

SUBSCRIPTION

Kuwait Times



ANNIVERSARY 55
Kuwait Times

THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2016

RABI ALAWWAL 11, 1438 AH

NO: 17076

KAC receives first long-range 777-300ER jet



South Korean prez impeached in stunning fall



Russian doping benefited over 1,000 competitors



150 Fils

SPECIAL CEREMONY HELD IN HONOR OF SAUDI KING

AMIR, KING SALMAN ATTEND EVENT AT JABER CULTURAL CENTER



Min 06°
Max 15°



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz attend a special ceremony held in honor of the monarch at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center yesterday. — KUNA



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his guest, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, attended a special ceremony held in honor of the monarch at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center yesterday.

HH the Amir and King Salman were received at the center by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-

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Sabah and Abdulaziz Ishaq, head of financial and administrative affairs at the Amiri Diwan and chairman of the executive committee tasked with building and managing Amiri Diwan's cultural centers.

The ceremony was attended by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, senior sheikhs and officials and senior officers in the army, police, national guard and fire brigade. A documentary was shown about the history of relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, followed by traditional Saudi and Kuwaiti songs. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and other top state officials welcome Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to a luncheon held yesterday in his honor. —Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured with Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.



Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud is welcomed upon his arrival to the venue.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured with Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

KUWAITI LEADERSHIP HOLDS LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF VISITING SAUDI KING

KING SALMAN'S VISIT HISTORIC: INTERIOR MINISTER

KUWAIT: With the attendance of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held a luncheon in honor of the visiting Saudi Monarch.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah yesterday expressed deep satisfaction at the current historic visit to the country by King Salman. This visit signals the solid and deeply-rooted relations between the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, said Sheikh Mohammad, also the head of the accompanying mission of honor, in a statement.

Peoples of the two brotherly countries look forward to this visit with respect of its impact on regional states' development and prosperity, he said, noting the Kingdom's solid stance on Kuwait's side during the 1990 Iraqi aggression and its warm hosting of Kuwaiti citizens at these hard times. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia constitutes "the strategic depth and the solid

shield in facing dangers and challenges," he said, affirming the vital Saudi support for the State of Kuwait.

In conclusion, he indicated at the high-esteem status of the Kingdom in eyes of the Arab peoples, noting resolve of King Salman and His Highness the Amir for maintaining security, stability and welfare in the Arab world.

King Salman, accompanied by a broad delegation of senior officials, arrived in Kuwait on Thursday, starting a historic visit to the country, where he held talks with His Highness the Amir. He arrived to an elaborate red-carpet welcome and ceremonial arrangements, displaying military personnel; with tune of the two countries' National Anthems.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), established in the early 1980s in shadow of a regional war between Iran and Iraq. The bloc was set up for closer links and cooperation at diverse levels among its six member countries—including Oman, the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain. —KUNA



Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud waves as he arrives to the venue.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured with Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud perform the traditional 'ardha' dance, as His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen in the background.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah performs the traditional 'ardha' dance.



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz attend a special ceremony held in honor of the monarch at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center yesterday. — KUNA



Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah presents a memento to King Salman.



KUWAIT CALLS FOR RELIEVING REFUGEES' CHILDREN

GENEVA: The State of Kuwait has voiced deep regret that dramatic events in the Arab world has "undermined stability of our region wasting time and efforts at the expense of development of our homelands."

Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghuneim, the State of Kuwait Permanent Delegate to the United Nations, who was addressing a session held by the UN Higher Commissioner for Refugees, said this meeting is being convened in shadow of rapid developments that have jeopardized "stability of our region wasting time and effort at expense of developing our homeland, thus aggravating the challenges we have been facing."

Shedding light, in particular, on plight of the refugees and their children, the State of Kuwait Ambassador called for collective international efforts to seek to resolve the existing regional conflicts and boosting efforts for protecting the impoverished children who have been exploited and traded.

