher after a volatile session. Blue chips provided the main support with First Gulf Bank adding 2.2 percent and Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank gaining 2.5 percent. **Egypt underperforms** Cairo's index of the 30 most liquid shares pulled back 1.8 percent as Orascom Telecom Media and Technology tumbled nearly 10 percent in its heaviest trade since 2012. The company announced that Egyptian billionaire Naguib Sawiris had resigned as chief executive and his deputy Tamer El Mahdi was nominated as successor. It gave no reason for the departure. Earlier on Sunday, OTMT also said it was closing its Orabank affiliate in North Korea because of complexity of complying with US sanctions on that country. The company added that its telecommunications associate Koryolink would continue operations in North Korea while complying with sanctions. "Investors are still absorbing the shock of Sawiris stepping down and of exiting the N.Korean bank," said Wafik Dawood, portfolio manager at Cairo's Compass Capital. "But fresh blood could be good news for the company over the longer term." Local funds were heavy sellers of Egyptian equities, exchange data showed, while foreign funds continued to be net buyers, as they have been since the central bank ditched the Egyptian pound's peg to the US dollar on Nov 3. —Reuters



KUWAIT: (From left to right) Mijbil Alayoub, Fatima Dashti and Jassim Abdulrahim addressing a press conference yesterday.



OOREDOO LAUNCHES 'NUKHBA' FOR ITS ELITE CUSTOMERS SPECIAL CEREMONY HELD AT OOREDOO HEAD-OFFICE

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network in 2016, launched its exclusive Nukhba program for its elite customers yesterday morning. The program's tailored services cater to the needs of elite customers.

Speaking at a press conference held yesterday, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub said: "The launch of Nukhba reiterates our investment in this important, and stems from our

deep-rooted belief in our values of caring, connecting and challenging." Elaborating on the features of Nukhba, Ooredoo's Director of VIP and Direct Sales Jassim Abdulrahim said: "We're proud to be launching such a comprehensive package, which can be tailored to cover all the needs of our elite customers. Nukhba plans include exclusive benefits such as discounts and VIP invitations to certain events throughout the year."

Exclusive benefits
Abdulrahim added: "All our Nukhba clients are taken care of with a designated account manager, a special hotline (110) to answer any of their queries around the clock, and are always kept up to date with future packages and products before they are released in the market. This is in addition to the customary Ooredoo benefits such as unlimited minutes, contract freeze, and easy transfer of contract ownership for customers' convenience."

He also noted that Nukhba customers can benefit from an exclusive concierge service that can be availed at most valet parking spots in Kuwait, in addition to entering VIP lounges in most international airports.

International minutes

Nukhba plans also include an unparalleled service giving customers 30 percent off international calls, in addition to Ooredoo Passport plans which give customers up to 1GB of roaming internet and 100 minutes and roaming SMS for KD 10 a week only.

Nojoom rewards

All Nukhba customers additionally get enrolled automatically in the Nukhba tier of Nojoom Program, a special rewards points program that gives customers points for every KD spent on using Ooredoo's services. The points can then be redeemed with vouchers from any of Ooredoo's partners, which include prominent retailers, hotels, airline companies, spas, restaurants and many



more premium service providers.

Nukhba Lounge

Ooredoo's Nukhba Lounge was inaugurated yesterday, where customers can enjoy an unparalleled reception in an ambience that reflects Nukhba's brand spirit. Customers can enjoy the hospitality while waiting to meet their account managers at the lounge on Ooredoo Head Office's 5th Floor where a special section is designated to test the latest devices and offerings from Ooredoo, including the newest tablets, smartphones, and routers.



BRITISH SERVICES PMI HITS 10-MONTH HIGH

LONDON: Businesses in Britain's dominant services sector grew at their fastest pace since January last month and the broader economy maintained momentum, even if firms have some worries about the year ahead, a survey showed yesterday. The Markit/CIPS services purchasing managers' index (PMI) - a closely watched gauge of the services sector - rose to 55.2 in November from 54.5 in October, beating all the forecasts in a Reuters poll of economists.

However, businesses reported the second-weakest level of optimism about the future in four years, due to the unexpected result of the US presidential election, the value of sterling and ongoing uncertainty about how Britain will leave the European Union. Despite a dip in the equivalent survey of manufacturers published last week, overall the November PMIs suggest the economy as a whole will maintain the third quarter's solid 0.5 percent growth rate through to the end of the year, Markit said.

"The pace of UK economic growth remains resiliently robust in the fourth quarter, despite ongoing uncertainty caused by Brexit," said Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit, the company that compiles the survey. Most economists and the Bank of England said Britain's economy would slow sharply after June's vote to leave the EU. But strong consumer demand and a

boost to exporters from the heavy post-referendum fall in sterling have kept growth going.

A separate survey by manufacturing lobby EEF released earlier on Monday showed a boost in new orders and a better-than-expected recovery in output.

Last month the Bank of England revised up its forecasts to pencil in 0.4 percent growth for the last three months of 2016. But it also said annual growth would slow to 1.4 percent next year from 2.2 percent in 2016 as higher inflation squeezes household incomes.

"Elevated price pressures and drop in expectations suggest that a slowdown remains on the cards for next year," HSBC economist Elizabeth Martins said. "Inflation is likely to outpace wage growth over the coming year or so, bearing down on domestic demand and causing growth to slow."

Businesses are already starting to feel the pinch of costlier imports due to the fall in sterling, and Markit said business costs had risen by the most in five-and-a-half years during the past two months.

"These higher costs will inevitably feed through to consumers in the form of higher prices," Williamson said. The BoE forecasts inflation will surge to 2.7 percent next year from 0.9 percent in the most recent data, and many private-sector economists think it could rise even faster. — Reuters

BRITAIN PUBLISHES DRAFT SUGAR TAX

LONDON: Britain moved forward with its planned sugar tax yesterday, publishing draft legislation confirming a two-band levy for sugar-added soft drinks aimed at fighting obesity.

In opting for a sugar tax, Britain joins Belgium, France, Hungary and Mexico, all of which have imposed some form of tax on drinks with added sugar. Britain's tax, announced in March, is due to come into force in April 2018, giving sellers of soft drinks, such as Coca-Cola European Partners and Britvic, time to reduce sugar in their products. The companies, which sell Coca-Cola and PepsiCo drinks respectively, have already been promoting no-sugar drinks such as Coca-Cola Zero Sugar and Pepsi Max cherry, which would be exempt from the tax.

The British levy has two thresholds—one of 18 pence per litre on soft drinks with more than 5 grams of sugar per 100 ml and one of 24 pence per litre on those with more than 8 grams per 100 ml. The draft was published on Monday by HM Revenue & Customs as part of an overview of legislative changes to

tax law the government plans to introduce in its finance bill for 2017.

The government has said it expects the levy to raise 520 million pounds (\$661.5 million) in the first year. Sugar taxes have tended to focus on fizzy soft drinks, as health campaigners argue they are a source of empty calories. Yet the whole packaged food industry has been working to make its products healthier as consumers increasingly opt for fresher foods. Nestle earlier this month said it had found a way to potentially reduce sugar in chocolate by up to 40 percent without affecting the taste. As a whole, the industry opposes special taxes on food or drinks, arguing that they do not work and disproportionately hurt poorer people.

"Evidence worldwide does not suggest that taxes of this sort have any impact on levels of obesity," Gavin Partington, director general of the British Soft Drinks Association, said in a statement, adding that the group would continue to work with UK Treasury officials during the process of implementation. — Reuters



HEMPEL TO OPEN NEW PLANT IN KUWAIT ON ITS GOLDEN JUBILEE PARTNERSHIP WITH KUWAIT GOVT WILL CONTINUE: CEO

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A modern Hempel paint factory will shortly open in Kuwait to replace its outdated plant, which was the first paint factory in the Gulf. Hempel-Kuwait partnered with the Al-Rashed family to bring the paint factory here in 1966, focused on marine coatings. It later forayed into decorative and protective paints. "The Kuwait market was the first to welcome our company in the Middle East. So in order to meet the demands from neighboring GCCs countries, we decided to establish a plant here in 1966," said Karsten Pedersen, Group Vice President and CEO of Hempel Middle East-West.

"We are now celebrating our golden jubilee, and we thank our loyal clients for placing their trust in us. After Hempel started in Kuwait, we broadened our reach to all locations in the region," Pedersen said. "Hempel, has been very proud to serve its clients. We are committed to continuing our partnership with the government of Kuwait. We have entered almost every sector, the oil sector being one of them. Hempel's operations are unaffected by regional instability," he added.

Hempel products have been improved considerably and it continues to innovate and cater to the needs of all countries. Today, Hempel is one of the most trusted brands, not just in the region but all over the world. It enjoys more than

a 50 percent market share and the innovation continues. "Kuwait holds a special place in our hearts. It was our gateway to the Middle East market. After 50 years, Hempel Kuwait is stronger and more dedicated, with a leading position in the paint market," Pedersen said.

"Together we have been through a great deal, despite some negative turns in the history of Kuwait. We never stopped production in our factories, and all the credit goes to our dedicated employees, superior quality products and above all our loyal clientele. We managed to play a major role in Kuwait's reconstruction. I am extremely proud that all the stakeholders and everyone else is present here on this special occasion to be a part of our success story. This is a prelude to the opening of a new state-of-the-art factory in 2017," he noted.

Hempel Kuwait will open the 20,000 sq m factory in the first quarter of 2017, with a capacity of 19 million liters in two shifts compared to the current 13 million liters, which increases production capacity by 40 percent. The factory will have cooling facilities and will produce solvent-borne as well as water-borne products. Hempel is also installing a regenerative thermal oxidizer in the paint production unit that removes volatile organic compounds to prevent atmospheric pollution.

Karsten Pedersen, Group Vice President and CEO of Hempel Middle East-West. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Hempel controls 60 percent of the marine coatings market, and 30 percent of the construction paint market. It is contributing to some major projects including the Jaber Hospital, Al-Sabah Housing Project, First Ring Road bridges, Jaber Cultural Center, Kuwait Towers and Kuwait National Petroleum Company's Clean Fuel Project.

Khaled Al-Rashed, Member of the Board of Director at Hempel Middle East-West, said, "We are proud today as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of establishing our first factory in Kuwait. Hempel succeeded in the past five decades in forging solid partnerships with all segments in the Kuwait society by producing high quality paints that have protected people's assets. Today, the company crowns its great success by announcing the opening of a new state-of-the-art factory in 2017. We are also honored to be a part of the largest medical complex in the region, the Jaber Hospital."

Hempel is helping Kuwait execute many other projects, such as the headquarters of the Ministry of Education, the facade of the Special Forces camp, offices of Al-Arjan company and Salmiya park, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Institute of Nursing, Kuwait College of Science and Technology, Faculty of Health Sciences, and a project to build 892 villas at Jaber Al-Ahmad New City, where home paint samples have been supplied.

GLOBAL EQUITIES MIXED; US AND JAPAN ADVANCE

NBK CAPITAL MONTHLY GLOBAL MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: Overall, global equities had mixed performance with Japan and US leading while emerging markets and UK equities were the major lagers. US equities rallied, following poor performance back in October, gaining 3.7 percent as measured by the S&P 500, as a result of Trump's victory, which is expected to lead to tax cuts and infrastructure spending. Commodities were mixed for the month with Gold down 8.1 percent while Brent Oil is up 4.5 percent. OPEC's decision in its meeting on November 30 in Vienna, to cut production levels for the first time in eight years, has driven crude oil prices up by 8.8 percent in the last day of trading of the month.

The US economy appears to show signs of continued growth, with preliminary annualized Q3GDP coming in at 3.2 percent supported by improving retail sales and a strong housing market. With the consumer price index coming in at 1.6 percent YoY, boosted by rising energy prices, and the expected increase in government spending from the Trump Administration, this could support the Fed's case for a December rate hike.

The November US ISM manufacturing came in at 53.2, higher than October's reading of 51.9. The November Nonfarm Payroll came in at 178,000, significantly higher than the October reading of 142,000. US unemployment

improved to 4.6 percent in November versus 4.9 percent in October. Consumer confidence grew in November to 107.1 from 100.8 in October. Durable goods order came in higher than expected at 4.8 percent in October, due to a 12 percent gain in transportation orders, compared to the revised September figure 0.4 percent. Strong US housing data revealed housing starts improved 25.5 percent in October to an annualized rate of 1.323 million, marking the strongest monthly percentage gain since 1982. Existing home sales also picked up to 5.60 million while new homes sales dropped to 0.563 million in October on an annualized rate.

The UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) for November dropped slightly to 53.4 compared to 54.2 in October. UK inflation remains somewhat stable at 0.9 percent down from 1.0 percent in September. Unemployment fell to 4.8 percent, an 11-year low as the number of unemployment claims only rose 10,000 to 803,000. Consumers continue to be confident which is proving to be crucial to the UK economy; retail sales rose to 7.4 percent YoY in October, up from the revised 4.2 percent in September.

UK equities dropped 2.5%

The eurozone manufacturing sector continues to grow as evident in the preliminary manufacturing PMI of 54.1 for the month of November, up from 53.5 in October. Further supporting growth in the region, is the preliminary service PMI for November, also at 54.1 compared to 52.8 in October. Consumer confidence, although still negative, has improved from a reading of -8.0 in October to a reading of -6.1 in November. European equities in November gained 0.9 percent, as measured by the Stoxx Europe 600.

Japan posted, a trade surplus of JPY 496 billion in October, compared to JPY 498 billion in September. The surplus was driven by a continued decline in the value of

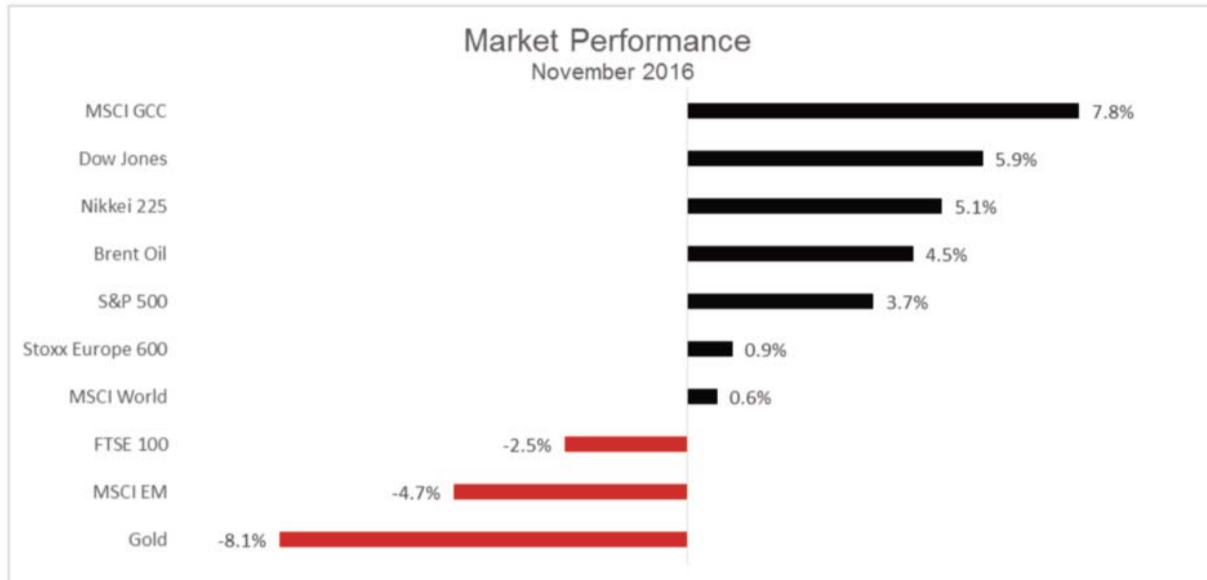
imports, which has fallen faster than exports. The Nikkei Manufacturing PMI remains slightly above 50 at 51.3 compared to 51.4 in the previous month. Japan's CPI rose YoY 0.1 percent in October breaking the declining trend over the past seven months. The unemployment rate remains at 3 percent in October, unchanged from September, the lowest since 1995; however, Real GDP grew at a rate of 0.5 percent QoQ in Q3.

Japanese equities continue to perform considerably well, as measured by the Nikkei 225, generating returns of 5.1 percent in November.

Chinese exports dropped 7.3 percent in October, an improvement from the 10 percent decline in September and imports declined by 1.4 percent YoY. CPI increased, on a YoY basis, from 1.9 percent in September to 2.1 percent in October. The Caixin Manufacturing PMI dropped to 50.9 in November compared to 51.2 in October.

Although emerging market equities ended the month down 4.7 percent, Chinese equities, as measured by the Shanghai Stock Exchange Composite Index, generated returns of 4.8 percent.

The GCC equity market continued to perform well ending the month of November with gains of 7.8 percent, supported by Saudi equity market, which increased 16.4 percent. In addition, UAE equities, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, recovered from last month posting minor gains of 0.9 percent and 0.2 percent, respectively. The gains in Saudi stocks were supported by delayed payments finally being made to contractors amounting to SR40 billion and the announcement that another SR100 billion will be paid out by the end of December. Abu Dhabi's improved performance this month comes from speculation of future mergers within the financial industry given the recent completed merger between First Gulf Bank and National Bank of Abu Dhabi.



HK-SHENZHEN TRADING LINK OFF TO A NEGATIVE START

HONG KONG: A long-delayed trading link between the exchanges of Hong Kong and Shenzhen in China made a disappointing debut yesterday, with markets on both sides of the border ending lower.

The link opens another door to the mainland's cloistered markets, allowing foreigners to buy shares in more than 800 Chinese firms for the first time, while also giving mainlanders further access to Hong Kong-listed companies. Similar to a connect that kicked off between Hong Kong and Shanghai two years ago, the scheme is being touted as China's latest effort to prove its capital markets are gradually opening.

But a growth slowdown in China's economy, the weak yuan and an expected hike in US interest rates have analysts sounding a note of caution. Hong Kong's city leader Leung Chun-ying hailed it as "yet another milestone in deepening mutual access" between the capital markets in Hong Kong and mainland China.

The former British colony is now a special administrative region of China but remains connected to the global financial system, unlike the mainland's closed markets.

However, by the close Hong Kong was down 0.26 percent and Shenzhen's composite index had given up 0.78 percent. And only 21 percent of the northbound trade permitted under the scheme was taken up, while a little more than eight percent of the southbound quota was used up. Hong Kong-based analyst Jackson Wong said the lacklustre start was not a surprise. "Investors were not expecting a spectacular open anyway, because investor sentiment is a little bit on the quiet side," he said.

That was mainly due to the weak yuan and concern that China would not open up capital flows in the short-term, said Wong, a securities analyst at Huarong International. The markets' performance might improve once the currency stabilises, he said, adding: "I think (China) will roll out more relaxed policies and that would eventually trigger... more buying interests."

Analysts said the repercussions of a rout last year in mainland markets—which spread globally—were still being felt. That delayed the launch of the new link, which had been expected by the end of 2015. Concerns have been exacerbated more recently by capital flight caused by the yuan, which is at eight-year lows against the dollar.

'Huge significance'

Comments from Liu Shiyu, head of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, may also have dented sentiment, analysts said. Liu blasted hostile corporate takeover attempts between Chinese firms in a strongly worded speech posted on the commission's website.

In the highest profile case, China's largest property firm Vanke has been fighting to repel an acquisition by private conglomerate Baoneng Group that would be China's first blue-chip hostile takeover.

While saying some buyouts can be positive, Liu condemned those in which the suitor becomes "a barbarian, and then eventually a bandit". He did not spell out any official measures to stem such takeovers.

"The (market) drop is mainly related to (Liu's) speech rather than the stock trading link launch," said Zhang Yufa, research director for private equity firm Million Tons Capital. "Market sentiment was affected by this." However, Liu Monday praised the new stock connect, saying it would "inject positive energy and instil confidence and trust in the international and domestic financial markets".

Shenzhen is China's second stock exchange, behind Shanghai, and is the world's eighth largest bourse with a market capitalization of \$3.3 trillion as of September. The Shanghai-Hong Kong link launched in November 2014 giving foreigners access for the first time to Chinese companies not quoted elsewhere, and vice versa. But it has failed to excite traders, with both daily quotas for southbound mainland and northbound international buyers often unfilled. — AFP



WARBA BANK OFFERS FINANCING SOLUTIONS FOR LSA COURSES

BANK INKS COOPERATION AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT HEALTH SECTOR

KUWAIT: Warba Bank is distinguished by the innovative solutions it presents to all members of the Kuwaiti society, which reflects its commitment to supporting social growth as well as spreading education and culture. Accordingly, Warba Bank announced an exclusive cooperation agreement with the Life Sciences Academy (LSA) on December 5, 2016, through which it offers educational financial facilities for health sector employees who are looking to enroll in training programs organized by the academy, renowned as leader and the first health academy in Kuwait and the Gulf region that offers training programs for health sector professionals.

Warba Bank offers these financial facilities through 'bargaining' contracts that are exclusive for education, and according to the Islamic sharia. It also guarantees flexible instalments facilitations that extend for up to 5 years through the free Takaful insurance system. In addition, these facilities are available for all, do not require salary transfer, and with limits ranging from KD 1000 to KD 15,000.

Commenting on Warba Bank's initiative, Basel Al-Obaid, Chief Corporate Banking Officer, said: "Warba Bank is keen on designing innovative financing solutions that are complaint with the Islamic sharia, and commensurate with the bank's developmental strategy that aims to provide facilitations for education to improve the capacity of Kuwait's health sector employees."

"Our partnership with the Life Sciences Academy is aligned to the standards of the bank's message and vision, which aim to provide flexible facilitations and to encourage those looking to improve their professional skills. We hope that it reflects positively in service of citizens and the society," he added.

Al-Obaid further indicated that Warba Bank continues its message of innovating solutions that benefit all segments of society, regardless of their monthly income, because the bank believes that it originated from the middle of the Kuwaiti society to present guidance and support necessary for its development.

"We are committed to making our clients' lives easier, and to always present financing offers for them that are designed according to flexibility and innovation standards, which makes Warba Bank their first destination for Islamic banking transactions," Al-Obaid concluded.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Nahes Al-Enezi, CEO of the Life Sciences Academy which is owned by the National Group for Technology Projects (affiliated to the Kuwait Investment Authority), said that signing the cooperation agreement with Warba Bank to finance the training courses that the academy presents comes in line with the social responsibility of both parties in terms of supporting the health sector and its all of its workers.

Al-Enezi added that the new financing service comes as a solution for a problem created by the limited budget dedicated for training at the Ministry of Health, as well as the pressures created by the state's budget deficit, coupled with the



urgent need to improve the health sector and train medical personnel on using the latest medical technologies and skills.

Furthermore, it helps limit the state's spending on treatment overseas, he added.

Moreover, he further indicated that the agreement stipulates providing a financing with a minimum of KD 1,000 and maximum of KD 15,000, and without profits on the declared price, in order to help doctors, nurses and other medical personnel improve themselves, and enroll in professional training courses certified by the most prestigious medical institutions around the world. It could also allow them to attend international scientific conferences and workshops with reduced costs, and without having to wait for long periods to obtain training courses in a dynamic and fast evolving sector, thus improving their career competitiveness locally and regionally.

Al-Enezi further indicated that the integrated financing solutions available between the Ministry of Health and Warba Bank makes it mandatory to implement a compulsory continued medical education system for all medical personnel, which is a system followed worldwide as a condition to practice medicine.

He added that the academy is the first of its

kind in the Gulf region which is specialized in presenting continued medical education programs in Kuwait, both in the public and private sectors. Furthermore, he pointed out that the academy carried out more than 150 training programs over the past two years and a half dealing with various health fields for the public and private health sectors, in which around 1,000 trainees have enrolled. He further explained that the academy provides knowledge, education and training through professional training programs in all health-related fields, and for practicing doctors, pharmacists, physicians, and even executive directors as a unique platform for continued professional development programs, thus making its programs a true opportunity to stay acquainted with the latest internationally certified medical practices.

It is worth mentioning that Warba Bank is a leader in designing financing solutions that meet all of our clients' needs. It recently launched a series of promotions to finance vehicles, signing in the process strategic partnerships with international automobile agencies. It also offers online services including the Express Finance service which it recently announced in cooperation with the Public Authority for Civil Information.

NEW ISLAMIC FINANCE GUIDANCE ON GOLD EMPHASIZES REAL DEAL

LONDON: Islamic finance experts have developed new rules for gold transactions, they said yesterday, potentially opening the way for Islamic institutions to trade gold and silver much more actively. Gold transactions must be fully backed by physical metal and settled on the same day, the developers of the new guidance said, to observe Islam's distinction between real economic activity and speculation.

Traditionally, gold has played a very minor role in Islamic finance and there has been little activity beyond spot trading, partly because of uncertainty over what is religiously permissible. The new standards, which also apply to silver, could help to change this. The Bahrain-

based Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) spent a year working out the new rules on gold trading and agreed them last month.

AAOIFI developed its guidelines with the World Gold Council (WGC), a London-based market development body, to clarify existing Islamic rulings on bullion and make it easier to conduct complex transactions. The guidelines will help to increase acceptance of gold products among Islamic investors while giving Islamic banks new liquidity-management tools, said Hamed Hassan Merah, secretary-general of AAOIFI, whose standards are followed in whole or in part by sharia-compliant banks around the world. — Reuters

INFINITI AL-BABTAIN STARTS ITS BANKS AWARENESS TOUR AT BOUBYAN BANK

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the authorized agent of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait started its Banks awareness tour in Boubyan Bank by giving its employees an exceptional offer.

Infiniti Al-Babtain had a variety of its luxury vehicles displayed at the entrance of Boubyan Bank on Thursday. Infiniti Al-Babtain gave Boubyan Bank's employees a staff offer that included 5 years warranty open mileage, free maintenance up to 5 years, free window tinting and body protection, free third party insurance and admin fees, free one year comprehensive insurance and a special discount of KD500.

The bank has over 1135 employees that enjoyed this offer for a three days period exclusively. This is a part of Infiniti's Banks awareness campaign that will continue with more banks and more offers from

Infiniti Al-Babtain.

Infiniti Al-Babtain aims to always hold activities that bring the product closer to the customer considering his desires and aspiration. Infiniti Al-Babtain aims through its new promotions' strategy to strengthen its sales of the luxury Infiniti vehicles, ensuring that Infiniti is the leading brand of luxury vehicles in Kuwait and the Middle East, which attracts the VIP clients to own it.

Infiniti belongs to the category of luxury vehicles that gained international publicity for its luxury features, elegant design, and attractive inspiration. All its models combine elegant comfort, capturing luxury, strong performance and smooth acceleration. Infiniti depends on the latest technology in the world, which ranks it on top of the most advanced smart vehicles with super technology.



KIB AWARDED 'BEST BANKING VISION IN KUWAIT' BY CPI FINANCIAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank was recently awarded "Best Banking Vision in Kuwait" by CPI Financial in the Islamic Business & Finance Awards category, thereby garnering one of the leading regional awards recognizing banking excellence and rewarding pioneers in the field of Islamic finance. KIB's Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mohamed Said El Saka, received the award on behalf of the Bank at the Islamic Business & Finance Awards ceremony held recently in Dubai.

El Saka described this latest accolade as one of the important recognitions received by KIB in its recent history, adding: "This recognition serves to highlight KIB's forward-thinking strategy and visionary outlook, which have been extremely successful in enhancing the Bank's position within the Islamic banking sector. The "Best Banking Vision" Award came as a result of a clear growth strategy encompassing all aspects of the Bank's performance and operations. This includes the introduction of new products and offerings, enhanced customer service levels, senior management's contribution to demonstrate profitability and sustainability, as well as a commitment to CSR initiatives. Our focused strategic approach has translated to



impressive growth rates across all areas. It has also enabled us to make great strides in our mission to offer our customers innovative, contemporary, and market-leading Islamic banking solutions."

He further added: "We at KIB strongly believe that successful banking strategies are dependent

on having a clear and actionable vision. Our highly experienced and knowledgeable team, guided by our Board of Directors, is uniquely qualified to carry out our ambitious strategy, which focuses on realizing a comprehensive transformation across all sectors and segments of the Bank. This latest

award serves to fuel our drive and motivate us to push ourselves even further to achieve that goal."

Over the past several years, KIB has garnered numerous local, regional and international prestigious awards, serving to affirm the strength of the Bank's financial core and the success of its strategy. One of the biggest accolades was being named "The Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait" by World Finance for three consecutive years (2014, 2015 and 2016). KIB was also named "Best Sharia-Compliant Bank in the Middle East" for the year 2015 by Capital Finance International.

El Saka concluded by saying: "The guidance of our Chairman, Sheikh Mohamed Al-Jarrah Al Sabah, along with our Board of Directors, has been a crucial factor in achieving this continued success, as well as the timely and proactive actions of the Central Bank of Kuwait. On behalf of the executive management at KIB, I would like to express my gratitude to every member of the team at KIB; their hard work has been a vital element towards helping us realize our success. My sincere thanks also to our customers for their continued trust in us, and we promise them even greater things to come."

AL-MAZAYA ASSIGNED CORPORATE RATING OF 'BBB-' LONG-TERM CI ALSO ASSIGNS 'A3' SHORT-TERM WITH 'STABLE' OUTLOOK

KUWAIT: Capital Intelligence Ratings, the renowned international credit rating agency, has assigned Al-Mazaya Holding Company corporate ratings of 'BBB-' for the long-term and 'A3' in the short-term.

In its initial report, the international agency indicated that the outlook on Al-Mazaya Holding Company's ratings is 'Stable'. The ratings are supported by the Group's well-diversified business model, its good liquidity backed by current high cash balances, and by its sound profitability. Further supporting the ratings is the long-term nature of the company's funding structure and the sound EBIT finance charge coverage ratio.

Commenting on the positive rating, Eng. Ibrahim Al-Soqabi, Group CEO of Al-Mazaya Holding Company, said: "Al-Mazaya Holding boasts a resilient financial position that is nimble enough to manage all the company's short-term and long-term leverage. As such, the company is keen to fulfill the requirements of its investors and shareholders by bridging the information gap and providing them with seamless access to comprehensible, user-friendly and authentic data with regards to risk management. The ultimate goal is to build confidence and ensure transparency."

He added: "The new positive rating should encourage investors and financial institutions to accelerate cooperation with Al-Mazaya Holding and launch multifaceted investments and business entities."



Eng Ibrahim Al-Soqabi

His statement served to underline the company's tireless development efforts to operate according to a dynamic, stable business model that is likely to yield high returns at acceptable levels of risks and ultimately consolidate the company, positioning it for future growth. Moreover, according to the report, the rat-

ings are also backed by the diversification that the company has achieved within the asset base and in revenue streams. While revenue streams are real estate-related, they are diversified by geography, varying between develop-for-sale and rental properties. The report also highlighted the fairly comfortable debt to equity ratio and the fact that this debt has a largely medium-to-long maturity profile. The company's short-term debt is fully covered by cash and other liquid assets at present.

In terms of non-financial factors, the report mentioned that the Group has a well-developed strategic plan and a very detailed multi-year business strategy that is subject to a quarterly review - the report is then updated if required. Moreover, there are clear policies and targets in place that include raising the proportion of income coming from rental activities, further diversifying the company's portfolio in terms of geography or real estate and establishing a family of Al-Mazaya Group brands.

The report lauded the company's financial results for the year 2016, stating that the current year is a good one for the Group in terms of both net profit and cash generation - both categories are growing significantly, especially the cash balance from sales of completed units. The report also hailed the company's falling leverage and rising rental income, noting that the expectation is for net profit attributable to shareholders to be maintained in 2017, with overall net profits predicted to rise in 2018.



MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS' OPENS ITS 157TH OUTLET GLOBALLY IN MUSCAT

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the leading jewellery retailer across the globe has launched its 157th global showroom in Sultanate of Oman at Muscat City Centre, Seeb on 30th November 2016. The latest showroom was inaugurated by Sheikha Tamimah bint Muhammad bin Sultan Almahruqiyah - Advisor of the president of Public Authority for Craft Industries, Oman in the presence of Khamis Al-Mandhari, Acting Chief of West Asian Department, Oman, Abdul Salam KP - Group Executive Director, Malabar Group, Najeeb K - Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Oman, media, well-wishers & other invited guests.

This exclusive outlet showcases exquisite collection of gold jewellery in 18K, 21K and 22K alongside Diamond, Uncut diamond and precious gem jewellery which is specially handpicked for the jewellery lovers in Oman. The new showroom will also display the exclusive 21K gold jewelry collections of the brand LAZURDE.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds intends to provide an unparalleled shopping experience to every customer of this region

with the opening of this new store. Unlike the other stores in Oman, the new outlet features exclusive jewellery handpicked to cater to the wide set of customers from different countries who visit the mall. The jewellery chain offers a significantly large collection of traditional as well as contemporary designer jewelries. The exquisite range of collections in the new outlet can hold one spell-bound with their awe-inspiring beauty and classic designs.

Malabar group offers exquisite and beautiful jewelry as a part of various brands presented at Malabar Gold & Diamonds' namely Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewellery, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewellery, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Divine - Indian Heritage Jewellery, Precia - Gem Jewellery and Starlet - Kids Jewellery.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has always been at the forefront in gold jewellery manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing and plans on being the 'most-preferred' jewellery retailer in the market in the coming years. The group strives to continue embarking on its journey by further expanding in the near future.

NISSAN ADDS TWO MORE TROPHIES TO ITS CABINET SECOND ARAB WHEELS AWARDS

DUBAI: The second annual Arab Wheels Awards, held this month at a prestigious ceremony in Dubai's Meydan Hotel, has resulted in Nissan taking top honours in two categories: 'Midsize Truck' for the all-new Navara and 'Large Sedan' for the Maxima.

"This award represents Nissan's hard work and success in the Middle East, and is testament of the company's efforts in introducing cars that deliver innovation and excitement to customers in the region," says Samir Cherfan, "Managing Director of Nissan Middle East, "Arab Wheels is one of this region's leading motoring magazine titles and, for a car to be awarded by its expert writers and readers, it has to be exceptional.

"That both the Navara and Maxima won their categories on the night should come as no surprise, as they represent the best in design, innovation and technology, and all of us at Nissan are proud that they have been awarded in what has quickly become one of the most eagerly anticipated industry awards ceremonies on the calendar."

For a car to be eligible for an Arab Wheels Award, it must be 'all-new' or 'significantly face-lifted' and have been on sale for three months prior to the announcement of the nominations. Awards are decided on by a voting process that is divided 'fifty-fifty' between jury member votes and those made by the title's readers via an online voting process.

"Our expert judging panel is made up of three prominent automotive journalists from the Middle East," adds Issam Eid, Arab Wheels' Editor-in-Chief. "Between them, the jurors have many years of regional experience and they know what makes a car suitable for the Middle East market. Nissan has been an intrinsic part of the market here for decades and is completely in tune with its customers' demands and expectations - which is why the rugged all-new Navara and dynamic new Maxima won their categories. They set new standards in their classes and fully deserved their trophies."

The all-new Navara has already been named International Pick-up of the Year 2016 in Europe and builds on Nissan's 80-year pick-up heritage by combining toughness and modernity to make the ideal vehicle for dual users who depend on their vehicles for professional and personal use. It introduces much in the way of new technology, safety, comfort and fuel efficiency, which is unrivalled in its class. It also outshines its rivals as the segment leader in torque and power, offering 403Nm and 168hp respectively, from its two engine options.



Winner of Best Large Sedan Award - Nissan Maxima.



Winner of Midsize Truck - Nissan Navara.

As for the new Maxima, this completely redesigned 8th generation car is the sportiest model ever. Created by driving enthusiasts for driving enthusiasts, it looks unique and its 'four-door sports car' positioning is perfectly matched to its style, technology and performance capabilities.

The Maxima's 3.5-liter VQ-series V6 has been

redesigned with more than 60 per cent new parts compared to the previous model and generates a pulse-quicken 300hp yet manages to be 15 per cent more efficient than its predecessor. The V6 is complemented by a new, performance-oriented Xtronic transmission that further enhances the Maxima's exciting driver dynamics, setting it apart as unique in its segment.

THE AUDIENCE HAS SPOKEN: BLUEFRIDAY SALE BY X-CITE WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!

KUWAIT: X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, the largest electronics retailer in Kuwait, is proud to share the news that the BlueFriday Sale, which ran from November 24th till 28th on xcite.com, was a huge success among cyber buyers and fans of electronics. Sponsored by Gulf Bank, Honda, Costa Coffee and Safat Home, the BlueFriday sale marks a new trend wherein customers are more receptive to online promotions presented within a limited shopping window on top of offering unbelievable prices across a wide range of products.

The success was evident by the massive traffic xcite.com has generated over the course of four days, with an astronomical jump in average daily visits to the website. Especially to Xcite's mobile app, which effectively demonstrates the customers' preference to shop on the go while enjoying the convenience of accessing, all of Xcite's amazing offers with just a few taps on their smartphone devices.

While the year 2016 is coming to a close, X-cite still has few surprises in store. Effective throughout the month of the December is the grand shopping campaign, "Run for it before it runs out," offering daily deals with up to 50 percent discount, in addition to the retailer's website 5th anniversary celebration, which promises to be huge. Xcite.com is also expanding its range of products, starting by launching a Baby Care section very soon.

In the meantime, X-cite encourages its customers to stay in touch and be informed of its sales and daily deals by subscribing to its newsletter on xcite.com and following its various social media channels: @xcitealghanim on Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat and Facebook: XcitebyAlghanim.

X-cite has the largest network of

retail electronic stores in Kuwait and the Middle East. It offers a convenient, dynamic and modern shopping experience that aims to add joy, entertaining moments to shoppers' time spent in the store. With its engaging and easy-to-use product display that encourages customers to get hands-on with the product of their choice, X-cite's shopping experience is further enhanced with its Easy Credit program, a highly skilled and multi-lingual team of sales professionals and the latest and newest electronic devices and gadgets in the market. X-cite by Alghanim Electronics has branches in 18 locations situated in strategic areas across Kuwait as well as an online store that parallels X-cite's unmatched in-store experience as it provides customers with valuable offers on quality brands. Customers can also enjoy many of X-cite's convenient services including Easy Credit, shopping at any of X-cite's select stores that are open 24-hours, extended warranty programs in addition to their new damage warranty program, free delivery and installation services and X-cite's bilingual online store, www.xcite.com, that enables customers to buy any electronic device or gadget they want at any time and any place.





HUAWEI LAUNCHES GLOBALLY AWAITED MATE 9 IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: In an event held at the Xcite showroom in The Avenues mall, the Huawei Consumer Business Group in Kuwait revealed its most coveted flagship smartphone, Mate 9, launching its third successful and innovative device in the country this year. The Mate 9 promises a high performance and unprecedented images with its Leica smartphone camera technology.

The event was attended by the Commercial Counselor, Mr Zhu Lian, Huawei Technologies Kuwait CEO, Mr Trevor Liu, and the Senior Director in Category Management of the Retail Electronics Division at Xcite, Rohit Gandotra. The event was presented by the Sales Manager at Huawei Consumer Business Group - Kuwait, Mr Ahmad Yamout.