Number of the displaced and refugees in the Middle Eastern troubled countries has alarmingly soared as a result of random abduction of civilians, namely children, many of whom have been coerced to carry the gun and fight, Ambassador Ghuneim said. "The figure of the refugees and asylum seekers has soared to unprecedented and horrific levels," he stressed.

Oppression and poverty have prompted many refugees to trek for sake of safety, however many have lost their life while struggling to survive, he said, noting that more than 7,000 people have drowned to death in the Mediterranean while fleeing their troubled homelands. This situation warrants a unified international stance to resolve these conflicts and crises that have been dragging on, the State of Kuwait delegate stated.

Ambassador Ghuneim called for urgent measures to protect unaccompanied children in their troubled homelands, transit and asylum countries, noting the need for facilities to help those who have become alone due to the war circumstances to re-unite with their parents and families. He lauded countries and communities hosting the refugees, bearing brunt of mounting economic, political and security hardships, singling out the UNHCR for relieving victims of wars and conflicts.

Keen on backing the UNHCR, the State of Kuwait, since 2008, has doubled its relief allocations for the UN agencies, thus becoming the number-one contributor to these relief organizations. It had also hosted three international conferences for aiding the Syrian refugees.

Ambassador Ghuneim, who noted the health and educational support for Syrian and Iraqi refugees, disclosed that Kuwait would host an international convention for backing education in Somalia, in addition to a planned conference for aiding the Palestinian children. — KUNA

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A flock of birds flying into the sunset. — KUNA

EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT HONORS KUWAITI CHARITY OFFICE'S HEAD

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi honored head of the Kuwaiti charity office in Cairo Ismael Al-Kandari on Thursday, giving him the first-class Medal of Science and Arts. This came during the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) birthday anniversary, with the participation of several dignitaries, scientists and clergymen from Arab and Muslim countries.

Commenting on the honoring, Kandari said this is an honoring for the State of Kuwait, the government and Kuwaitis, as well as Zakat House in recognition of their distinguished efforts in humanitarian and developmental action in Egypt.

It reflects the deep-rooted and solid relations between the two countries, he added, stating that the Zakat House has been supporting charitable and developmental projects in Egypt. Kandari dedicated the medal to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi honors head of the Kuwaiti charity office in Cairo Ismael Al-Kandari. — KUNA

COLD WINTER COMPLICATES HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN MOSUL

BAGHDAD: As if the chaotic scenario in Iraq was not enough, the arrival of harsh and cold winter season in Mosul had increased the suffering of displaced Iraqis fleeing from the ongoing military operation to rid the city from the so-called Islamic State (IS).

According to government statistics, around 90,000 citizens have fled the city so far; however, the cold winter had become another issue that the authority must deal with to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.

A number of displaced Iraqis in Al-Kazer camp said though the situation in refugee camps - erected by the UN and other regional and international bodies - is relatively safe, the cold winter began to take its toll on them.

Ammar Ibrahim, one of the displaced, said that the tent in which his family was living in had become a

freezer due to the lack of adequate heating units and fuel. The UN and other bodies could only provide so much to the displaced, but the situation is beyond human capacity, said Ibrahim. Hassan Abdulkareem, another

displaced person, said that the cold weather is having a devastating effect on many of the camp's elders and people with illnesses. The lack of medicine and suitable health facilities also adds to the dire situation, said

Abdulkareem.

Speaking about the efforts to better the situation of the displaced, the camp's coordinator Zarkar Obaid said that they were doing what they could despite of the odds. He affirmed that

blankets, fuel for heating units, and other necessities were continually being handed out to the displaced Iraqis, but all these efforts are being overwhelmed by what is going around them. — KUNA





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STUDENT ART COMPETITION

12 December 2016 to 26 January 2017

Supported by Australian Embassy In cooperation with Kuwait Times



Student Art Competition

The Australian Embassy, in cooperation with the Kuwait Times, is proud to launch the "Colours of Australia" drawing competition for students in Kuwait. The competition will have students in Kuwait learn more about different countries, cultures and civilizations, and to identify communities in other parts of the world through arts. The theme for the Arts competition is "Colours of Australia" to encourage students to express their knowledge of Australia by drawing an icon, a natural scene, or any other expression they would find suitable.

The drawing competition will be held from 12th December 2016 till 26th January 2017 for a period of forty six days, allowing participants from government, special needs and private schools enough time to submit their work.

At the due date, the drawing sheets will be collected by Kuwait Times, and a jury of professional artists will be selected from the Kuwait Arts Association, who will choose the top Ten winners of each age group. The contest will be open to both boys and girls as follows: Elementary (6-9 years) Intermediate (11-13 years), Secondary (14 years and above), in addition schools of special needs. Valuable prizes, including phones and tablets, will be awarded to the top 10 entrants in each category. Three major winners will be selected in each category who will be given a plaque and major prizes, while the remaining seven runners up will receive a certificate and prizes.

A certificate will also be given to the school as recognition of honourable participation.

At the conclusion of the event, awards and prizes will be distributed to the winners by the honorable VIP guest, sponsors and other committees as part of a closing reception ceremony party. The competition is sponsored by Viva, Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) and hosted by Crown Plaza Hotel "Al-Thuraya City".

Sponsored by





KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways' new Boeing 777-300ER aircraft arrives at Kuwait International Airport yesterday. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KAC CEO Rasha Al-Roumi, US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman and Housing Minister Yasser Abul inspect the plane.



The first Boeing 777-300ER aircraft to join Kuwait Airways' fleet.



Officials pictured at the ceremony.

KUWAIT AIRWAYS WELCOMES FIRST OF 10 BOEING 777-300ER AIRCRAFT AT AIRPORT

NATIONAL CARRIER TAKES DELIVERY OF 'EXTENDED RANGE' AIRCRAFT

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways, the official national carrier of the State of Kuwait, yesterday confirmed that the first of 10 ordered Boeing 777-300ER aircraft has arrived in Kuwait, landing at Kuwait International Airport at 3pm local time.

Following on from the aircraft's reveal in October, at Boeing's factory in Everett, near Seattle; the aircraft, sporting the new livery and branding of Kuwait's official national carrier, was provided a water canon salute and welcomed by a delegation from the airline, headed by Rasha Al Roumi, Chairperson & CEO, and Kamil Al Awadhi, Deputy CEO. Dignitaries also present included, Kuwaiti Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Yasser Hassan Abul; US Ambassador to Kuwait, Lawrence R. Silverman; and President of the DGCA, Sheikh Mubarak Salim Al Sabah, as well as other senior officials.

Arriving as a non-commercial, non-stop flight from Boeing's factory to Kuwait, the Boeing 777-300ER will now undergo some regional flight tests, before entering full commercial service within weeks. It is understood that the aircraft's maiden commercial flight and route will be to London, although the exact dates will be revealed in a later announcement.

The delivery of the Boeing 777-300ER, bearing the airline's new look livery, represents another positive step forward for the Arabian Gulf-based airline, in support of its previously announced five-year transformation strategy, in September this year. The essence of the plan being: To restore pride in the Gulf region's longest serving, one-state airline, and reassert its pioneering legacy in the regional aviation sector.

In the medium to long-term, the transformation strategy also includes the addition of 10 A350 and 15 A320neo aircraft; with a number of the latter already having entered service with the airline. In the short term, the acquisition of the 10 Boeing 777-300ER aircraft will play an immediate role in enhancing the inflight experience for passengers. It will also take the airline's operational capacity to new levels, on key routes within the official national carrier's current number of 37 international destinations.

Ultimately, the "ER" or "extended range" element of these aircraft will allow Kuwait Airways to explore the possibilities of adding more long-haul routes to its network, in the future; further supporting the airline's ambitions to grow the number of destinations it serves.