Huawei Technologies Kuwait CEO, Mr. Trevor Liu, said: "We bring to Kuwait our latest

revolutionary smartphone, following the successful launches of the innovative Mate 8 and P9 this year. Huawei continues to push the limit of the performance and advanced features of its smartphones, making them the ideal smartphones to support business users and complementing the lifestyle of consumers in general. Huawei users and new users won't be disappointed with the Mate 9."

Mate 9 users in Kuwait will also take advantage of the two-hour turnaround service at the Huawei Service Center, as well as a pick-up and delivery service for the maintenance of their devices under warranty. The two-hour turnaround service, available at the newly Service Center, gives users a high-quality and fast experience, from the device itself to the after-sale service. The pick-up of a device can be made simply by calling the Huawei VIP hot-

line at 22288063. A time will be set to pick the device at the preferred location of the user. Maintenance in case of pick-up and return takes up to three working days.

Revolutionary speed

Built with the new Kirin 960 processor and intelligent Machine Learning algorithm, this ground-breaking interplay between hardware and software means the Huawei Mate 9 is born fast and stays fast.

Enhanced power

The Huawei Mate 9 offers a truly revolutionary battery life. With its large 4000mAh battery and smart power-saving technology, the battery lasts up to two days' usage. The State-of-the-art HUAWEI SuperCharge technology safely charges the device for a full day's power in 20 minutes.

Breath-taking photography

The Huawei Mate 9 offers exceptional sharpness in its second-generation Leica Dual Camera which renders images in unprecedented detail. The Mate 9 is also equipped with a front camera.

Ground-breaking user experience

The Mate 9 was designed with EMUI 5.0 and a beautiful and smart user interface for a stunning experience. Huawei plugged in the VR technology to support Daydream, a highly-demanded VR system launched by Google.

Fingerprint unlock speed

The Huawei Mate 9 comes with 4 Level Fingerprint which includes 3D fingerprint recognition and an encrypted file safe that you can access with the fingerprint sensor. It's also

fast, 20% faster when compared with the Huawei Mate 8.

Global connectivity

With incredible network support and integrated dual SIM support, the Huawei Mate 9 offers outstanding performance worldwide. Users can experience consistent call quality and a stable Internet connection with reduced power consumption and data usage around the globe.

Bold, meticulous and refined

The Huawei Mate 9 has inherited the Mate Series' design DNA, with a visual and sensual feel that's uniquely glamorous. There are two versions: The Huawei Porsche Design Mate 9 which uses 5.5 inches 2K curved screen, and the Huawei Mate 9 with 5.9 inches 1080P screen.



AVAYA HELPS BUSINESSES RAISE BAR FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

DUBAI: Avaya announced yesterday a new version of the company's contact center platform that enables midsize businesses to rise above the competition by offering a superior, omnichannel customer experience. Avaya IP Office Contact Center 10 is a true, end-to-end solution with the advanced features and tools customers expect, but the simplicity and affordability needed by midsize business.

Research data finds that 60% of consumers surveyed stated their expectations for customer service are higher now than they were just one year ago. In addition, by 2020 customer experience is expected to surpass product and price as the key brand differentiator. Finally, Aberdeen Group (2015) research shows significant increases in customer retention, profitability and growth for those companies that deliver best-in-class customer experiences over those that don't.

Avaya IP Office Contact Center 10 extends Avaya's industry leading contact center innovations that deliver efficient, personalized customer service, lower costs, and increase profitability. Midsize companies can quickly and easily define and deploy an omnichannel strategy that encompasses the entire customer journey, from proactive, outbound capabilities, multi-channel self and assisted service, through real-time and historical reporting and integration with CRM packages. Avaya IP Office Contact Center 10 dra-

matically simplifies the ability to provide that best-in-class experience with the following new capabilities for ease of use and simplification:

- Out of the box configuration wizards and templates to quickly design call and IVR flows that reduce time required by up to 80 percent
- Ability to make changes to call flows on-the-fly
- Simplified and enhanced user interface and web administration, including installation and configuration wizards for multichannel services and other frequently used features
- Enhanced real-time and historical reporting capabilities including more than 30 ready-to-use report templates that can be accessed in as little as four clicks
- Customer callback features that hold their place in the queue and give them more control over their time
- High availability and resiliency with support for VMware HA
- Tightly integrated workforce optimization via Avaya Workforce Optimization Select

Avaya IP Office Contact Center is optimized for use with Avaya IP Office software, and is available in multiple deployment options, including premises-based, hybrid or pure cloud. Avaya IP Office Contact Center 10 is globally available now in English, Spanish, French, German, and Italian.

CHINA SLAMS US DECISION TO BLOCK AIXTRON DEAL

BEIJING: China yesterday criticized a US decision to block a Chinese company's purchase of German semiconductor equipment maker Aixtron, saying business should not be politicized. President Barack Obama blocked the deal by rejecting the inclusion of Aixtron's US unit in it. The US Treasury Department said the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States had found that the risks posed by the purchase, which could put sensitive technology with potential mili-

tary applications in Chinese hands, were too great. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said the move to purchase Aixtron was purely market-driven.

"China opposes politicizing normal business behavior or interfering in it in a political way," he told a regular press briefing. "We hope the US side can stop making groundless accusations to Chinese companies and provide a fair environment and good conditions to Chinese investments." In a statement

Friday the US Treasury said publicly-traded Aixtron SE's expertise in technology which is key to making advanced compound semiconductors used for LED lighting, lasers and solar cells also has military applications. Washington does not want to see such technology end up in the hands of the Chinese government-backed company which wants to buy Aixtron, Grand Chip Investment. The Treasury said Aixtron's US business was an important contributor to that technology. —AFP

KASPERSKY LAB STRENGTHENS META TEAM WITH NEW APPOINTMENTS

DUBAI: Kaspersky Lab announces the appointment of Amir Kanaan as Managing Director in the Middle East, as well as the promotion of Aman Manzoor to the new role of Head of Consumer Sales in META (Middle East, Turkey and Africa). These changes reflect the focus the company places on the region for its development.

"We see great business perspectives for growth in the region, and aim to double sales in the META region by the end of 2020. I'm sure that our strong regional team can achieve this goal by establishing new customer and partner relationships and promoting new offerings for enterprise and SMB organizations," said Maxim Frolov, Managing Director for the Middle East, Turkey and Africa, Kaspersky Lab.

Amir Kanaan has more than 15 years of sales and managerial experience in the field of IT Security. As Managing Director in the Middle East at Kaspersky Lab, he is responsible for strengthening the company's position as a market leader and growing Kaspersky Lab's business in the region.

"Along with IT development and IT threat landscape changes, seeing more public cases of cybersecurity breaches, more organizations in META now pay a lot of attention to cybersecurity. We have been a trusted partner to many of these organizations, and are ready to



Amir Kanaan, Managing Director

meet the needs of others, by sharing our almost 20 years of expertise in the form of intelligence services and award-winning solutions. Working closely with our local partners, we'll be making sure our customers are protected in the complex and constantly changing IT environment," said Amir Kanaan, Managing Director in the Middle East, Kaspersky Lab.

Aman Manzoor in his role as Head of Consumer Sales in Middle East, Turkey and Africa will be promoting all Kaspersky Lab solutions for home users on the fast developing META market.

Before this appointment Aman was Regional Consumer Sales Director in the Middle East at Kaspersky Lab, so he will continue to apply his experience in developing a qualified team of personnel and a well-equipped and diverse channel network.

In recent years, Kaspersky Lab has expanded its security portfolio with new solutions for individuals and organizations, and introduced important updates to its current products such as Kaspersky Internet Security - multi-device 2017. The company offers Security Intelligence Serviceto corporate customers, as well as the comprehensive integrated Kaspersky Endpoint Security platform and a range of specialized targeted solutions. Among its latest offerings are Kaspersky Endpoint Security Cloud - a software-as-a-service solution that provides small and medium-sized businesses with multi-layered IT security, and Kaspersky Industrial CyberSecurity - a solution designed to protect complex industrial environments.

FCC: AT&T, VERIZON SHOULDN'T EXEMPT OWN APPS FROM CAPS

NEW YORK: US regulators are calling out AT&T and Verizon for exempting their own video apps from data caps on customers' cellphones. This may not result in any changes in how the wireless carriers operate, however, as agency leaders appointed by Donald Trump, the incoming president, are expected to look more favorably on such practices.

The Federal Communications Commission sent letters to the country's biggest wireless carriers Thursday saying the way they handle the practice, known as "zero rating," can hurt competition and consumers. The agency had warned AT&T in November and said in its Thursday letter that AT&T's response did not ease its concerns. Other services - say Hulu or Netflix - can pay Verizon and AT&T so that consumers could also use those apps without eating up cellphone data. The FCC says that could harm the market for streaming services as it makes it more expensive for internet companies to compete with video services that are owned by the carriers. For example, the FCC estimates that a video service provider would have to pay AT&T \$16 a month for a customer who streamed video for 10 minutes a day without using up his data on the cellular network, or \$47 a month for a user watching a half-hour a day.

Zero-rate

Adding in those costs makes it difficult for a rival to compete on price with AT&T's new online TV app, DirecTV Now, whose cheapest bundle costs consumers \$35 a month, wrote Jon Wilkins, the head of the FCC's wireless bureau. Competing video providers would also be at a disadvantage if they didn't zero-rate their services at all, as consumers could need to pay for more data to watch. AT&T Inc. said Friday that exempting apps like DirecTV Now from data caps saves customers money, and the FCC shouldn't put a stop to that. Verizon Communications Inc. said its practices are good for consumers and comply with regulations.

Verizon lets wireless customers watch its go90 video app and NFL football, for which it has exclusive mobile rights, without using up data. The warnings come in the final days of the FCC under President Barack Obama's administration, which has enacted regulations intended to prevent cable companies from playing favorites with internet services. The agency under Trump and a Republican-controlled Congress are expected to roll back or enforce more leniently such measures. —AP

CHINA RISKS WASTING \$490BN ON COAL PLANTS: CAMPAIGNERS

BEIJING: China could waste as much as half a trillion dollars on unnecessary new coal-fired power stations, a climate campaign group said Monday, arguing the world's top carbon polluter already has more than enough such facilities. The Asian giant's rise to become the world's second largest economy was largely powered by cheap, dirty coal. But as growth slows, the country has had a difficult time weaning itself off the fuel, even as the pollution it causes wreaks havoc on the environment and public health.

Many of China's giant state-owned coal mining firms are unviable and plagued by overcapacity, but the ruling Communist Party is reluctant to turn off the financial taps and risk widespread unemployment, with its potential for anger and unrest. As of July, China already had 895 GW in coal-fired

power stations-representing more than half its electricity generation-said the London-based Carbon Tracker Initiative, which argues for limiting carbon emissions using financial data. The country was operating the coal units at less than half their capacity, it said, but "perversely" had another 205 GW already under construction and plans for an additional 405 GW.

At an estimated US\$800 million per kW, that could cost US\$490 billion in total, CTI said. "This misallocation of capital is a microcosm of wider structural woes within the Chinese economy," it said in a report. Power demand growth had slowed from 10 percent to three percent or less per year, it added. Even if power consumption grew at five percent a year until 2020 and coal-fired stations were run at 45 percent capacity, it

said, existing plants and those currently under construction would be more than enough.

'Overcapacity crisis'

"China no longer needs to build any additional coal plants and therefore should act with conviction to contain its coal overcapacity crisis," the report said. Beijing has repeatedly pledged to cut overcapacity in several sectors as it seeks to reform the economy to make it more efficient. It set a target of reducing coal production capacity by 250 million tonnes this year, which Premier Li Keqiang announced last week had been met by the end of October.

But even though capacity cuts do not necessarily lead to reductions in production, they have been blamed for rising coal prices, giving stricken

producers a new lease of financial life. CTI's comments echo statements by environmental campaign group Greenpeace, which estimated in July that China has up to 300 GW of excess coal-fired capacity. Two new coal power plant projects were being begun each week across 10 different provinces, it stated.

China's current five-year plan-a blueprint for economic and social development in 2016-2020-was "disappointing" and "far from ambitious enough" in tackling coal power overcapacity, Greenpeace has said. Public discontent about the environment has grown in China, leading the government to declare a "war on pollution" and vow to reduce the proportion of energy derived from fossil fuels, but critics say efforts have fallen short of expectations. — AFP



OAKLAND: In this Oct 25, 2016, file photo, Golden State Warriors coach Steve Kerr reacts during the team's NBA basketball game against the San Antonio Spurs. — AP

KERR'S MARIJUANA ADMISSION MAY SPARK DIALOGUE IN SPORT

USING MARIJUANA 'MAKES A LOT OF SENSE'

OAKLAND: David West has undergone four surgeries in his long NBA career: Left knee, right elbow and right foot twice to fix a couple of toes. "I don't even like saying all that," he said. So, yes, just like his coach who tried medicinal marijuana to get some relief, West knows real pain. Draymond Green has never needed an operation - he knocks on a table not once but twice as to not jinx himself - yet he considers that the option of using marijuana "makes a lot of sense."

"I'm always struck every time I'm home on the couch watching a sporting event, some drug commercial comes on, they show these happy people jumping in a lake, rowing a boat, then you just wait for the qualifier," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said a day after revealing he tried marijuana for severe back pain. "Side effects include suicidal thoughts and possible death. And you're like, this is insane. Insane." Kerr's players believe his voice can go far in starting a serious, thoughtful dialogue in professional sports regarding pot use for pain relief.

"You look at something that comes from the Earth. Any vegetable that comes from the Earth, they encourage you to eat it," Green said at shootaround Saturday. "It does make a little sense as opposed to giving someone a manufactured pill. If something takes your pain away like some of these pills do, it can't be all good for you. ... He talked about Vicodin. Toradol, you can be completely hurting and then take a Toradol shot and go through a game and feel nothing. Is that really good for you over the course of time? I doubt it."

Dealing with pain

The reigning NBA Coach of the Year acknowl-

edged he tried marijuana twice in the past 18 months while dealing with debilitating back pain that still affects him this season. "First, I'm disappointed it didn't work. I really wanted some relief and I didn't get it. Having done the research it was well worth a try," Kerr said Saturday. "You can see it with our country, our country is starting to wizen up on the medicinal marijuana side. I hope we can wizen up on the prescription drug side. That's scary stuff and it's really not talked about often enough."

Kerr told Comcast SportsNet Bay Area's Warriors Insider Podcast with Monte Poole on Friday that he used medicinal marijuana but it didn't help - and painkillers have often been worse. On Saturday, Kerr said he was surprised how a serious conversation about pain relief "turns into the headline 'Kerr smokes pot.'"

"I'm actually kind of glad it became an issue because I think it's a very important issue to talk about, having gone through a tough spell over the last year with my own recovery back surgery, a lot of pain, chronic pain," he said. "... The issue that's really important is how do we do what's best for the players? But I understand that it's a perception issue around the country and the NFL, NBA, it's a business, so you don't want your customers thinking, 'These guys are a bunch of pot heads.' That's what it is. But to me it's only a matter of time before medicinal marijuana is allowed in sports leagues because the education will overwhelm the perception."

Green said he hasn't needed painkillers nor has he tried marijuana, never having a serious injury or requiring surgery. Guard Klay Thompson

would support drugs for medicinal use only - this after he was arrested on charges of misdemeanor marijuana possession in early March 2011, in Pullman, Washington, during college at Washington State. He was suspended for a game.

"Steve's open-minded, and obviously with the way the world's going, if there's anything you can do that's medicinal, people are all for it, especially when there's stuff like Crohn's disease out there, glaucoma, a bunch of stuff, cancer," Thompson said. "But not recreationally, that should not be of its use ever. There's a medicinal side to it that people are finding out have benefits, especially people with really high pain."

California was the first state to embrace legal, medicinal marijuana two decades ago. Twenty-eight states and Washington, D.C. now allow marijuana for medical or recreational purposes. The 51-year-old Kerr missed the first 43 games last season and the team's record 24-0 start while on a leave of absence following complications from two back surgeries. A spinal fluid leak led to terrible headaches, nausea and neck pain among other symptoms that left him feeling frustrated and down.

Kerr noted, "athletes everywhere are prescribed Vicodin like it's vitamin C, like it's no big deal." "I think the league should look into medicinal marijuana for pain relief ... that's what should be in the CBA," Kerr said. Green and West believe change can happen, that over time people might become more open-minded when the person speaking up is someone like Kerr, who was selected the Western Conference Coach of the Month for November. — AP

KEY HOUSE CHAIRMAN: GOP WILL CHANGE MEDICARE, TO 'SAVE' IT

WASHINGTON: The chairman of a key House committee is pledging that congressional Republicans will change Medicare in order to save it.

GOP Rep Kevin Brady of Texas, head of the Ways and Means Committee, insisted Thursday that Republicans won't be deterred by the politics, even though Donald Trump won election as president on promises to protect the popular health care program for older Americans, and Democrats are already warning of a "war on seniors."

"Democrat tactics of 'Medicare' have been around a long time. They've stopped working," Brady told The Associated Press in an interview in the Capitol. "Voters have figured out Republicans want to save Medicare for the long term, and they know that those who say everything's just fine with it aren't leveling with them."

But Brady also said the GOP will move cautiously on Medicare, starting with smaller changes. And he declined to say when the party might try to pass "premium support," the controversial approach that would, over time, remake Medicare into a voucher-like program that would force seniors to buy health insurance on the open market. Critics say such coverage would take away the "Medicare guarantee" and give seniors subsidies whose value won't keep up with inflation.

"I think it's important, especially in health care, to take this step by step," Brady said. "Whether it's the replacement of the Affordable Care Act, how we make Medicaid work better, how we save Medicare for the long term." "So I envision 2017 as taking steps, small, in preparing for larger steps to save Medicare for the long term," he said, mentioning early reforms in the areas of post-acute care - nursing homes, home health care agencies and rehabilitation facilities. "I'm absolutely confident, in fact I'm optimistic, that by focusing on quality and innovation in Medicare that we can save that program for the long term in a very positive way," Brady said.

Political target

Democrats have already made clear that they view the GOP focus on Medicare as a ripe political target. The incoming Senate Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer of New York, fired an opening salvo earlier this week when he declared at a news confer-

ence: "It's clear that Washington Republicans are plotting a war on seniors next year. Every senior, every American should hear this loudly and clearly: Democrats will not let them win that fight." "We say to our Republicans that want to privatize Medicare, go try it, make our day," Schumer said.

Democrats have had political success in the past by attacking GOP plans to overhaul entitlements. Right after getting re-elected in 2004, President George W. Bush held a news conference in which he claimed a mandate for change - and that meant entitlements. The ongoing Iraq war and that push on Medicare and Social Security cost the GOP control of the House and Senate in 2006. Now, with Republicans in control of both chambers of Congress and the White House next year, Democrats clearly view those same issues as their path back into the majority.

The lesson is not lost on Republicans, and several Senate Republicans said this week that they would not be eager to make Medicare changes their top priority, especially given their plans to move quickly to repeal President Barack Obama's health care law. "I think the first priority is Obamacare and that's going to take most of the oxygen out of the room," said Sen John McCain, R-Ariz. "The Medicaid issue, Medicare is very controversial. We were committed to repealing Obamacare, and that's what we've got to do first."

Medicare, in place more than a half-century, is considered the government's flagship health insurance program. It covers about 57 million people, including 48 million seniors and 9 million disabled people. Medicare has strong public support across party lines and generations.