"As part of Kuwait Airways' five-year transformation strategy, we are pleased to welcome the arrival of the first of 10 Boeing 777-300ER aircraft into our fleet," said Rasha Al Roumi, Chairperson and CEO of Kuwait Airways.

"Such acquisitions will be instrumental in the airline's future growth plans and today's delivery represents one of the first steps towards achieving our stated aim of having the youngest commercial airline fleet in the world, by 2021."

According to the airline's senior management, the transformation taking place across the airline is not limited to just "cosmetic" or "product" (aircraft) changes; it is described as a comprehensive approach that seeks to deliver on all areas of "operational, commercial and service excellence."

'SUSPECT IN GOOD HEALTH CONDITION'

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Municipality crackdowns

KUWAIT: The Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry said claims over social media about the deteriorating health of suspect Khalifa Ali Al-Hashash are untrue and lack credibility. The suspect is in good health condition and does not suffer from any health problems, it said in a statement yesterday. The suspect was detained at the orders of the public prosecution, the department said, urging the public to refrain from spreading unconfirmed news regarding the topic.

Kuwait Municipality held an inspection campaign in Shuwaikh that included warehouses, butcheries and co-ops, resulting in issuing 109 citations. The crackdown came as part of campaigns carried out to make sure of food safety at restaurants and retail stores, the municipality's Public Relations Department said in a statement. Meanwhile the general cleaning and road occupancy department at the municipality carried out several campaigns to remove abandoned cars from public streets and yards. A total of 2,613 vehicles were removed in 11 months.

TWO FIGHT OVER PARKING SPOT

KUWAIT: A fight broke out between two female citizens in Fintas over parking, prompting their husbands to intervene and separate them. The men then argued and exchanged blows. Neighbors called police, who took them to the police station for questioning.

police station. He said the two threatened the Asian guard. Police are investigating.

Reckless driving

Another fight between two citizens in Ahmadi was broken up by police. The fight started when a man was driving recklessly in front of the other's house and damaged the windows of his car with flying gravel. Both men were taken to the police station and charged with fighting. The reckless driver was issued several tickets for his actions and his car was impounded.

Camp theft

Two thieves stole the contents of a camp including a generator and electronics in Abdaly desert, according to the complaint of the camp owner at Jahra

Attempted kidnap

A female citizen told police that while on the way to join her family in a camp, a man drove next to her and yelled "join us", but she ignored him. He then attempted to force her to stop, but she turned around to avoid him. He still followed her, so she drove to the police station, prompting him to flee. The woman gave police the suspect's license plate number.

Drug possession

Farwaniya police noticed a taxi driver obstructing traffic in Ardhiya, so he was stopped. An Egyptian passenger who was with him escaped, while the Bangladeshi driver was seen throwing out an envelope suspected of containing drugs. He claimed that a man gave it to him to deliver it to the Egyptian. He was sent to the Drugs Control General Department. —Al-Rai

International

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**Bombing on Cairo road
to pyramids kills 6 police**

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**400 migrants storm
border at Spain's Ceuta**

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**Carter reassures Afghans
as Trump era dawns**

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SEOUL: Protesters shout during a rally calling for South Korean President Park Geun-hye to step down in Seoul yesterday. —AP

SOUTH KOREAN LAWMAKERS IMPEACH PRESIDENT PM ASSUMES INTERIM LEADERSHIP AFTER STUNNING VOTE

SEOUL: South Korean lawmakers voted overwhelmingly yesterday to impeach President Park Geun-hye over an influence-peddling scandal, setting the stage for her to become the country's first elected leader to be expelled from office in disgrace.

The impeachment motion was carried by a wider-than-expected 234-56 margin in a secret ballot in parliament, meaning more than 60 of Park's own conservative Saenuri Party members backed removing her. The votes of at least 200 members of the 300-seat chamber were needed for the motion to pass. The Constitutional Court must now decide whether to uphold the impeachment, a process that could take up to 180 days.

"I solemnly accept the voice of the parliament and the people and sincerely hope this confusion is soundly resolved," Park said at a meeting with her cabinet, adding that she would comply with the court's proceedings as well as an investigation by a special prosecutor.

Park, whose approval rating stands at just 5 percent, has resisted demands that she step down immediately. Under the constitution, Park's duties were assumed by Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn on an interim basis until the court rules.

"I stand here with heavy-hearted sadness," Hwang said in a televised address. "As an aide to the president, I feel deep responsibility about the situation we have come to face." Cheers had erupted outside the chamber of the domed parliament building when the vote was announced. People held signs saying "Victory for the People" and "New Republic of Korea".

Earlier, anti-Park activists scuffled with police as they tried to drive two tractors up to parliament's main gate. Choi Jung-hoon, a 46-year high school teacher, joined the rally outside parliament with his wife and daughters, age 7 and 18 months.

"I wanted my kids to be here, making history, at a historic moment, and show we people can win," he said.

Mass rallies

Park, 64, is accused of colluding with a friend and a former aide, both of whom have been indicted by prosecutors, to pressure big businesses to donate to two foundations set up to back her policy initiatives. Park, who is serving a single five-year term that was set to end in February 2018, has denied wrongdoing but apologized for carelessness in her ties with her friend, Choi Soon-sil.

If Park leaves office early, an election must be held within 60 days. The poll frontrunners are United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and ex-lawmaker Moon Jae-in, the former leader of the main opposition Democratic Party, who lost the 2012 election to Park by 3 percentage points.

"The Secretary-General is confident that the people of the Republic of Korea will overcome the present difficulties through unity and resilience as well as a strong commitment to democratic institutions and principles," Ban's spokesman Stephane Dujarric said in a statement.

Ban has not said whether he will seek his country's presidency when his UN tenure finishes at the end of the year. "The power of candles has made a big change without any arrest or casualty," said



SEOUL: South Korean President Park Geun-hye attends an emergency Cabinet meeting at the presidential office in Seoul yesterday. —AP

third-placed presidential hopeful Lee Jae-myong, mayor of the city of Seongnam, referring to the candle-lit anti-Park rallies that have drawn huge, peaceful crowds to central Seoul for the last six Saturdays.

Another rally was planned for this weekend. "It has opened up a new era in the history of the Republic of Korea's democracy," Lee - who has said he wants to be the South Korean Bernie Sanders - told Reuters. Kang Dong-wan, a professor at Dong-

A University in Busan, said the large impeachment vote from Park's own party was probably a result of rising crowds at weekly demonstrations.

"It looks like more from the ruling Saenuri Party gave their support than many had expected after realizing that the party could collapse if the bill doesn't get approved," Kang said.

Prime Minister Hwang, whose post is largely ceremonial, assumes presidential powers at a time of heightened tension with North Korea, and said after the vote that the chances of a provocation by Pyongyang were high. Various agencies, including the Finance Ministry and financial regulators, planned emergency meetings.

Presidential immunity - for now

South Korea's economic outlook is also worsening, in part because of the domestic political uncertainty. Investors are likely to be spooked when trading resumes on Monday and remain jittery until the Constitutional Court ruling, analysts said. The won was forecast to lose further ground against the dollar on Monday.

The daughter of a military ruler who led the country for 18 years before being assassinated by his disgruntled spy chief in 1979, Park would lose presidential immunity if she left office early, and could be prosecuted for abuse of power and bribery, among other charges. The Constitutional Court will determine whether parliament followed due process and whether there were sufficient grounds for impeachment. Arguments from the two sides will be heard in public hearings, which Park is unlikely to attend. —Reuters



ALEPPO: Syrian residents of the newly retaken eastern neighborhoods of Aleppo walk through the Bab Al-Hadid district as they go back home under supervision of the Syrian pro-government forces yesterday. — AFP

IS SEIZES MORE GROUND NEAR SYRIA'S PALMYRA

TURKEY-BACKED REBELS LAUNCH FRESH ASSAULT ON AL-BAB

BEIRUT: Islamic State seized more territory from Syrian government forces near the ancient city of Palmyra yesterday in fierce clashes that raged for a second day, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said.