Adding to the political complications for the GOP, Trump campaigned as a protector of Medicare, saying in an interview with The Daily Signal last year: "I'm not going to cut Social Security like every other Republican and I'm not going to cut Medicare or Medicaid. Every other Republican is going to cut." But Trump already appears to be shifting. His transition website mentions modernizing Medicare, though without details, and his nominee for secretary of Health and Human Services, GOP Rep. Tom Price of Georgia, has also backed the premium support idea. — AP



WASHINGTON: House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rep Kevin Brady, R-Texas, speaks during an interview with The Associated Press on Capitol Hill. — AP

IN JORDAN HOSPITAL, TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN BLOWN APART BY BOMBS

AMMAN: As soon as the bombs exploded outside his house in the Iraqi town of Falluja, Rachid Jassam rushed onto the street to rescue the injured. As the teenager ran out, another plane swooped overhead and dropped more bombs, the shrapnel tearing his right leg so severely local doctors wanted to amputate it. His father refused the amputation to spare his son from a life of disability, and opted for basic surgery instead.

"When I got injured, I didn't lose consciousness. I witnessed the whole thing when the people came and took me to the hospital. I remember everything," 15-year-old Jassam said through an interpreter at a Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) hospital in Amman in Jordan. "I lost five centimeters of my bone from my right leg and I couldn't move it anymore." More than 20 percent of all patients at the MSF hospital are children just like Rachid - blown apart, severely burnt and disfigured by conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Gaza.

Since it opened in 2006, the hospital has treated almost 4,400 patients free of charge, and remains the only hospital in the Middle East to perform advanced reconstructive surgery on victims of war. But as conflicts rage across Middle East, hospital staff say resources have been stretched in recent years, with most patients coming from Syria and Yemen. For Jassam, the clinic has been his lifeline. Sitting

on his hospital bed in the Jordanian capital after receiving specialized surgery on his leg, he smiles broadly as he holds onto his crutches. "Thank God, it's God that preserved my leg."

'You see war every day'

Not all children are so lucky. In a small pink room on the upper levels of the hospital, young girls with disfigured faces and missing limbs grow increasingly agitated as they try to solve puzzles and play board games. "Sometimes the trauma affects their memory skills or problem-solving, and it also has psychological effects like low attention span. They can get frustrated easily and they have low self-esteem," said occupational therapist Nour Al-Khaleeb, 24, who is part of a team of mental health specialists.

"You see war every day, you see their injuries, you see how it's affecting their lives - and sometimes it has an effect on you too," she said, talking loudly over the girls' screams and chatter. "Maybe they will remember that someone did something good for them, and this will give them hope later on in life." Around 60 people, mainly young men, undergo complex orthopaedic, facial and burn reconstructive surgery at the hospital each month, according to MSF. They also receive psychological care and counseling during their stay.

Mohammed, 11, said his family was fleeing the city of Homs in Syria by car when an

airstrike hit, injuring him and his two brothers. He watched as his mother died in the explosion. "A part of the bomb went into my leg and fractured my bone into pieces - it cut into my nerves and tendons," he said through an interpreter, insisting he wasn't scared when the bombs fell overhead. Hobbled down the hospital corridor on crutches after a recent operation on his leg, Mohammed said he will get on with his life when he is discharged, and return to join his family in Jordan's Zataari refugee camp, which hosts almost 80,000 Syrian refugees.

Resilience

Clinical psychologist Elisa Birri, who heads the mental health team, said it was common for children in the hospital, especially boys, to put on a brave front. But sooner or later, psychological symptoms like bedwetting, depression, anxiety, aggression and insomnia can crop up, said Birri. At the severe end of the spectrum, patients can experience flashbacks, panic attacks and disassociation, where they lose their sense of reality. "Children show in their drawings and during free play what they have experienced, it's like a mirror. For example, they will draw themselves playing with guns because of the war context they came from," said Birri, adding that children will sometimes regress to an infantile state to cope with the trauma. — Reuters

SCOTLAND BANS SMOKING IN CARS WITH CHILDREN

LONDON: A new law comes into force in Scotland yesterday banning smoking in cars when children are present, as part of the government's plans for a "tobacco-free generation". Under the law smokers face a £100 (\$127, 119 euros) on-the-spot fine if caught lighting up in a private vehicle where under-18s are present. The penalty increases up to £1,000 if a case goes to court, under a bill passed unanimously in Scottish Parliament in December. The new measure was introduced as part of the Scottish government's plans to lower the smoking rate to under five percent by 2034.

"It's simply not safe to smoke when a child is in the car. Dangerous levels of chemicals can build up, even on short journeys," said Aileen Campbell, Scotland's public health minister. Breathing second hand smoke is linked to asthma, respiratory infections, lung cancer and coronary heart disease, according to the World Health

Organization. The law has been welcomed by health charities, with Ash Scotland saying it sends a clear message that children should grow up in a smoke-free environment.

"We know from speaking to parents that they want to protect their children from tobacco smoke, but often don't know enough about how smoke is harmful and lingers in the air even after you can't see or smell it," said the organization's Chief Executive Sheila Duffy. But the move has been criticized by smokers' group Forest, whose director Simon Clark described the law as "patronizing and unnecessary".

"Very few adults smoke in cars with children. Smokers know it's inconsiderate and the overwhelming majority don't do it. So few people smoke when there's a child in the car it will be like looking for a needle in a haystack," he said. The law banning smoking in vehicles carrying children came into force in England and Wales in October 2015. — AFP

AUSTRALIA CONSIDERS CHARGING ITS POWER GENERATORS FOR POLLUTION

CANBERRA: Australia will consider making electrical power companies pay for greenhouse gas pollution they create, three years after the government scrapped the national carbon tax, a Cabinet minister said yesterday. The conservative government rejected all polluter-pays options in 2014 when it repealed Australia's 3-year-old carbon tax levied against the nation's biggest industrial polluters. But Environment and Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg said that charging power generators

fueled by coal and natural gas for their pollution was under consideration as the government looks for ways to achieve its carbon gas reduction targets. He said while his government rejected the previous center-left Labor Party government's policy of charging all major industrial polluters, the electricity industry produced a third of Australia's greenhouse gases and could face its own charges. The new scheme could include international trade in carbon credits, he said.

"How do we meet our emissions reduction targets while at the same time keeping electricity affordable and the lights effectively on? That's our target," Frydenberg told Australian Broadcasting Corp. The government on Monday released details of its climate change policy review which will begin in February. Australia has pledged to reduce its carbon emissions by at least 26 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. The government replaced the carbon tax with a

2.55 billion Australian dollar (\$1.9 billion) fund paid by taxpayers to give incentives to polluters to reduce their emissions. Only AU\$400 million is left, Frydenberg said. Environmentalist John Connor, chief executive of the Australian Climate Institute, said the fund could not achieve Australia's reduction target. Australia is among the world's worst greenhouse gas polluters on a per capita basis because of its heavy reliance on abundant reserves of cheap coal for electricity generation. — AP

SOLAR, WIND COMPANIES HOPE YEARS OF COURTING PAYS OFF UNDER TRUMP

LOS ANGELES: US wind and solar companies for the first time gave more money to Republicans than Democrats during the 2016 election cycle, according to federal campaign disclosures, part of a years-long effort to expand renewable energy's appeal beyond liberal environmentalists. The industry is now hoping its strategy of reaching across the political divide will pay off in the form of Congressional support as Republican Donald Trump, a climate change skeptic who has expressed doubts about the role of clean energy, takes the White House in January. "We're not starting from ground zero," said Isaac Brown, a principal at 38 North Solutions, which lobbies on behalf of clean energy clients. The USwind and solar industries employ over 300,000 people, making clean energy an important political constituency that is about five times bigger than the coal sector for jobs, thanks to years of rapid growth fueled by government incentives and declines in the cost of their technologies. They have also fought to win over a new breed of backer: conservatives skeptical of climate change but interested in supporting homegrown energy alternatives that increase national security, boost competition, and create well-paying blue collar jobs.

But Trump's upset victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton in the Nov 8 presidential election has cast doubt on the future of a federal tax break for renewable energy seen critical to the industry's continued growth. Trump has never specifically called for those credits to end, but has expressed skepticism about the role of solar and wind in the US energy landscape, calling both "so expensive" and blaming wind turbines for killing birds and ruining picturesque landscapes.

Money and lobbying

During his campaign, Trump also called global warming a hoax and promised to quit a global accord to cut greenhouse gas emissions, though he has since softened his stance and said he is keeping an "open mind" about the deal.

The renewable energy industry got a

boost last year when Congress approved a five-year extension of tax credits for new power projects fueled by solar panels and wind turbines, and the industry's main concern in Washington is to ensure they are not withdrawn in Trump's first term, or allowed to expire should he win a second.

A Trump official did not respond to a request for comment about how he will approach renewables as president. But one of Trump's potential picks for Energy Secretary, Oklahoma oil and gas drilling mogul Harold Hamm, has been a vocal opponent of subsidies for renewable energy. Renewable stocks took a beating immediately after Trump's election but have since mostly recovered.

During the 2016 cycle, the wind and solar industry's political action committees contributed more than \$225,000 to Republican candidates for office, compared with \$185,000 for Democrats. The numbers are not large by the standards of political donations but they mark the first time the industry has tilted its contributions toward Republicans, according to federal records. In 2012, Democrats got about two-thirds of the industry's contributions.

Recipients this year included 34 House Republicans and 19 Senate Republicans. US Senator Dean Heller from Nevada, New York Representative Tom Reed and North Carolina US Senator Richard Burr - all vocal proponents of renewables - together accounted for more than 40 percent of the Solar Energy Industries Association PAC's total federal campaign donations. "It is reassuring that we have those relationships already developed, and we have a really strong business case for the policies that have been implemented," said Brown of 38 North Solutions.

Industry executives like SunPower Chief Executive Tom Werner and First Solar Inc CEO Mark Widmar have acknowledged the uncertainty around federal support for renewables. But they have sought to assuage investors, saying current policies are likely to remain due to the cost-competitiveness of their technologies and the number of jobs they represent. — Reuters



WASHINGTON: In this Friday, Dec 2, 2016, photo, visitors look on as a Pacific fisher takes off running after being released into a forest at Mount Rainier National Park. — AP

RARE WEASEL SPECIES MAKES COMEBACK IN WASHINGTON

SPECIES HAS BEEN MISSING FOR SEVEN DECADES

MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK: The elusive weasel-like mammal poked its head out of the wooden crate, glanced around and quickly darted into the thick forest of Mount Rainier National Park - returning to a landscape where it had been missing for seven decades. One by one, 10 Pacific fishers that had been trapped in British Columbia were set free at the park south of Seattle as part of a multiyear effort to reintroduce the native species to its historical range.

A large crowd gathered Friday to herald the return of the dark-brown member of the weasel family with its lush fur and bushy tail. They cheered, clapped and hooted, and First Nations and American Indian tribal members sang and drummed, as each crate door was lifted and a fisher streaked out of sight across the snowy ground.

Solitary animals

"We're correcting something that we mismanaged a long time ago before we knew enough to manage wildlife populations," said Jeffrey Lewis, a biologist with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. "Now we can fix that because we know how to. We know we've got a lot of habitat here. All we were missing were the fishers."

Fishers historically were found throughout much of the forested areas of the West Coast. But they declined in numbers due to trapping in the 1800s and early 1900s, and the loss of forest habitats. By the mid-1900s they were eliminated from Washington State. The solitary animal, which hunts snowshoe hares, rodents and small mammals, were listed as state endangered species in

1998. They're one of the few predators of porcupines and are found only in North America.

While common in the Northeast and Midwest, they're rare in the Northwest. Population estimates of West Coast fishers today are anywhere from a couple hundred to a few thousand, mostly in southern Oregon and Northern California. More recently, West Coast fishers have faced threats from illegal pesticide use by marijuana growers and other threats. But they're slowly making a comeback in Washington through reintroduction efforts involving WDFW, Conservation Northwest, the National Park Service and other partners.

"These animals were here before us and so it's our duty to take care of them," Hanford McCloud, a Nisqually Indian Tribe council member, said during a ceremony before the fishers were released on park land designated for the tribe's use. Several First Nations people traveled with the fishers, some that were captured First Nations land in British Columbia. The first fishers, about 90 in all, were reintroduced in Washington state in Olympic National Park starting in 2008. Those animals are reproducing and expanding its geographic range.

Relocating fishers

The second phase of the project involves relocating fishers from British Columbia into the southwest Cascade Mountains and later into the North Cascades. The goal is to reintroduce 80 fishers to each region. "We feel like we're making headway and we're getting good positive results. It's too early to say that we're establishing a self-

sustaining population but it sure is looking positive," said Lewis.

The recovery efforts, however, comes as conservation groups have sued the US Fish and Wildlife Service, alleging the federal agency failed to consider the best scientific evidence when it decided not to provide the fisher protections under the Endangered Species Act. Fish and Wildlife had proposed listing the forest-dwelling mammal as threatened in 2014 over concerns about logging practices, illegal pesticide use by marijuana growers and other threats.

In April, the agency acknowledged the creatures no longer occur in their historical ranges in Washington, Oregon and California but concluded they were not in danger of extinction. The agency said the best available science showed current threats aren't causing significant declines in West Coast populations. It also cited conservation measures such as reintroduction efforts in Washington.

"We're heartened by reintroduction efforts, but they alone are not going to be sufficient to save the fishers," said Tom Wheeler, Environmental Protection Information Center, one of the groups that sued. He said the animals need greater federal protections because they still face ongoing threats. Tara Chestnut, a Mount Rainier park ecologist, said the return of fishers to the Cascade Mountains will restore biodiversity to the ecosystem. "But there's also cultural significance," she said. "Fishers are part of our natural history and our natural heritage. There are also spiritual aspects of their return that are really important." — AP



PAS-DE-CALAIS, France : A picture shows a wind turbine and solar panels installed at the Lumiwatt site, a site of research and testing on photovoltaic panels. — AFP

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BRITISH DELEGATION VISITS WHITE PALACE

Lord Mayor of the city of London, Dr Andrew Parmley, Lord Jonathan Marland, the British ambassador to Kuwait, Mathew Lodge and their accompanying delegation recently visited the White Palace where they met Dr Suad Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and other family members. Both sides exchanged cordial talks and spoke of the friendly relations between both countries and peoples.

COME POSE WITH 3D ART PAINTINGS IN BOULEVARD



For the first time in Kuwait, Boulevard had organized a 3D art painting festival from 29th of November till 3rd of December performed by award winning 3D artists from Australia, Jenny McCracken and Rudy Kistler. The visitors along with the Australian ambassador HE Mr Warren Hauck and his family enjoyed posing on 3D paintings. Visitors during the event also enjoyed fresh

coffee and chocolate strawberries from Costa Cafe and Popcorn place. The artists during their visit trained some university students to learn new skills and gain invaluable experience. These volunteers will get a written reference letter post event completion. Mrs Rawan Adnan - Marketing & Leasing Manager stated that this event was part of the

unique entertainment activities that Al Salmiya Group for Enterprise Development Company is organizing at its huge project "Boulevard". Such Activities are set to redefine "Boulevard" as the must-go touristic destination in the State of Kuwait and to support the talents and skills of youth. This was the first visit for the artists to the State of Kuwait. They have previously done

many such festivals in UAE, Australia, USA and worldwide. Mrs Rawan Adnan also added that "Boulevard" project provides commercial, entertainment and sports services to represent the perfect place for family and youth to spend their time and enjoy such unique events. The project facilitates a huge commercial mall that consist of

2 floors with famous international and local brands, coffee shops and restaurants in addition to a huge green area that occupies 90% of the project area. It provides a perfect environment for joggers to enjoy beautiful views of trees. In addition to the above, the project also contains 2 lakes, a river and sports fields for football, tennis, basketball and cricket.



LET THE FESTIVITIES BEGIN WITH HOME CENTRE'S NEW SEASONAL COLLECTION

Home Centre, the largest home retailer in the Middle East, is set to ring in the festive season with its new seasonal collection. The new ranges of designer accents are sure to enrich homes and add the right aesthetic element. Reflecting the essence of the season, this year's festive ensemble includes trendy decorative items such as wall hangings, baubles and ornaments, musical dancing figurines, LED lanterns, gingerbread mugs and snowman candles among others. Home Centre also has a range of decorated Christmas trees, available in various sizes and styles.

This year's collection has a traditional touch to it, bringing the red and gold back in trend. Each product reflects the quintessential festive glitter, made to dramatically accentuate one's home dÉcor and infuse it with festive warmth and cheer. Homes will look ready for guests this season with Home Centre's versatile entertaining essentials like ceramic crockery, glassware collection, serving bowls with inscriptions of festive messages, table runners and lots more. Finding the perfect gift is one of the joys of Christmas and shoppers will be spoilt for choice with Home

Centre's range of tasteful gifting options such as decorative reindeer pieces, glass ornaments, gingerbread man photo frames and musical gift boxes - all in the colors of the season. Home Centre is the one-stop solution for customers seeking every kind of aesthetic or functional home dÉcor item - from festive tree ornaments and baubles to stockings and eco-friendly lighting that add that extra sparkle to homes. The new seasonal collection is available across all Home Centre outlets located at Al Rai, Shuwaikh, The Avenues, Kuwait City, Fahaheel and Sama Mall.





Women Group takes off at the Green Island



Men Group takes off at the Green Island

NBK HOLDS ITS 22ND ANNUAL WALKATHON

THE BIGGEST SPORTS CARNIVAL WITH OVER 100 WINNERS AWARDED

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) kicked off its annual Walkathon on Saturday, December 3, 2016 under the slogan "We're Stronger... With Every Step", where thousands of runners took part in the competitive race that started at the Green Island and ended at the Shuwaikh Beach Park. The event was culminated by awarding over 100 contestants in a huge gracious carnival.

Among the participants of this enormous sports event were Isam Al Sager, NBK Group CEO, Shaikha Al Bahar, Deputy Group CEO, Emad Ahmed Al Ablani, NBK General Manager, Group Human Resources, Suresh Bajpai NBK General Manager, Consumer Banking Group, Mohammed Othman, NBK's Deputy General Manager, Consumer Banking Group, Saleh Abdulmohsen Al Babtain, Al Babtain Group CEO, and Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, alongside several top executives from NBK and Al Babtain Group, in addition to several sports and social figures.

Manal Faisal Al Mattar, NBK Communications Executive Manager said in her event's speech that the National Bank of Kuwait is so proud to be a lead initiator in launching such a huge sports carnival, the biggest of its kind across Kuwait dating back over 22 years ago, in support of health and sports in Kuwait. She expressed her happiness of the great continuous success of NBK's annual Walkathon, and the huge mass participation that continues to far exceed all expectations at every event.

Al Mattar commended the great collaboration exhibited by different ministries and governmental institutions, spearheaded by both the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior, in addition to the Kuwaiti Association of Athletics Federations, all showing great cooperation to ensure the event's success.

Al Mattar also stressed that NBK maintains its position as the premier community leader in serving the Kuwaiti society through its commitment to uphold its inherent social responsibility cultural approach. She added that NBK takes pride in its mission of dedicating this culture through launching several key vital social programs across various sectors including education, health, recruitment, training and social support, in addition to sports initiatives and environmental activities.

Race preparations

Several communication points were set up along the race route (extending 11 KM); between the Green Island, Kuwait Towers, Souq Sharq, and Shuwaikh Beach Park. By the early morning hours, organizers ensured the full readiness of the site to receive the participants. The event start-

ed after NBK volunteers finalized all required organizational and preventive measures to ensure the safety of the contestants. Furthermore, the team also collaborated with paramedics and medical emergency teams assigned by Ministry of Health, who provided the required tools in case of emergencies. Besides the huge coordination with Ministry of Interior, the Ministry spread its units along the entire distance of the Walkathon, and diligently followed up on all its events.

Meanwhile, the closing ceremony included many surprises, entertainment events, and rewarding competitions for both contestants and attending audience as well. Awards were presented to the top ten winners from each age group, as well as the special needs category winners, in addition to a draw on three brand new Renault 2016 cars offered by Al-Babtain Group.

Children's activities at Shuwaikh Beach Park

This year's event included organizing events dedicated to children aged 7 to 12 years old, set up at Shuwaikh Beach Park from 9:00am to 12:00pm. The children participated in several fun-filled contests and games, under the supervisor of NBK's volunteers.