The jihadists launched an attack late on Thursday in which they captured grain silos northeast of Palmyra and have since taken at least partial control of oil and gas fields to its northwest. Dozens of Syrian troops have been killed in the fighting, the British-based Observatory, which tracks the war using sources on the ground, said.

Syrian warplanes were carrying out air raids in the area in an effort to take back positions lost. The fighting was some of the fiercest in the area since the Syrian army recaptured Palmyra after nearly two years in March, driving out the ultra-hardline militants who had destroyed large parts of the city's UNESCO World Heritage ruins. Islamic State has been on the back foot in both Syria and Iraq since late last year, losing much of its territory in both countries as well as some of its most senior figures, killed in air strikes.

The group took advantage of chaos during Syria's civil war to seize territory there and in Iraq in the summer of 2014. Syria's civil war pits President Bashar Al-Assad, backed by Iran, Russia and militias against mostly rebels.

Turkish push

Turkish-backed rebels launched an assault on the Islamic State-held city of al-Bab in northern Syria yesterday, opposition fighters said, and Turkish

warplanes hit dozens of jihadist targets in support of the offensive. Hundreds of Arab and Turkmen fighters involved in the assault took control of at least two villages west of al-Bab, the fighters said. Turkish state media said late on Thursday that Ankara had sent 300 Turkish commandos to northern Syria as a reinforcement.

The operations are the latest in Turkey's "Operation Euphrates Shield", a military incursion launched three and a half months ago in support of the rebels, and meant to push both Islamic State militants and Kurdish fighters back from the border.

The Turkish army said its air strikes on Friday morning destroyed 34 Islamic State targets, including militant bases, shelters, vehicles mounted with guns, and ammunition depots. Ten targets had also been hit the day before. The military also said the rebels it backs had seized control of an important highway between the towns of Al-Bab and Manbij, around 50 km (30 miles) to the east. "There is a major assault under way," a fighter with the Turkmen Sultan Murad brigade speaking from inside Syria said. "God willing we will break (IS) resistance this time. Very powerful troops were sent last night."

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the conflict through a network of sources in the country, confirmed there was an increase in the number of Turkish troops with the Euphrates Shield forces and that they were shelling heavily on Friday as they attempted to advance on Al-Bab. The Observatory said explosions

triggered by Islamic State had caused casualties in a village close to Al-Bab. It also said it had received information that 12 civilians were killed and 10 wounded as a result of air strikes and bombardment by Turkish forces targeting Al-Bab. The advance of the Turkish-backed forces potentially pits them against both Kurdish fighters and Syrian government forces in an increasingly messy battlefield.

Al-Bab is of particular strategic importance to Turkey, partly because Kurdish-dominated militias have also been pursuing a campaign to seize it. Ankara is determined to prevent the Kurdish YPG militia, which it sees as a hostile force, from joining up cantons it controls along the Turkish border, for fear that would stoke Kurdish separatism at home.

The Syrian army meanwhile, has released drone footage showing the widespread destruction in Old Aleppo, which it took control of from rebels this week. Bombed-out buildings and destroyed roads, the result of ground fighting and air strikes, could be seen in the footage released on Thursday as the army pressed ahead with an offensive to retake all of Aleppo, once Syria's most populous city.