Tough competition

A huge sense of enthusiasm prevailed among participants, who showed a great deal of determination to complete the race and win advanced positions. The competition lasted till the final stages, especially by returned participants who continued to join the race during the previous years, aiming to hold their positions and to grab additional medals.

Sheer will and determination

As part of the ongoing comprehensive coverage and follow up on NBK's Walkathon event this year, and keeping up the theme of "We're Stronger... With Every Step", several athletes shared their experiences with the participants, highlighting their stories filled with success and achievements, in order to encourage and push them to believe in their abilities and to adopt interest in sports as an appropriate behavior that leads to change and assist in fulfilling aspirations.

Special Needs champions

NBK dedicates an annual special competition within the race for people with special needs, as part of the bank's beliefs of the utmost importance of involving all members of society and their ability to prove their



Speechless Engy Ahmed, unable to express her happiness to be a winner

active and vital role in various areas and fields, particularly sports. This year witnessed the participation of special needs contestants who successfully took part in the competition, thanks to their determination and enthusiasm, thus achieving a significant milestone in reinforcing their confidence and boosting their hopes.

Remarkable collaboration

As always, Ministry of interior and Ministry of Health and medical emergencies have not spared any efforts to support NBK Walkathon's participants. Additionally, Kuwait Municipality provided an appropriate venue to hold the closing ceremony in Shuwaikh Beach Park. NBK praised the efforts exerted by all parties involved and their supportive role during the race over the past years. The Ministry of interior deployed patrols along the race route to ensure that it runs smoothly. Medical emergency task force assigned by the Ministry of Health was present around the race vicinity and was fully prepared for any emergencies.

Kuwaiti Association of Athletics Federations

The Kuwaiti Association of Athletics Federations provided its full support to NBK's Walkathon, with over 100 referees, spreading along the racing route to arbitrate the event. The referees were provided with vehicles stationed in various spots on the Gulf Road, in order to closely follow the race and make their decisions transparently. By the end of the race, NBK held the closing ceremony to award this category's winners, providing them with a range of diverse and entertaining programs and contests, including the distribution of prizes and surprises.

The Walkathon on social network

Thousands of people followed the closing ceremony live on Twitter @NBKPage, NBK Group YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. The audience interacted with the events, as NBK's team broadcasted full coverage of the event starting from the onset of the race up to the closing and awards ceremony, both on the bank's website as well as all relevant sites to this huge sporting event, the biggest of its kind in Kuwait and #100millionsteps and #NBKWalkathon.



A contestant showing great joy for her early arrival at the finish line



Winner of Al Jawhara monthly draw of KD 125,000 receiving his prize from executive management



Victory tastes sweet - an award of appreciation

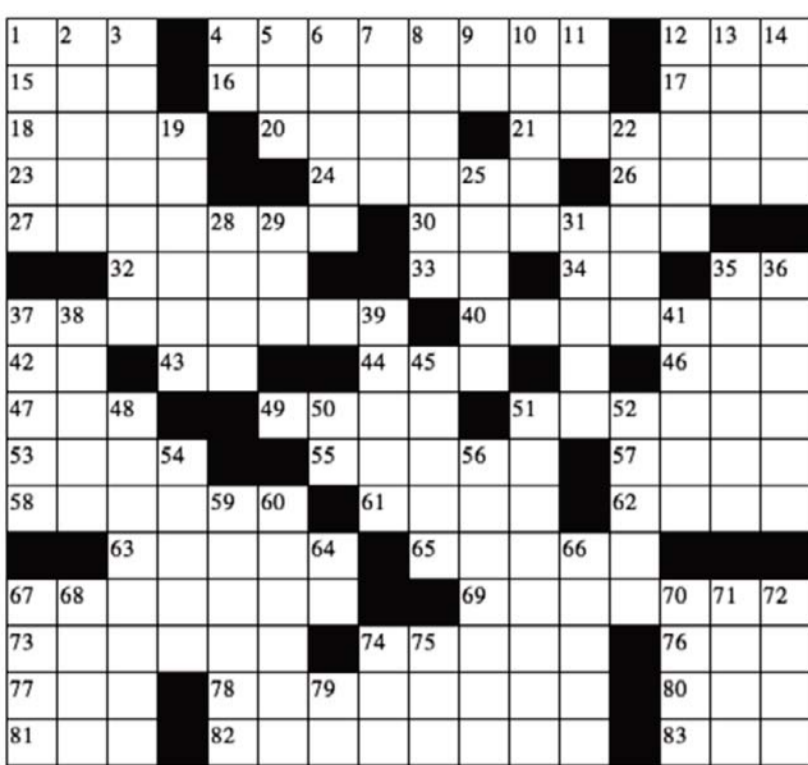


Ms Shaikha Al Bahar, Deputy Group CEO, presenting a special needs participant with a medal.



Children joyful participation and expressions of happiness

CROSSWORD 1452



ACROSS

- 1. North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- 4. A drug (trade name Antabuse) used in the treatment of alcoholism.
- 12. A light touch or stroke.
- 15. A fractional monetary unit of Japan and Indonesia and Cambodia.
- 16. Type genus of the Serranidae.
- 17. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- 18. Severe diabetes mellitus with an early onset.
- 20. A bluish shade of green.
- 21. Equipped with or connected by gears or having gears engaged.
- 23. A river in northwestern Russia flowing generally west into the Gulf of Finland.
- 24. Jordan's port.
- 26. Similar to the color of jade.
- 27. The father of your father or mother.
- 30. Covered with paving material.
- 32. The basic unit of money in Iran.
- 33. An associate degree in nursing.
- 34. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
- 37. Science and technology of electronic systems and devices for aeronautics and astronautics.
- 40. A region of northeastern France famous for its wines.
- 42. Of or relating to the stomach and intestines.
- 43. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- 44. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
- 46. Used of a single unit or thing.
- 47. A legal document codifying the result of deliberations of a committee or society or legislative body.
- 49. An outlying farm building for storing grain or animal feed and housing farm animals.
- 53. God of death.
- 55. Any of numerous perennial bulbous herbs having linear or broadly lanceolate leaves and usually a single showy flower.
- 57. The villain in William Shakespeare's tragedy who tricked Othello into murdering his wife.
- 58. Relating to or characteristic of Arabs.
- 61. An ancient Egyptian city on the west bank of the Nile opposite Cairo.
- 62. The 16th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- 63. On the negative side or lower end of a scale.
- 65. The immature free-living form of most invertebrates and amphibians and fish which at hatching from the egg is fundamentally unlike its parent and must metamorphose.
- 67. Extensive landed property (especially in the country) retained by the owner for his own use.
- 69. After a negative statement used to indicate that the next statement is similarly negative.
- 73. Sacred text of Zoroastrianism.
- 76. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 77. A logarithmic unit of sound intensity equal to 10 decibels.
- 78. (of a nuclear reaction) Occurring with evolution or releasing of energy.
- 80. (computer science) Memory whose contents can be accessed and read but cannot be changed.
- 81. The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
- 82. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- 83. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.

DOWN

- 1. An act that exploits or victimizes someone.
- 2. (Judaism) The ceremonial dinner on the first night (or both nights) of Passover.
- 3. (Norse mythology) A dwarf who possessed a treasure that was stolen by Loki.
- 4. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
- 5. Remaining after all deductions.
- 6. A step in walking or running.
- 7. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
- 8. When dried yields a hard substance used e.g. in golf balls.
- 9. An organization of independent states to promote international peace and security.
- 10. A white crystalline carbohydrate used as a sweetener and preservative.
- 11. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
- 12. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- 13. Advanced in years.
- 14. A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
- 19. A starch made by leaching and drying the root of the cassava plant.
- 22. A genus of Platalea.
- 25. Obvious and dull.
- 28. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
- 29. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- 31. A Bantu language.
- 35. Grandson of Amaterasu and first ruler of Japan.
- 36. One of the evil spirits of traditional Jewish and Christian belief.
- 38. A Roman Catholic priest who acts for another higher-ranking clergyman.
- 39. A gesture involving the shoulders.
- 41. Hungarian wine made from Tokay grapes.
- 45. (Sumerian) God of the air and king of the Sumerian gods.
- 48. A restraint that confines or restricts freedom (especially something used to tie down or restrain a prisoner).
- 50. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- 51. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- 52. Deciduous South African tree having large odd-pinnate leaves and profuse fragrant orange-yellow flowers.
- 54. True firs.
- 56. The god who fathered the islands and gods of Japan with his sister Izanami.
- 59. The arch of the foot.
- 60. Battle in 401 BC when the Persian King Artaxerxes II defeated his younger brother who tried to usurp the throne.
- 64. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
- 68. Divisible by two.
- 70. Not easy.
- 71. Very dark black.
- 72. Avatar of Vishnu.
- 74. A yearning for something or to do something.
- 75. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
- 79. A state in northwestern United States on the Pacific.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Using reasonable thinking and being more conscientious takes on a special importance for you. Professionally speaking, you are in top form and stop many times to help a customer or client. Now that the holiday season is underway, this afternoon you may give a short talk to your family regarding future meal plans with a list of things from which they can choose. This way you will have discreetly warned them ahead of time that the meals will be prepared ahead, albeit plentiful. Lean and healthy are the goals for everyone. It thrills you to have everyone near you this evening. Everybody wants to talk about their plans. Creative thinking, plans and a family that supports each other and plays together are great ways to spend your evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Staying focused may be a challenge the first part of this day. There are lots of unfinished projects but you are able to tend to all the loose ends. Lots of people have been clamoring for more of your time and this can wear a bit thin. Find ways to get your body moving at least once before quitting time. Anything as simple as walking outside your work area will help you sort through your day and regain a focus when you come back to the work chores this day. Some nice compliments may find a way to your ears today, making a busy day more pleasant. Being more involved with friends, neighbors and family is likely this evening. Although every person in your family is pooped there may be some requests in favor of a movie tonight.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You find yourself talkative and quick-witted, much to the amusement of those lucky enough to be around you. Ideas are clear and easy for you to come by. This could be a good time for thinking over your future professional plans. It should be a super day for making financial plans or decisions or finding your way through just about any problem that may present itself. You feel successful and you are able to contend with whatever comes your way. Good advice and compliments come from a guide or an older person, if you need it. This is a wonderful day in general and an exceptional holiday time. If you are alone this evening you might volunteer to help a friend so he or she can get some sleep or rest or just have a change of pace for a few hours.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A look into your deeper, more spiritual nature will be available to you at this time a little quiet time this morning is good. Allowing your creative side a free rein could be your ticket to new solutions or inventions. You show great understanding and awareness of the needs of others and you are in a good position to communicate, listen or make decisions. You may enjoy a round of golf or some other workout with a friend or mate after work. Raising your own vegetables interests you and this evening you may decide a trip to the library or bookstore would help you decide on the type of garden you would like to work into your schedule this next spring. It could be something as simple as large pots that can be worked into the landscape easily.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A demanding boss, who has always been very hard to please, pays you a compliment. Evidently, you are doing something right. You are pleased with the results of your hard work and others are pleased as well. You promise yourself to kick it up a notch for next year in hopes of getting a promotion or increase in salary. This afternoon circumstances create a good focus for you to complete a difficult task. Your more reserved side is dominant this evening. Visiting with friends or family is a good thing, and the rush to please turns into several convenient opportunities for your own needs in the next few days. If you are not the regular cook, you may help the main cook tonight with a specialty item. A few flowers complement the atmosphere.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You just seem to have a natural sense for communicating with others. Clear thoughts about the past may also be flowing into your life. You may be planning a big get-together with friends soon. If you have been in a new workplace this year, you may find yourself wrapped up in some holiday plans that are quite different from your usual experiences. Tonight you talk about traditions you want to create with a loved one. Other people and the general place and time in which you find yourself are very pleasant. You may enjoy the company of many people this evening. You are thankful to have so many delightful friends. Your spirituality will become more pronounced and you may be able to express yourself in poetry or in attitude.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This day you may feel that you finally understand your current life situation better. All the shuffle to get things put together, mailed and attended to, seems to have moved along much better this year than any other year gone before-but it did take work. You are pleased and happy that now you can relax. You may even want to send up a prayer to keep things as they are at this time: peaceful. There is no test of relationship-all interactions are without a glitch, even the neighborhood is a quiet place. It is a grand time to get closer to the people you care about and there are opportunities to update yourself to your friends and vice versa. Let both your own feelings and the reactions of others guide you when seeking a balance in emotions.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This workday flows along quickly as there are many projects that are coming to an end. Some projects will soon be set aside to be finished next year. Co-workers are busy with their own projects later this morning. At the noon break you may find yourself listening to the comments of customers. This means you may find a new way to put the finishing touches on a special job. You may be looking forward to a performance later this evening that you don't want to miss. You could find that you enjoy being with your family and friends more than ever. Enjoyment is derived by obtaining and sharing information and entertainment. Keeping communications positive is most important and you know just what to do. Tickets to an event make a great gift.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Self-expression is accomplished through helping others at this time and you are always happy to help someone in the workplace or home place, whether they ask, or even if they do not ask. You have some sort of talent that other people enjoy. Family members encourage you to develop your special technical, scientific or spiritual talents and encourage you to try for perfection. You will be open to beauty and poetry. Your creative spirit is enhanced at this time, which may manifest as daydreaming and drifting attention from time to time. Anything you need this birthday year, including financial backers, will be pulled in for you because of your integrity of purpose. The reputation that ensues will be yours with little effort-magic happens. Happy birthday!



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are very capable at managing others and that is what today seems to be all about-you are in charge and in high focus. You should find this an exceptionally good time to be with others and to work together. A superior may seek you out as just the right person for a particular job. It seems that your skills fit in most areas of the business world and that makes you a prized possession-consider a request for higher pay. Someone who understands just how you feel will be there to support you in any undertaking. You could find that you are appreciated for your ability to act quickly and responsibly. You may find yourself delving into some new area such as politics, metaphysics, further education, travel or religion to name but a few.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This time of year is probably one of your favorites. You will find yourself in a position to really enjoy and understand those around you, whether you are working with people or you have a house full of guests. Wonderful feelings and a sense of support and harmony make this a truly joyous time. Celebrate the feelings that you have today and allow them to carry forth throughout the coming new year, as well. You will find that others are very respectful of your ability to give advice, be of good cheer and in general present the type of person worth following. You just seem to have a natural sense of what others want and need for now. Clear decisions affecting others could be made today. This evening, you may spend time writing and addressing cards.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

No grass grows under your feet today... You are out of the door, quick as a flash and ready to get the day over with before you even get to the workplace. Do be wise in your driving and handling of sharp instruments-all kidding aside, just slow yourself a bit. Establishing a good plan of organization could be the priority for this day. There is the possibility of some changes in your environment and the location of a social gathering may change. There is actually the possibility that you will have several social invitations; take the second one. Your ability to truly understand and have a handle on things of a conceptual and spiritual nature certainly will not hurt your popularity in a social situation. Others will appreciate the time you take to listen.

WORD SEARCH

Look Up!

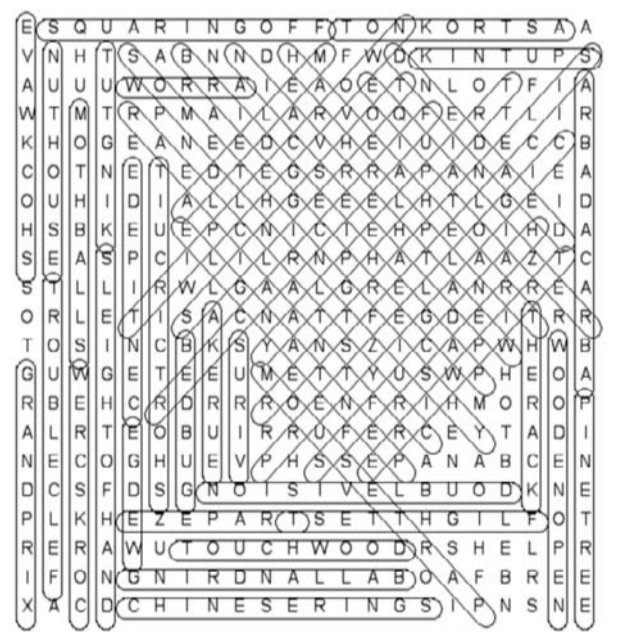
Find and circle all of the items that you might see when you look upward. The remaining 24 letters spell an additional item you might see.



- AIRPLANE GALAXY METEOR SHOWER SMOG
- BIG DIPPER HAZE MOON SOLAR ECLIPSE
- BIRDS HELICOPTER PLANETS STARS
- BLIMP HOT AIR BALLOON POWER LINES STREET LIGHT
- BLUE SKY JET EXHAUST RAINBOW THE SUN
- CHIMNEY SMOKE JUPITER SATELLITE TREETOP
- CLOUDS KITE SATURN UNIVERSE
- COMET LIGHTNING SKYDIVER VENUS
- DRONE MARS SKYSCRAPER
- FIREWORKS MERCURY SKYWRITING

Yesterday Solution

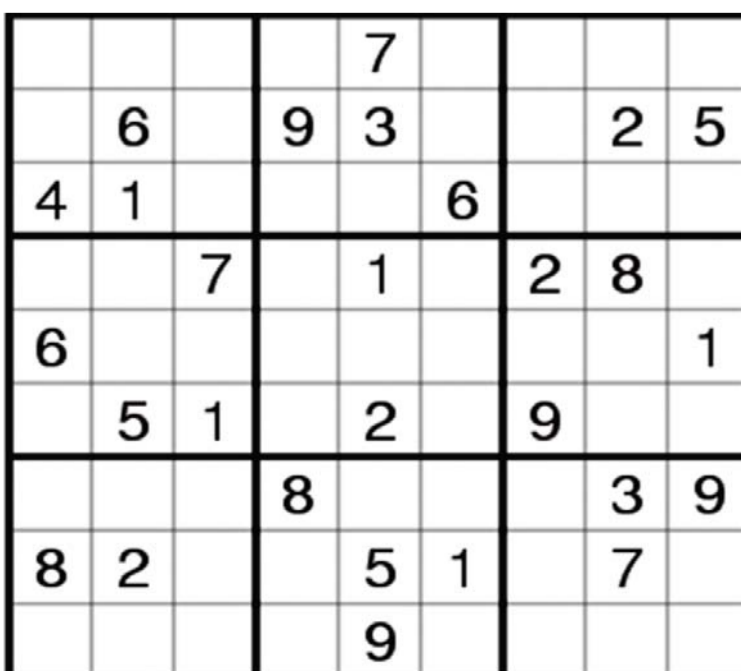
Livewire Puzzles



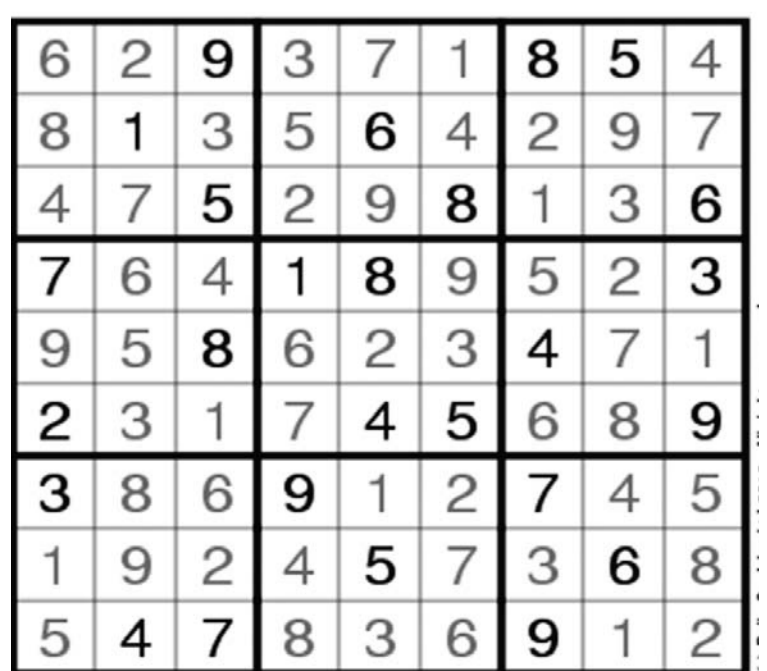
- ARRACADABRA EQUALIZER PENTANGLE THE RACK
- ARROW EUREKA PINETREE TOUCH WOOD
- ASTROKNOT FIRECRACKER PRETZEL LOGIC TRAPEZE
- BALL AND RING FLIGHT TEST SHOCKWAVE TRIPLE CROWN
- BEDBUG GRAND PRIX SHORT CIRCUIT TRIPLE PLAY
- BRIDGE THE GAP HANDCUFFS SILENT PARTNER TRIPWIRE
- CENTPEDE HAVE A HEART SLEIGHT OF HAND TROUBLE CLEF
- CHINESE RINGS KING TUT SLINGSHOT VIRUS
- CORKSREW MELEDA SOMETHING FISHY WEATHERVAIN
- CRYSTAL CLEAR MOTHBALLS SPUTNIK WEDGE
- DEAD END MOUSETRAP SQUARING OFF WOODEN OPEN
- DOUBLE VISION NUT HOUSE

The hidden phrase is: A HANDFUL OF PATIENCE IS WORTH MORE THAN A BUSHEL OF BRAINS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

Table with 4 columns: GOVERNORATE, PHARMACY, ADDRESS, PHONE. Lists various pharmacies across Kuwait governorates.

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT. Includes logo and contact info.

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours. Includes temperature (22°C), SFC. CHART, Four-Day Forecast, Warnings & Weather Watches, Kuwait Forecast, Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport, and Prayer Times.

Hospitals

Table of hospitals including Sabah Hospital, Amiri Hospital, Maternity Hospital, Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital, Chest Hospital, Farwaniya Hospital, Adan Hospital, Ibn Sina Hospital, Al-Razi Hospital, and Physiotherapy Hospital.

Clinics

Table of clinics including Kaizen center, Rawda, Adaliya, Khaldiya, Kaifan, Shamiya, Shuwaikh, Abdullah Salem, Nuzha, Industrial Shuwaikh, Qadsiya, Dasmah, Bneid Al-Gar, Shaab, Qibla, Ayoun Al-Qibla, Mirqab, Sharq, Salmiya, Jabriya, Maidan Hawally, Bayan, Mishref, W Hawally, Sabah, Jahra, New Jahra, West Jahra, South Jahra, North Jahra, North Jleeb, Ardhiya, Firdous, Omariya, N Khaitan, and Fintas.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Table of international calls with columns for country and phone number. Lists countries from Afghanistan to Lesotho.

PRIVATE CLINICS

Detailed listing of private clinics categorized by specialty: Ophthalmologists, Plastic Surgeons, Paediatricians, Endocrinologist, Family Doctor, Psychiatrists, Gynaecologists & Obstetricians, Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT), General Practitioners, General Surgeons, Internists, Chest & Heart, Dermatologists, Dentists, Neurologists, Gastrologists, Physiotherapists & VD, Rheumatologists, Internist, Chest & Heart, Consultant Cardiologist.

Summary table for private clinics with columns for clinic name, address, and contact details.



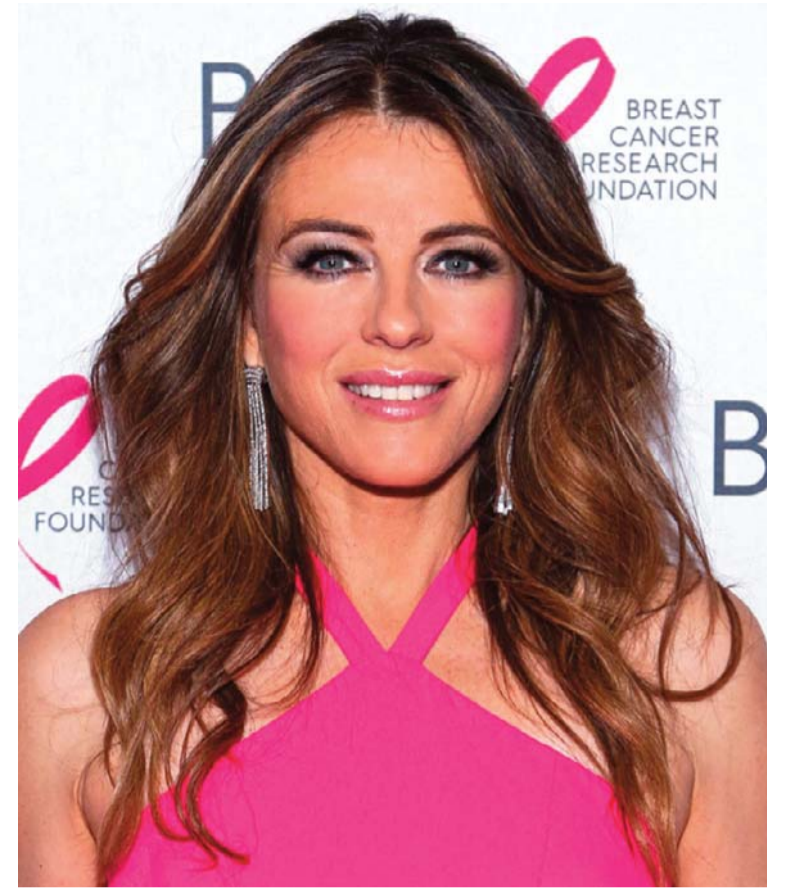
Lady Gaga's headpiece contained almost 50,000 Swarovski crystals

The 30-year-old singer songwriter - who performed during this year's annual Victoria's Secret Fashion Show, which took place in the Grand Palais in Paris, France, on Wednesday - adorned five showstopping garments, but the black cowboy-style hat with beaded detail was emblazoned with 47,000 gems. According to WWD, the 'Bad Romance' hitmaker recruited the American hat shop Gladys Tamez Millinery and a team of 10 people to create the statement accessory, which took the creative masterminds 300 hours to make. However, this wasn't the first time the blonde beauty wore a garment from the store, as last month she adorned a white tailored suit, which she paired with a matching hat for the American Music Awards. Gaga had a number of costume changes during the show, including a sequined jumpsuit, worn with and without sleeves, as well as teamed with a white leather jacket, and a black and red long dress, which was teamed with her very own angel wings, but has hinted her finale

ensemble was the most raunchy. The musician, who donned a stunning Azzedine Alaïa sheer lace crop top and trousers set at the end of the lingerie show, has admitted her last outfit made her feel like an "affair". Alongside a photo of her on Instagram wearing the garment, she wrote: "A dress by @azzedinealaïaofficial worn for #vsvfashionshow. Exquisite this piece, an affair really. Feels amazing in the City of Love in a dress made with so much of it.(sic)" The designer also created the gown she wore on the Pink Carpet ahead of the show, and Gaga was very grateful for his support. Alongside another image, she wrote: "Thank Monsieur ALAIA @azzedinealaïaofficial for my perfect Pink Carpet #vsvfashionshow and Finale dress! I will always be grateful for not only your talent and generosity, but your simply stunning heart. there's only one ALAIA (sic)".

David Gandy works out 'five times a week' before a shoot

David Gandy works out "five times a week" for two months prior to shooting a new campaign. The 36-year-old model - who was announced as the face of Dolce and Gabbana's Light Blue fragrance for 10 years - has revealed prior to stripping down and shooting the commercials, the dark-haired hunk trains almost every day for a solid two months to be in his best shape. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz about his fitness regime, the catwalk icon - who recently jetted to Mont Blanc to pose for the Autumn/Winter collection - said: "Dolce and Gabbana is out today that's the light blue we've been working for 10 years now, so the concept of that changed cause we did a winter commercial although it's always been in Capri and this time we did it 4,000 meters up on Mont Blanc, so it was quite unusual but it moves the story on. "It was a couple months of quite intense training. I've skied since I was six so the skiing thing was quite natural quite easy, which was good, it was just getting the body back into light blue as usual. "Well I train anyway, obviously, but when you're going into a shoot like that then you train probably a good two months before and go maybe 4 or 5 times a week." And the British hunk has likened his change in lifestyle to the routine of an athlete, because he has to alter his diet plan to include more protein. He added: "With the training you have to change your diet, so a lot more protein. It's almost like you're training like an athlete, so it takes about six weeks to get properly into shape for it for light blue or underwear commercials." Although David has admitted he has been active ever since he was a child, and didn't get into fitness because of his modeling career. He explained: "I've done sports since I was young and always trained. People may think I started from when I became a model, but it was years before. And a lot of it is for my mental state as well as my physical state, it's like I like to exercise wherever I am in the world. An hour in the gym is a great refresh and great to just release endorphin in different ways from being on your mobile phone for an hour. I'm not saying you have to go to the gym for six weeks, but when you've got something to build to its quite interesting." Meanwhile, David - who is the friend of the Jaguar brand - attended the global reveal event in Los Angeles for the I-PACE, Jaguar's first all-electric car, which was revealed to guests using pioneering virtual reality technology.



ELIZABETH HURLEY'S MASK WILL BE SOLD TO CHARITY

Elizabeth Hurley's Animal Ball mask is set to be sold to charity. The 51-year-old actress wore a golden Georgia Harding Macaw head piece, accompanied with a stunning blue gown, to the Animal Ball event in London, which saw a number of dinners take place across the capital last month prior to the ball at Victoria House in London's Bloomsbury, and the extravagant Vero - the Animal Ball's social media partner - will sell the head piece alongside 11 other accessories, which depict a variety of endangered species, including the gorilla pop mask worn by model Lily Cole, the Ganesha elephant mask sported by Ellie Goulding, Princess Eugenie and Matthew Williamson's self made butterfly mask, as well as Charlotte Tilbury's showstopping peacock mask. The organization will see 100 per cent of the profits be donated to the Elephant Family charity, who protect endangered animals across the globe. Other popular masks for sale from the charity event are the Stripe a Pose Zebra mask by Philip Treacy, the Himalayan monal bird mask, the fashion mogul Jimmy Choo's oaxaca hummingbird piece and the turtle mask by Alice Temperley. And the organization have revealed they are "thrilled" they are able to give those who couldn't attend the star studded event, to still purchase and feel a part of the occasion by purchasing a mask and keeping it as a "memento". Speaking about the fundraising, Ruth Powys - who is the CEO of the Elephant Family - said: "Vero has been the perfect social media partner as it's allowed us to communicate privately with our patrons and ambassadors, as well as publicly with our supporters via a single app. "We love that Vero gives us the ability to deliver a fundraising first through social media purchasing. We're thrilled to be able to offer those unable to attend this year's ball, the chance to buy now and own an exclusive designer memento."



Kendra Wilkinson suffers from seasonal affective disorder

Kendra Wilkinson suffers from seasonal affective disorder (SAD). The 31-year-old reality TV star has admitted she is currently coping with SAD, which is a specific type of depression that comes and goes according to the seasons of the year. She shared on Twitter: "I don't know about u guys but I feel crazy around the holidays. Moody n s***. Maybe im like this year round n don't know tho. "Lack of vitamin D they say ... been gettin that extra D ... maybe I should actually take the vitamin tho. (sic)" The symptoms of SAD tend to be more severe during the winter months and can return in a repetitive pattern. The condition can cause sufferers to feel low, lose interest in normal everyday activities and feel lethargic. But Kendra revealed she was considering taking vitamin D supplements as a means of making up for the lack of sun during the winter months. She said: "Somehow they trap the sun rays in a pill n take it to supplement. I'll never understand. (sic)" In August, meanwhile, Kendra admitted to suffering from "empty nest syndrome" after her two-year-old daughter Alijah started school. The blonde beauty - who also has six-year-old son Hank with her husband Hank Baskett - previously insisted she had no ambitions to have a third child, but revealed she began to feel lonely and broody after her daughter started school. Asked about the possibility of having more children, she said: "I said, 'absolutely not', but now our daughter just entered pre-school and that second that she went into the pre-school, I got empty nest syndrome already." Kendra - who previously was a live-in girlfriend of Playboy founder Hugh Hefner - and her husband were involved in a much-discussed cheating scandal in 2014, but they have since worked out their differences with the help of therapy. But Hank - who was alleged to have cheated on his wife with transgender YouTube model Ava Sabrina - was always convinced he was the right man for Kendra. He previously told Kendra: "No one will understand you and treat you like I do. "I was like, 'You can go on out - me and the kids will still be here - so you can make your decision. I'll be here comfortable, but go play around if you want."

Kylie Jenner poses with python for 2017 calendar

Kylie Jenner has posed with a python for her sexy 2017 calendar. The 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' star teased her social media followers with some of the shots from her 'Kylie Jenner 2017' calendar, and not only was she not afraid to flash the flesh for the shoot she was brave enough to leave the giant snake lie over her as bared her bountiful butt. A post made on the official Kylie Shop Instagram account revealed the photo along with the caption: "KYLIE JENNER 2017 CALENDAR WITH @terryrichardson #December10 (sic)" Kylie, 19, also lived up to her former Snapchat name 'King Kylie' as on her own Instagram account she uploaded an image of her wearing a black crown along with the words: "The Official KYLIE JENNER 2017 calendar with @terryrichardson launches on KylieJennerShop.com December 10th all exclusive terry photos. Check out my snapchat for a preview xoxo ! (sic)" The 2017 calendar will be available to purchase from The Kylie Shop website from December 10 just in time for those looking for a Christmas gift for their Kylie-loving family and friends.



Hardy still hasn't got the tattoo DiCaprio designed for him

Tom Hardy still hasn't got the tattoo Leonardo DiCaprio designed for him, because his handwriting is "really sh***y". The 39-year-old actor lost a bet to the Hollywood legend when he claimed that he wouldn't be nominated for an Oscar for his role in 'The Revenant' - in which he plays adventurer John Fitzgerald who betrays Leonardo DiCaprio's frontiersman Hugh Glass - and whilst the penalty for losing the bet was to have a tattoo designed by DiCaprio, 42, inked onto his skin he is still waiting for a "proper" version to be drawn up. Speaking in December's issue of Esquire magazine, Tom said: "I haven't got [the tattoo] yet, because it sucks. "He wrote, in this really sh***y handwriting, 'Leo knows everything: 'I was like 'OK, I'll get it done but you have to write it properly.' " Whilst Hardy didn't pick up the gong for Best Supporting Actor, he previously dedicated his nomination to the production team who made the semi-biographi-

cal survival story happen. He said: "The nomination is for everybody that was in the cold, everyone who was in the wet. The film has been picked for them ultimately. It was a number of things, Leo called me, because Sean Penn wasn't available. The script, the director. "To be part of his team, I would facilitate whatever it is that he needs and it's a pleasure to do that for somebody who has got a smorgasbord of options that they've already come up with, that they're feeding you and you them. "It's wonderful to watch him (Leonardo) create and orchestrate himself on screen and also that carries through the entire ensemble. It's just lovely to be a team with somebody like that." Meanwhile, DiCaprio picked up his first ever Academy Award for his performance as Glass in the film, taking home the prize for Best Actor.

GOSSIP

David Hasselhoff has a Baywatch ringtone

David Hasselhoff uses the 'Baywatch' theme tune as his ringtone. The 64-year-old actor starred as Los Angeles County Lifeguard Mitch Buchannon in the iconic TV series - which also starred Pamela Anderson and Carmen Electra - and he is still proud of his association with the show by having the distinctive opening credits music on his phone, according to Boyzone singer Ronan Keating. The Irish pop star recently found himself stood behind Hasselhoff in a queue at an airport in London and shared the impromptu meeting on Twitter which exposed his ringtone of choice. Keating tweeted: "In the Q at Heathrow and @DavidHasselhoff is in front of you and his phone rings and his ring tone is Baywatch theme. #legend #Loveit (sic)" Hasselhoff retweeted Keating's message, before the chart-topping singer claimed he might follow the American's lead by having one of his own hit singles as his ringtone. He posted: "I might have to change my ringtone to 'Life is a Rollercoaster'

what ya think @DavidHasselhoff (sic)" Hasselhoff is poised to make a cameo appearance in the eagerly awaited 'Baywatch' movie, which is set for release in 2017. The Hoff's original role is to be played by Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson, but the wrestler-turned-actor is delighted the Hollywood veteran has accepted a part in the film. Dwayne posted on Instagram earlier this year: "BAYWATCH is the most successful TV show of all time and from the day we announced we were turning it into a movie, 'The Hoff' has been our greatest supporter. Especially once he knew our RATED R movie was going to be a combination of AVENGERS meets ANCHORMAN. (sic)" Johnson also revealed Hasselhoff had been working hard in the gym to ensure he was ready for the movie. He said: "Hoff's a cool dude who's down to have fun and here's the best part ... He's been training his ass off and gotten in the best shape he's been in in years! (sic)"



Sean Penn's alleged stalker has been arrested

The unnamed woman was allegedly picked up by police in Malibu last week after she visited the home of the 56-year-old actor twice in two days. TMZ has reported that Sean claims the 51-year-old woman had "tried to contact him about 50 times this year by phone or email". The website also reports that during the woman's first visit last week the 'Dead Man Walking' actor was inside his residence and contacted the police at the time to file a report. During the second visit, it was reported that someone else called the police and the woman was allegedly arrested for felony stalking. The website claims it is unknown whether or not the actor was at home at the time of the alleged arrest. The woman is said to have believed she was in a romantic relationship with the 'Mystic River' star. The day after her alleged arrest, she was

released on \$150,000 bail. And the unnamed woman isn't the only one showing her affection to Sean either, as his ex-wife Madonna - who he was married to for four years before their divorce in 1989 - recently confessed she was "still in love" with the 'I Am Sam' actor. Speaking to Sean on stage at a fundraiser in Malawi, the star said: "I'm still in love with you. Yes. In fact, I think I love you more now that we're divorced." The 'Like A Virgin' hitmaker also professed her love for the actor at another benefit gala in January. The 58-year-old singer said: "I want to say, Sean, that I love you from the moment that I laid eyes on you and I still love you just the same. I just wish you'd stop smoking so many cigarettes."