Reuters journalists heard the sound of nine air raids in about half an hour in Old Aleppo, in the centre of the city, yesterday. Intense clashes also occurred in Sheikh Saeed in the south of the eastern sector. Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad has said that reclaiming Aleppo would swing the course of the nearly six-year civil war in his favour. — Agencies

SEPARATE BOMBINGS KILL 10 IN BAGHDAD

BAGHDAD: Separate bombings in the Iraqi capital killed 10 people and wounded another 22 yesterday, according to Iraqi officials. The Baghdad attacks mainly targeted civilians and though there was no immediate claim of responsibility, they bore all the hallmarks of the Islamic State group in what are apparently efforts by militants to distract from the Iraqi forces' major offensive in the northern city of Mosul. Mosul is Iraq's second-largest city and the IS militant group's last major urban bastion in the country.

The casualty toll for yesterday's attacks was provided by police and hospital officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief reporters. The operation to retake Mosul was launched in October and has been progressing slowly in recent weeks. Iraqi forces control less than a quarter of the city and have faced significant setbacks this week in Mosul's southeast. Iraq's Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi has continued to pledge that the city will be retaken by the end of the year but has also warned that IS will likely continue to launch insurgent style attacks in Iraq even after losing control of Mosul. — AP

LAVROV SAYS US DRAGGING OUT TALKS ON ALEPPO

HAMBURG, Germany: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday accused the United States of stalling talks on evacuating remaining rebel-held parts of the Syrian city of Aleppo, and said it was taking "strange" and contradictory positions. Lavrov said there was still a good chance of reaching a deal, as long as Washington did not change its mind about participating in a meeting of technical experts in Geneva today.

But he also said the fighting would continue until all rebels had left, denying that he had said on Thursday that the Syrian military would halt its activity.

Russia, which backs the Syrian army with air strikes, wants Washington to urge rebel fighters to abandon their remaining territory, which appears to be on the verge of falling, and accept transport out. Russia said yesterday that its forces had helped more than 8,000 Syrian citizens flee parts of eastern Aleppo still controlled by rebels in the last 24 hours, including almost 3,000 children. The UN human rights office said it believed some 100,000 civilians were still in the rebel-held enclave. Lavrov said Washington's lack of control over Syrian rebels was a factor in its inability to conclude an agreement.

But he also said the State Department did not appear to be "in charge" of all factors, and that some parts of the US government apparently did not support continued negotiations with Russia. Even US Secretary of State John Kerry had publicly denied the existence of a US working paper that had been presented to Moscow last week, Lavrov said.

BETTER TIES UNDER TRUMP?

He appeared to hold out hope of closer cooperation once Donald Trump was sworn in as US president. Trump has vowed to build better ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin and suggested that Washington's focus in Syria - which along with Russia considers all rebels "terrorists" - should be on fighting Islamic State. "The dedication to fighting terrorism is quite obvious and evident with Donald Trump, much more than the actions of the Obama administration," he said.

Lavrov was in Hamburg for a meeting of the 57-nation Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). He said he had raised the issue of military buildups in Europe, where the West says it is responding to aggressive Russian actions, notably in annexing Crimea from Ukraine and supporting a rebellion in eastern Ukraine. — Reuters



HAMBURG: Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov addresses a press conference during the foreign ministers' meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Hamburg yesterday. — AFP

KENYA DEPLOYS ARMY DOCTORS AS HOSPITAL STRIKE DEEPENS

NAIROBI: Kenya deployed army doctors yesterday to the country's main teaching and referral hospital where the last remaining doctors joined a five-day strike that has crippled healthcare services around the country. "Our doctors are already at the hospital to help needy cases," said military spokesman Paul Njuguna. "It is within our mandate and that is why we stepped in."

The strike for better pay has seen thousands of doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers walk off the job

since Monday, leaving scenes of chaos as patients were stranded in hospital wards or forced to go to expensive private clinics. As the Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi is a key referral hospital, some 300 doctors had remained on duty until yesterday when they too joined the strike.

Patients requiring emergency care went unattended as they lay on stretchers at the hospital. "We are looking for an ambulance to take the patient to a private hospital, he got in an accident

and we rushed him here but there is no one to attend to him," said Jackson Mwangi, a relative of one of the patients. "I am told there are doctors from the military but the queue is too long to get in and there is a lot of confusion."