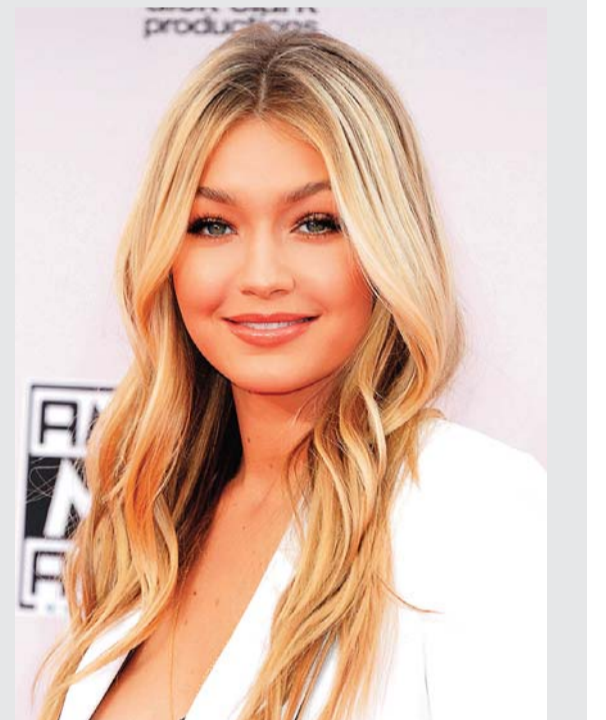
MADONNA'S DAUGHTER IN GYMNASTICS SUCCESS

Madonna's daughter won four medals at a gymnastics tournament. The 58-year-old singer cheered on 10-year-old Mercy as she took part in the event, and the youngster cleared up by winning a multitude of prizes for her efforts. Madonna took to her Instagram account to share a snap of her daughter complete with her four medals, adding the caption: "Mercy James takes home 4 Medals! (sic)" The 'Hung Up' hitmaker - who also has kids Lourdes, 20, Rocco, 16, and David, 11 - also posted a picture of Mercy and some of her team-mates standing on a podium celebrating their success with their hands clasped together while up in the air. She wrote: "Go Mercy James!!! It's all about team Work! (sic)" It's not the first time Madonna has shown off Mercy's gymnastics talents to the world. In March, the pop star shared an Instagram video of the youngster doing some impressive cartwheels in New Zealand during some downtime from her 'Rebel Heart Tour'. She added the caption: "Mercy flies in New Zealand! What a beautiful magical place! Thank you for having us! (sic)" This comes just days after Rocco took to Instagram to admit he is "so glad" he no longer lives with Madonna. Rocco shared a video of his family - including Madonna, David and Mercy - taking part in the Mannequin Challenge, which requires the participants to stay completely still while being filmed. In the post, which has now been deleted, Madonna was seen with food hanging out of her mouth as she froze mid-meal. The video footage was captioned: "So glad I don't live here anymore."



Gigi gets 'choked up' thinking of the Victoria's Secret show

Gigi Hadid gets "choked up" every time she thinks of the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show. The 21-year-old model - who graced the runway last week in the lingerie giants annual catwalk show, which is set to air on Monday on the American broadcasting channel CBS - has admitted she feels overwhelmed with pride and gets tearful when she thinks about her runway appearance and of her fellow models who gained their angel wings for the first time. Alongside a picture of the style icon sporting a pair of black angel wings prior to hitting the runway on November 30 in Paris, France, which she shared on her Instagram account, she wrote: "I can't look at this photo or think about all my angelic friends putting their wings on for the first time without getting choked up with tears of pride. My excitement is too real! Catch us out of our rehearsal clothes TOMORROW night on CBS! @victoriasscret#vvs2016 (sic)." And the blonde beauty has credited the annual showcase for the fashion house as the "show of my dreams" because she always feels inspired by her fellow models and the creative team behind the show. Speaking previously the star - who is currently dating Zayn Malik - she said: "Forever and always the show of my dreams. @victoriasscret "If I could send, through the phone, the energy and emotion that filled the breathtaking Grand Palais as the music started, it would send chills down your spine. I will never be able to put into words how much being in this show means to me and how inspired I am by the people I get to work with. Thank you @ed_razek for believing in me and having me again and for putting so much heart into everything you do. @10magazine @JohnDavidPfeiffer@monica.mitro and everyone behind the scenes who has put so much time into#VVS2016, you are so amazing and so appreciated. Can't wait to share this magical show with the world on December 5th! (sic)."



Mariah Carey had wedding delay guilt

Mariah Carey worried about "disappointing" James Packer when she postponed their wedding. The 'Hero' hitmaker and her manager Stella were concerned that juggling plans for the nuptials - which were ultimately cancelled as the couple split in October - with her European tour were too stressful, so felt it for the best to delay the ceremony until Mariah's professional commitments were fulfilled. Stella asked: "I feel like you'll be putting your professional life before your personal life and it makes me feel bad but dare I say, do you postpone the wedding?" Mariah admitted: "It is slightly overwhelming because we are pretty much putting together this entire tour in two weeks. You know...there's a lot to think about." Later in the opening episode of the 46-year-old star's new reality show, 'Mariah's World', Mariah said: "I just...I don't...I don't know because he keeps asking what we're doing with the dates and when he asks... don't want to disappoint him and I feel really bad. "And so now I'm sitting here going, 'How do I even do this?' " Stella reassured her client that the Australian billionaire loves her "so much" and is always "supportive" of her decisions, prompting Mariah to say: "OK, maybe we do the tour and then figure it out afterwards and do it right. You know it's not an easy call to make. "This is a hard decision to make, I'm not sitting around like, 'Oh just blow off the wedding. I'm sitting here going, 'How am I supposed to fulfill my professional obligations and not disappoint James?" Mariah then called James to break the news, and later admitted: "I feel bad because I know I've disappointed James by postponing the wedding. But what I need to focus on right now is this tour." But it wasn't just because of the tour that Stella wanted the 'Fantasy' hitmaker to delay the wedding, as she also had concerns about the pre-nuptial agreement the businessman had had drawn up. She admitted: "I'm actually relieved that Mariah wants to postpone her wedding because I've been dealing with this pre-nup and it's definitely not the most romantic thing I've read I'll tell you that. "So I feel like we should meet our professional obligations first before jumping into any personal commitments at this moment." After the couple split, it was revealed the document included clauses that James would not pay for clothes for Mariah and her ex-husband Nick Cannon's five-year-old twins Moroccan and Monroe, any gift worth over \$250,000 had to be accompanied by a note stating it was a present or the giver retained ownership, and the investor had to approve the 'One Sweet Day' singer's requests to use a private jet for her own use.



LITTLE MIX 'IN TALKS' FOR TELL-ALL DOCUMENTARY

Little Mix are "in talks" for a documentary about their lives. The 'Shout Out to My Ex' hitmakers - comprised of Perrie Edwards, Jesy Nelson, Jade Thirlwall, and Leigh-Anne Pinnoch - are set to tell all in the new television show, which aims to detail their "personalities" and give fans an insight into their lives outside of the music industry. Jesy, 25, told the Daily Mirror newspaper: "We are in talks at the moment. We really want to do a documentary as we feel people do not know much about us. "They know our songs and have seen us perform but they don't know our personalities, so we would love to do a documentary. "We want to get someone to follow us around on this whole tour for a whole year." But Leigh-Anne, also 25, is concerned they won't enjoy having cameras following them everywhere they go, but admits it "will be good" for fans to get a first hand look at the "drama" in their lives.

She told the publication: "Maybe we are saying this now but when it comes to it and the camera is being rammed in our faces we will be like, 'Leave us alone.' "And the drama. There is always drama in our lives. "Honestly we actually don't ever get it on camera, do we? So that will be good for people to see that." The documentary is expected to be filmed in fly-on-the-wall style, meaning the cameras will be present in the room whilst the girls talk as they normally would. Documentary bosses are hoping this will help lift the lid on Jesy's recent claimed there was "no going back" for the pair. An insider said previously: "It's over as far as Jesy's concerned and there's no going back. The wedding is off and her engagement ring won't be going back on. Jesy's so busy with her career and she's throwing herself into work."



Olly Murs worries he'll always be single

Olly Murs is worried he'll never meet the "right" woman. The 32-year-old singer - who split with his ex-girlfriend Francesca Thomas, 27, in 2015 after three years - has revealed that his deepest fear is he'll never settle down and get married and have children. He shared: "What's my deepest fear? Personally, never meeting the right person, getting married and having kids. "I'm sure I could get married and have kids but I hope it's with the right person - that's my only fear. Obviously, there are much bigger things to be fearful of in the world." The 'You Don't Know Love' hitmaker has begun to use different social media platforms to try and find potential dates as he thinks it's an "easy" way to meet ladies. Speaking to the Metro newspaper, he said: "I've been on a few dates. You've got Twitter, Instagram, all these different social platforms. I'm not saying I need them to meet girls but it's easy to meet different people." The pop star also revealed that he wasn't putting up "any barriers" in the search for a new lover and would be happy to date another celebrity or a regular girl. He added: "I always felt like nah, I'd rather date a normal a girl, which I did. But you never know in this job whoever you meet along the way. If you connect with someone who happens to be doing the same job as you, that's amazing. It could be anyone, a random girl walking down the street. I wouldn't put a barrier up." Olly's comments follow on from his previous admission that he isn't a fan of casual relationships or one night stands. He said: "People would suspect that because I'm a pop star I'd be sleeping with different girls every week but that's not the kind of person I am. I'm no slapper! "Of course, when I was younger and not interested in a serious relationship, I had a lot of fun but I'm not that kind of person now."

MUSIC & MOVIES

Bob Dylan sends speech for Nobel ceremony

Music icon Bob Dylan won't be at the Nobel prize ceremony this week to accept his award, but he has sent along a speech to be read aloud, the Nobel foundation said yesterday. The 75-year-old, whose lyrics have influenced generations of fans, has had a subdued response to the honor, remaining silent for weeks following the news in October he had won the prize for literature. "This year's Laureate in Literature, Bob Dylan, will not be participating in the Nobel Week but he has provided a speech which will be read at the banquet," the foundation said in a statement. Sending along the speech does not exempt the American songwriter from holding a lecture at a place and a type of his choosing, the only requirement by the Nobel foundation.

Rock legend Patti Smith will perform a version of Dylan's "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" at the ceremony on December 10 in Stockholm, which is the same day as the banquet. Dylan said

in a letter on November 16 that he would not attend the ceremony because he had "pre-existing commitments", in an announcement that did not come as a surprise to observers. Several other prize winners have skipped the Nobel ceremony in the past for various reasons-Doris Lessing, who was too old; Harold Pinter, because he was hospitalized, and Elfriede Jelinek, who has social phobia.

Dylan did not say a word about his prize on the day it was announced, October 13, when he was performing in Las Vegas. The writer of "Blowin' In The Wind", "Like A Rolling Stone", and "Mr Tambourine Man" confined himself to his songs. The Swedish Academy said it respected Dylan's decision, but that it was "unusual" for a Nobel laureate not to come to Stockholm to accept the award in person. Asked on October 28 by Britain's Daily Telegraph newspaper if he would attend the Nobel prize winners' banquet, Dylan said:

"Absolutely. If it's at all possible."

Academy member Swedish writer Per Wastberg accused Dylan of being "impolite and arrogant", and said it was "unprecedented" that the academy did not know if Dylan intended to pick up his award. But the first songwriter to win the prestigious award in literature is expected to come to Stockholm early next year. Nobel laureates are honored every year on December 10 -- the anniversary of the death of prize's founder Alfred Nobel, a Swedish industrialist, inventor and philanthropist. The value of the prestigious award this year amounts to 8 million kronor (\$870,000). — AFP



In this file photo, Bob Dylan accepts the 2015 MusiCares Person of the Year award at the 2015 MusiCares Person of the Year show in Los Angeles. — AP



Members of the band Kings of Leon, from left, Matthew Followill, Caleb Followill, Nathan Followill and Jared Followill arrive at the State Department for the Kennedy Center Honors gala dinner.



Kennedy Center Honoree Timothy Schmit, center, of the Eagles arrives with his family, from left, Ben Schmit, Jeddrah Leiterding, Owen Schmit, and Jean Schmit at the State Department for the Kennedy Center Honors gala dinner on Saturday.



Kennedy Center Honoree Joe Walsh, third from left, of the Eagles arrives with from left, Christian Quilici, Lucy Walsh, Marjorie Bach, Ringo Starr and Barbara Bach.

Bittersweet gala honors Pacino, Eagles, Taylor



President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama arrive for a reception to honor recipients of the 2016 Kennedy Center Honors in the East Room of the White House in Washington.



President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama, with recipient of the 2016 Kennedy Center Honor award blues singer Mavis Staples, applaud during the Kennedy Center Honors gala.

Al Pacino, The Eagles, James Taylor, gospel and blues singer Mavis Staples and Argentine pianist Martha Argerich were celebrated Sunday for their lifetime achievements at the last major arts gala attended by President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle. It was a bittersweet moment, with Obama making one of his final goodbyes to celebrated artists as president. The first couple received a long standing ovation as they entered the Opera House of the Kennedy Center, a monument to the late president John F. Kennedy. As he kicked off the evening, host Stephen Colbert said America was lucky to have a "passionate, intelligent and dignified" president.

That brought applause and by far the longest standing ovation from the sold-out crowd in the Opera House, paneled in dark red woven fabric under a massive Lobmeyr crystal chandelier gifted by Austria. Colbert then joked: "Sir, I don't know why you stood up. I was talking about Michelle." "This is a joyous day. It's the best Christmas present!" Staples told AFP on the red carpet about receiving what is considered the nation's highest honor for lifetime achievements in the performing arts. At 77, Staples lives up to the maxim that age is only a number. "People ask me, 'Mavis, when are you going to retire?' Retire for what? I love what I'm doing and I intend to sing until I can't sing no more, forever," she said.

Aretha Franklin, Sean Penn, Kevin Spacey and Ringo Starr were among a series of surprise A-listers-the awardees are notoriously kept in the black about who will pay tribute to them prior to the event-who serenaded and hailed the legacy of the award recipients. Virtuoso Israeli-American violinist Itzhak Perlman, now wheelchair-bound, and 29-year-old Chinese pianist Yuja Wang played on the huge stage in honor of Argerich, with Perlman saying he felt lucky to have been alive during her time.

Obamas celebrated

At an earlier reception at the White House, Obama called the awards "one of the perks of the job that I will miss." Kennedy Center chairman David Rubenstein thanked the Obamas, who have hosted a reception for the honorees and attended the gala for eight years, and offered them a "golden ticket" for free admission to any event at the national arts center. But there's a catch. "Parking is extra," he quipped. Obama jokingly asked Eagles guitarist Joe Walsh, a notorious troublemaker, not to trash the White House because he is leaving soon and wants his "securi-

ty deposit" back. Founding member Glenn Frey died in January, and his prior illness caused The Eagles to postpone their awards last year. So Don Henley, Timothy Schmit and Joe Walsh received the medallions and rainbow-colored ribbons, as did Frey's widow Cindy over the weekend. Band manager Irving Azoff couldn't hold back tears as he raised a glass to Frey during Saturday's State Department reception. "For our Eagles family, 2016 couldn't have had a harder beginning or a more appropriate ending," he said.

Grammy Award-winner Juanes gave a stunning performance of "Hotel California" with gui-

sang at Kennedy's inauguration. Argerich, 75, is widely considered one of the world's best, if reclusive, living pianists.

For nearly two decades, she largely shunned solo performances, playing almost exclusively with orchestras and chamber ensembles, until a sold-out recital at Carnegie Hall in New York in 2000. "I was surprised. I didn't think I was entitled," Argerich, who is famously wary of publicity, said of learning she had won the award. Academy Award nominee Don Cheadle hailed Pacino's humility despite a long and storied career that has seen him perform in some 100 films and



Teresa Heinz Kerry, front row, from left, Kennedy Center Honorees Al Pacino, Mavis Staples, Martha Argerich, James Taylor, and Kennedy Center President Deborah Rutter; rear row, from left, Secretary of State John Kerry, Kennedy Center Honorees Joe Walsh, Don Henley, and Timothy Schmit, and David Rubenstein are photographed following the State Department for the Kennedy Center Honors gala dinner, Saturday in Washington. — AP photos

arist Steve Vai, who spoke of the "surreal" experience of playing the piece's famed guitar riff in front of the musicians. Garth Brooks, Sheryl Crow and Darius Rucker played some of Taylor's best hits, including "Carolina in my Mind" and "Sweet Baby James." Taylor, 68, performed "America the Beautiful" at Obama's second inauguration in January 2013, while Staples, who like none other provided the music of the civil rights movement,

plays, including "The Godfather," "Scarface," "Sea of Love," "Heat" and "Scent of a Woman." Kevin Spacey said Pacino "immerses us in his characters so we can experience the humanness in monsters and the monstrosities in humans." — AFP



This image released by Disney shows characters Maui, voiced by Dwayne Johnson, right, and Moana, voiced by Auli'i Cravalho, in a scene from the animated film, 'Moana.' — AP

Disney touts French-speaking African market with 'Moana'

The Walt Disney Company is set to expand its footprint across French-speaking Africa. The company is hosting the screening of "Moana" - dubbed in Arabic — at the Marrakech Film Festival today. "Moana" marks the first Disney movie to be shown at the festival and the first Disney film to be dubbed in Arabic in the Maghreb, which includes Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. Disney has traditionally limited Arabic dubbing to Middle-Eastern countries. Audiences in former French colonies - Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria — only had access to Disney movies dubbed in French until now, even though Arabic is increasingly considered the primary spoken language.

The move is part of Disney's strategic push into French-speaking Africa, a market boasting a fast-growing middle-class and young consumers who often have a taste for Hollywood films as well as family entertainment and merchandising. Within the next year, Disney will aim at expanding the scope of its

releases in French-speaking Africa (spanning Abidjan, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia), anticipating the growth of the theatrical landscape. France's largest cinema circuit, the Gaumont-Pathe theater chain, is expected to launch in the region next year.

Just last week, The Walt Disney Company inked a multi-deal with Canal Plus to distribute its films and TV series (from Marvel Studios, Disney Pixar, Lucas Film and Studio Ghibli) on Canal Plus channels in Africa and well as to distribute Disney's four channels, in exclusivity. Disney also just sold first-run rights to the ABC Studios-produced hit show "Black-ish" to Afrostream, the subscription-based VOD service dedicated to African-American, African and Caribbean films. — Reuters

Russian film sparks uproar by glorifying Soviet WWII 'myth'

In a controversial new Russian film, 28 Soviet soldiers facing sure death singlehandedly defend the frontline outside Moscow against an onslaught of Nazi tanks in 1941. "Everything's clear here-the enemy is over there, and Moscow is back there," says one soldier in the film "The Panfilov 28." But the events are far from clear cut and the film about a legendary unit of soldiers written into the pantheon of national heroism has sparked an angry debate. A top historian says the derring-do depicted in the film-which received generous state funding and is playing in more than 1,000 theatres across the country-was in fact concocted by Soviet propagandists.

Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky has launched a scathing attack on doubters. "They are trying to knock away the foundations of our faith in things that are absolutely set in stone and holy," Medinsky said on television. "Even if this story was invented from start to finish... this is a holy legend, which is simply untouchable. And people who do this are the scum of the earth," he told journalists, according to RIA Novosti news agency. The film recounts the story of the outgunned and outmanned Panfilov rifle division, which was defending Moscow's western front. According to the official version, after suffering heavy losses, only 28 soldiers were left to fight with no possibility of getting reinforcements, knowing they would die. The 28 were collectively endowed with the title Hero of the Soviet Union.

'Made up heroes'

The head of Russia's State Archive, historian Sergei Mironenko, was one of those who spoke out as the film was being shot last year. He posted a Soviet military prosecutor's report from 1948 that called the story "invented." The Soviets launched a probe after noticing that five of the 28 were still alive and one had surrendered to



A security staff member walks past posters promoting the new Russian film "The Panfilov 28" in a cinema in Moscow. — AFP photos

the Nazis, but kept the report top secret. There was indeed fighting and more than 100 died, but the story of the 28 comes only from an army newspaper article, Mironenko told Kommersant daily. "The problem with the Soviet regime was that made up heroes were a lot more important than real ones," he said. Mironenko, who had been in his post since 1992, left it for a less senior role shortly after he cast doubt on the Panfilov

story. Another historian, Andrei Isayev, who has written numerous books on World War II, told Lenta.ru news site that the official account has "no basis." Moscow still has a street named after these soldiers.

'Moral guide'

In central Moscow, wartime songs boom from speakers at the opening of a street art-



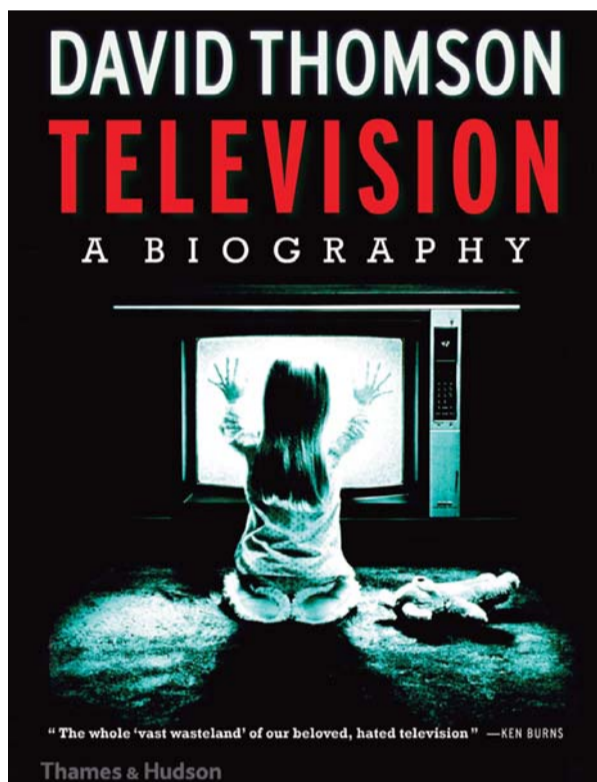
Producer and scenarist Andrei Shalopa poses for photographers during a preview of the new Russian film "The Panfilov 28" in a cinema in Moscow.

style painting promoting the film. Vladislav Kononov, the executive chief of the Russian Military History Society, who attended the event, said he had little time for sceptics. The society-founded by President Vladimir Putin and chaired by Medinsky helped with research for the film and is now helping promote it. Kononov calls the incident a "legend" and a "moral guide" for generations, while acknowl-

edging that "possibly there weren't 28 of them (and) possibly they didn't all die."

"The fact that they carried out a feat of courage and endurance, that should not be under any doubt," he said. "Leave history to the historians." Producer and scenarist Andrei Shalopa agreed, saying that "in reality, there's no doubt that it happened." He blamed what he called "attempts to debunk national achievements that started back in the 1990s." Putin, who created a commission tasked with preventing the "distortion of Russian history" and was one of the first to view the film, has condemned what he calls the "falsification of history" by those challenging it.

It is the latest in a series of patriotic war films made with state funding and aimed at youth audiences. Last year, the film "Battle for Sevastopol" about a female sniper earned \$7 million (6.6 million euros) in cinemas, according to the Exhibitors' Bulletin trade journal. "Stalingrad," a special-effects-heavy drama about the long-running eponymous WWII battle, also earned more than \$25 million in 2015. At a recent showing of the Panfilov 28 film in Moscow, the audience applauded at the end, some in tears. "We all remember this and we are proud, even the young generation," said 27-year-old Ksenia. The film made 154 million rubles (\$2.4 million) in its first weekend. Unusually for a Russian film, the makers used online crowdfunding to get some of their initial financing. This contributed some \$536,000 - or a fifth of the budget, Shalopa said, and the donors are all listed on the credits. — AFP



A SEASONED FILM CRITIC EYES TV IN 'TELEVISION: A BIOGRAPHY'

At 75, David Thomson is the sultan of cinema criticism. British-born but long based in America, he is the author of nearly two dozen film-related books including "Moments that Made the Movies," "Have You Seen...?": A Personal Introduction to 1,000 Films" and "The New Biographical Dictionary of Film." Now Thomson has switched his gaze, and his analysis, to the TV medium. In "Television: A Biography" (Thames & Hudson, \$34.95), he focuses on TV from its individual genres to its broad social impact during the past 70 years. As ever, his writing is bright, puckish and reader-friendly. At 400 pages, the book is a bit weighty, but not the prose. But what made Thomson, who had never before put his take on TV between covers, decide to change channels? During a recent interview, he explained. "I was at a point where I felt that the movies were not really going anywhere very exciting, and that if you were looking for the best American movies, you probably needed to look at television. 'The Wire,' 'The Sopranos,' 'Breaking Bad' - they were so much more ambitious than anything made for theaters. So I began to develop an historical perspective on TV that I had had on the movies for a long time. I'm much more interested now in thinking about and writing about TV than the movies."

A viewer's book

"You may have watched a lot of TV but never thought systematically about it. I wanted to do a book which would give you a sense that the totality of the medium had been addressed. Not covered, but addressed. And if you have never watched television, after you read this book I think you can say, 'I understand what television is.'"

A different creature

"Our relationship with TV is different than with almost any medium we've had before. It's all well and good for something on TV to be so riveting that you don't want to miss a moment. But when you tune in to watch one show, you may end up just watching TV overall. There's such a lot on television that is sort of tidal - it just washes in and out, over you. You turn it on like you would turn on a light, and you may be doing other things. But even if you're not watching, it enters into you in ambient ways."

Short list

Thomson, film's consummate list-maker, shared "off the top of my head" a few pick TV hits: "Monty Python's Flying Circus" ... the BBC version of "The Singing Detective" ... live coverage of the funeral of President John F. Kennedy ... "Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In" ... "a couple of episodes of 'All in the Family' where Edith is just sublime" ... the ESPN documentary series "O.J.: Made in America," which he calls "a major work" ... and, of course, "Breaking Bad." "But this time tomorrow," he cautions, "I would revise the whole list."

TV president

"With Donald Trump in the White House, I think we're going to get more of the same as with the campaign: His administration will have to be judged as an ongoing TV show. He is a television person, so I think it's going to be a presidency of shows and moments. My instinct is, in terms of policy, he's doing to be dreadfully disappointing to his supporters. But on TV, I think it's going to be amazing - until it becomes grotesque." — AP

BBC Earth Film series to get China releases

Four medium length movies from BBC Earth are to get non-commercial theatrical release in China. "Tiny Giants," "Wild Africa," "Earthflight" and "Incredible Predators" will have distribution on a network of giant screens at science and technology museums from January. The move follows a deal between BBC Worldwide and Orient International Holding Shanghai Foreign Trade Co and Wuhan DDMC Culture Co. Each film is 40 minutes long and will enjoy runs of between six months and a year in mainland Chinese cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Shenyang and Hefei, as well as in Hong Kong.

"Visitors to science and technology museums all over China will have access to the four BBC Earth films that will allow viewers to envelop themselves in the larger than life, immersive experience of the 2D Dome and 3D giant screen formats," said Kelvin Yau, BBC Worldwide's GM, Greater China. "Earthflight" shows some of the world's greatest natural spectacles from a bird's-eye view. "Wild Africa," narrated by Helena Bonham Carter, discovers how water shapes all life. "Incredible Predators" delves into the interactions between predators and their prey. — Reuters

'Last Tango in Paris' rape scene revelation sparks outrage

"Last Tango in Paris" is making headlines again 44 years after the controversial film came out. A recently unearthed video interview with Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci from 2013 has renewed interest, and outrage, over what happened to actress Maria Schneider on set during the infamous butter rape scene. Bertolucci said that neither he nor Marlon Brando told Schneider of their plans to use the stick of butter during the simulated rape scene - a concept they came up with the morning of the shoot - because he wanted her to react "as a girl not as an actress." He wanted her, he said, to feel "the rage and the humiliation."

Schneider, who died in 2011 at age 58 after a lengthy illness, spoke a number of times about the scene between her, then aged 19, and Marlon Brando, then 48, even saying in a 2007 Daily Mail interview that she "felt a little raped" by her co-star and director. "They only told me about it before we had to film the scene, and I was so angry," Schneider said. "I should have called my agent or had my lawyer come to the set because you can't force someone to do something that isn't in the script. But at the time, I didn't know that."

But despite Schneider's past comments, the video interview with Bertolucci struck a chord this weekend as it circulated on social media that the director was admitting that the scene was non-consensual. Actress Jessica Chastain wrote on Twitter that she felt "sick" over the revelation that "the direc-

tor planned her attack." Filmmaker Ava DuVernay called it "inexcusable." "As a director, I can barely fathom this. As a woman, I am horrified, disgusted and enraged by it," DuVernay wrote. — AP



In this file photo, director Bernardo Bertolucci poses for photographers during a photo call at the Rome Film festival in Rome. — AP

Marrakech Film Festival remembers Iranian master Abbas Kiarostami

Iranian master Abbas Kiarostami, who passed earlier this year, was celebrated at Marrakech Film Festival during a moving homage hosted by his son, Ahmad Kiarostami, on Saturday evening. Speaking about his father's uncompromising love of life, Kiarostami told Marrakech audiences that someone once asked his dad what he would choose between living without his work or his work existing without him. "He said he'd choose his own existence over his films. That's how much he loved his life," said Ahmad Kiarostami.

"Now he's gone but he is with us with his films, his photography, his poetry, and hundreds of people he has trained in his master classes all around the world, and I see all these different events and tributes around the world, and all of you are here, as a continuation of his presence," said the director's son. "When he came, he came, when he was there, he was there, when he left, he was there," said Ahmad Kiarostami, reading one of his father's poems.

The speech drew a long ovation and was followed by the screening of Kiarostami's black-and-white wordless short film "Take Me Home," which he lensed in Southern Italy. Kiarostami headed Marrakech Film Festival's jury in 2009 and returned last year to deliver a master class. Credited for giving Iranian cinema an international profile and paving the way for other filmmakers in Iran and elsewhere with his poetry-filled, singular movies, Kiarostami died at age 76 in July. Although the media attributed Kiarostami's death to a cancer, the director's closed ones said he died of a stroke, four months after getting a surgery at a Tehran hospital. At the time of his death, Kiarostami was developing "24 Frames," an experimental film based on 24 four-and-a-half minute films that he had been directing over the last three years. — Reuters



French director Jan Kouen (center-left) presents a lifetime achievement award to Japanese director Shinya Asuka Tsukamoto (center-right) during the 16th Marrakech International Film Festival in Marrakesh, Morocco. — AFP photos



Katia Toledano and Sidney Toledano



Laetitia Bleger and Christophe Guillaume



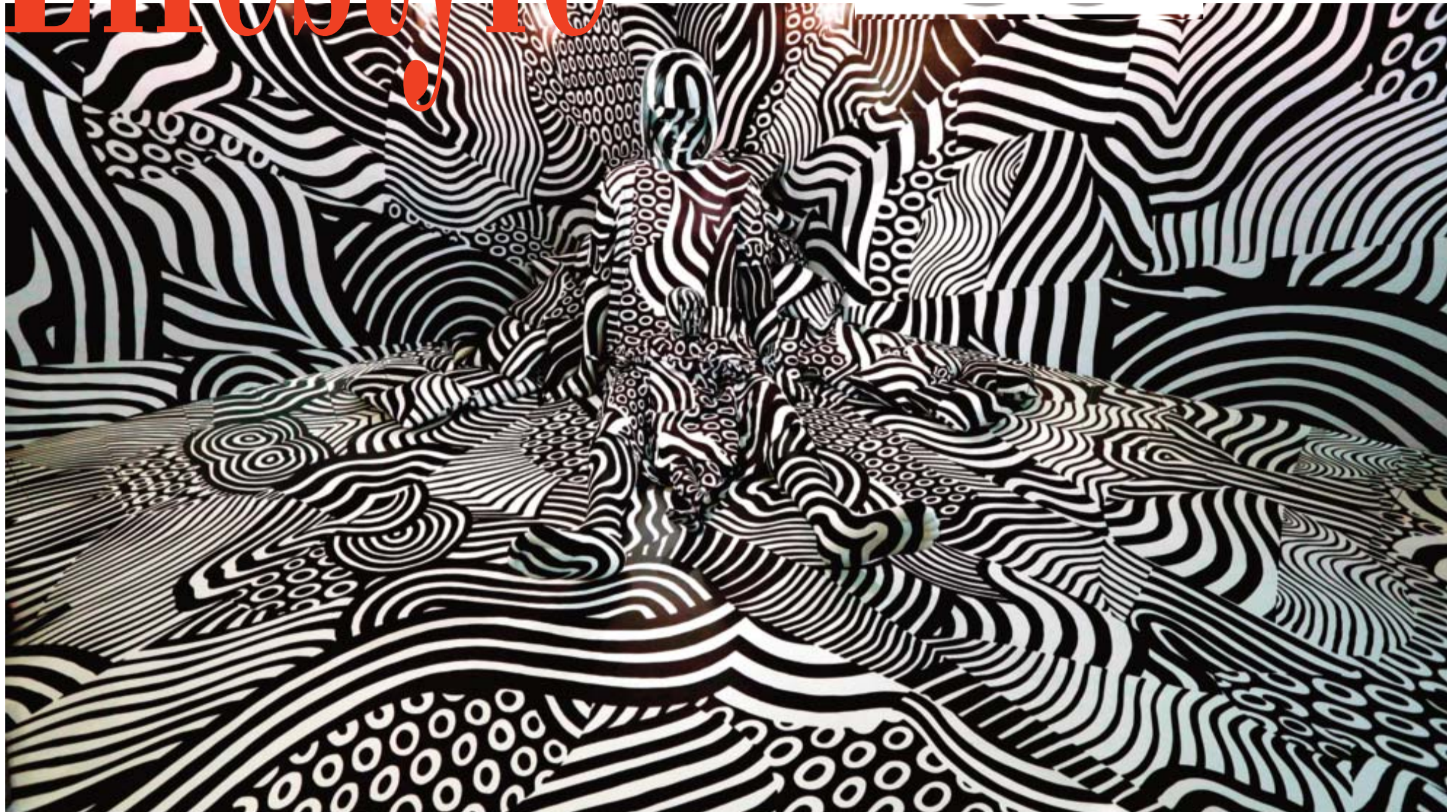
Mathilde Meyer and Marisa Berenson

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2016

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Bob Dylan sends speech for Nobel ceremony

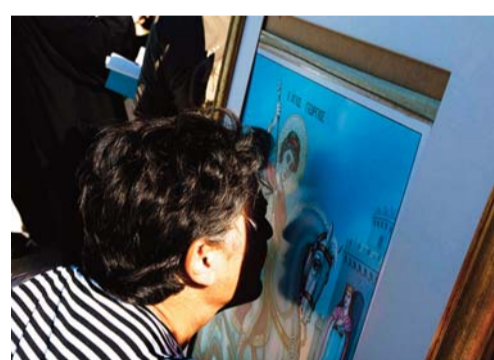


A model named feebee poses as part of art installation 'Narcissism : Dazzle room' made by artist Shigeo Fukuda at rooms33 fashion and design exhibition in Tokyo on Sept 14, 2016. Fukuda's installation featured a strong contrast of black and white, which he learned from dazzle camouflage used mainly in World War I. — AP

Cyprus minority sees chance to save ancient language

In a village in northern Cyprus, a community struggling to save its ancient language has seen a glimmer of hope in intensified efforts to reunify the divided island. Kormakitis was once the hub of Cyprus's Maronite minority, descendants of Syrian and Lebanese Christians who spoke Sanna, a unique dialect of Arabic influenced by the Aramaic spoken by Jesus. The language is now severely

endangered, according to UNESCO. Uprooted by the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, many Maronites assimilated into Greek Cypriot communities where they sought shelter. They have seen fresh hope in recent months as the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders intensified their efforts to reunite the island. Talks in Switzerland ended on November 21 with no breakthrough, but the leaders have since agreed to resume negotiations and are due to meet again in Geneva in January. The Maronites hope a deal could eventually encourage the community to return to live in northern Cyprus. That could help revive Sanna, which is in decline despite years of classes, the efforts of NGOs and an annual summer school in the village.



A maronite woman attends a mass at the St George chapel near the village of Kormakitis in the Turkish-controlled northern part of Cyprus.



A picture shows an Aramaic language course in the Cypriot capital Nicosia.

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"The problem is that because we have lost our village it's very difficult to keep our language," teacher Katy Foradari said, taking a break from teaching Sanna under the vaulted ceiling of an 18th century church in Kormakitis. Able to visit and

stay in the village despite living outside the Turkish-controlled part of the island, young Maronites have attended Sanna classes at a summer camp there every August since 2008. In sun-baked sandstone chapels and whitewashed bungalows around the small main square, around 100 children aged five to 17 took part in this year's camp. They learnt basics from the alphabet-codi-

school in Kormakitis, "we have started losing our language," Foradari said. "We are used to speaking Greek." A few hundred, mostly elderly, residents remained in the village after 1974, using Sanna in their daily life and helping out with the summer camp. But of nearly 5,000 Maronites living across the island today, only around 1,000 speak Sanna. Some of them see the peace talks as the best hope in years for reviving their language.

For Yiannakis Mousas, the community's representative to the parliament, only a solution to the Cyprus dispute can save Sanna. "Only through the return of the Maronite people, of their property, of their schools, of their churches, only in this way do we have a good chance to revive the language," he told AFP.

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'A new beginning'

Since 1974, Mousas and many other Maronites have been based in Nicosia, the island's divided capital. They have a modern church and a small social club named after Kormakitis, where they sip coffee a few hundred yards from the UN buffer zone that splits the old town. Mousas said reunifying the island would encourage young Maronites to move to their villages, where they would hear Sanna spoken daily, encouraging them to adopt it again. "Once the Maronites are resettled to their villages, there will be a new beginning," he said.

But the latest talks produced no concrete results, and the memory of previous, failed negotiations looms over ongoing efforts to reach a solution. The community is teaching Sanna as usual, with classes at Nicosia's Maronite primary school and more summer camps planned. "We have to create projects like this camp where we combine learning the language with entertainment," said Antonis Skoullou, an IT expert in his 40s who helps organize the Kormakitis language school. He recognized the need to make Sanna appealing to young people who had no memory of living in Kormakitis. But nostalgic for the village he fled as a young boy, he admitted his motivation to revive the language was more personal than practical. "Behind this language are my memories and my feelings," he said. — AFP



Maronites attend a mass at the St George chapel near the village of Kormakitis in the Turkish-controlled northern part of Cyprus.



Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus Joseph Soueif leads a mass at the St George chapel in the village of Kormakitis in the Turkish-controlled northern part of Cyprus.



A picture shows an Aramaic language course on November, 4, 2016 in the Cypriot capital Nicosia. — AFP photos

Swiss restaurant still in world's top 10 despite chef's suicide

The Swiss restaurant named the best in the world last year remained in the top 10 of the La Liste ranking yesterday despite the tragic loss of its star chef who killed himself weeks after lifting the honor. The Restaurant de l'Hotel de Ville at Crissier near Lausanne came joint fourth in the latest French-based guides aggregator, which claims to be more "more scientific and reliable" than its British-based rival, the 50 Best Restaurants. Benoit Violier, 44, shot himself in January seven weeks after receiving the award, but his widow Brigitte vowed that the restaurant

would remain open. It has also since retained its maximum three-star Michelin Guide rating. While French chef Guy Savoy topped this year's rankings for his Paris restaurant in la Monnaie, the old French national mint, Japanese restaurants came out on top overall. Two Tokyo institutions made the top 10: the minuscule Kyo Aji, and Kyubey, whose sushi is renowned for being both "extraordinary and reasonably priced", La Liste said. Two New York restaurants were up there alongside them, double Emmy-award-winning US tel-

evision chef Eric Ripert's Le Bernardin fish restaurant-which came joint second-and Jean-Georges in Trump Tower. Italy's Osteria Francescana in Modena-which topped the 50 Best rankings came joint third in La Liste, which praised not only its inventive use of the local Parmigiano Reggiano cheese but also "its deep commitment to fighting food waste". Restaurants in Italy also came out best overall for value for money, it said. La Liste bills itself as a "guide of the guides", pulling together reviews from almost 400 guidebooks, newspapers and online sites from TripAdvisor to the

New York Times and the prestigious Michelin rankings. An aggregator, its list of the 1,000 top-rated restaurants in the world is modeled on the world tennis rankings, the Shanghai Ranking for universities-and film reviews website Rotten Tomatoes. This year it has added a smartphone application for the 10,000 eateries which its analysis found to be the best value for money. — AFP