Mary Mueni who had come to see her sister, a cancer patient, said that deploying the army was not a solution to the crisis. "Let the government pay doctors for a permanent solution," she said. Unions are demanding a 300-percent pay rise for doctors and 25- to 40-

percent pay rises for nurses that they say was agreed in a 2013 collective bargaining agreement, but has yet to be implemented. Several rounds of talks have collapsed and the main doctor's union has said that private hospitals would join the strike next Tuesday. A judge has ordered union officials to appear in court next Tuesday, threatening them with jail for disobeying a court order to call off the strike. Judge Hellen Wasiliwa said that if they did not show up she would order their arrest. — AFP

BOMB BLASTS KILL 10 IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA; BOKO HARAM BLAMED

YOLA, Nigeria: Two explosions ripped through a bustling market in northeast Nigeria's Madagali town yesterday morning, killing at least 10 people and wounding 67, a survivor and an official said.

The attack comes as Nigeria's government claims it is routing the Boko Haram Islamic extremists blamed for the blasts. The blasts occurred on the edge of the extremist group's Sambisa Forest stronghold, which Nigeria's military has been bombing ahead of ground assaults. Since the military has dislodged the insurgents from towns and villages this year, they have been attacking soft targets.

Madagali was liberated last year after months in the hands of Boko Haram. It is 150 kilometers (95 miles) southeast of the biggest northeastern city, Maiduguri.

Yesterday's blasts struck simultaneously at opposite ends of the market selling grains and vegetables, according to Ahmadu Gulak, a driver who was buying tea there. He told The Associated Press he counted at least 10 bodies. At least 67 people were wounded and taken to a hospital for treatment, said spokesman Sani Datti of the National Emergency Management Agency. He did not have the number of dead.

Police spokesman Othman Abubakar confirmed the blasts and said it was unclear if the attacks came from suicide bombers or planted explosives. A bus station near the same market was targeted by two women suicide bombers who killed at least 30 people in December 2015. In June, Boko Haram extremists opened fire on mourners at a funeral in Madagali, killing 18 people.

The attacks continue despite government and military assertions that the insurgents are on the run. President Muhammadu Buhari had declared the extremist group was "technically defeated" in December 2015. Last week, a year later, he said a multinational force from Nigeria and neighboring states is readying to "move simultaneously and spontaneously for us to see the end of Boko Haram."

Buhari said the insurgents "are done for" in the Lake Chad Basin bordering Nigeria, Chad and Niger. But the United Nations says more than 1 million people are believed trapped there by ongoing fighting without food or medical help. Boko Haram's seven-year uprising has killed more than 20,000 people and forced 2.6 million from their homes.

The United Nations has launched a \$1 billion appeal to help 5.1 million people in danger of starvation, calling the crisis in northeast Nigeria the worst on the African continent. Buhari has accused the UN and aid agencies of exaggerating the crisis to seek donations. "The government seems to be more interested in managing perception," Lagos-based SBM

Intelligence analysts said yesterday, saying much of the crisis "is rooted in the ineptitude of the (state) agencies involved, rife corruption causing diversion of the food aid, and the still-present threat of Boko Haram ambushes, which make the provision of supplies a risky undertaking."

The Associated Press has reported that children already are dying of acute malnutrition in the relatively accessible Maiduguri city. — AP



CAIRO: Egyptian emergency services carry a wounded victim at the site of a bomb attack next to a police checkpoint in the western Talibiya district of the capital Cairo yesterday. — AFP

BOMBING ON CAIRO ROAD TO PYRAMIDS KILLS 6 POLICE

SHADOWY GROUP HASM CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY

CAIRO: A bombing on a main Cairo road leading to the Giza pyramids killed six police and wounded another three yesterday, the deadliest attack on security forces in the capital in more than six months.

The bombing, near a mosque on a wide avenue often used by tour buses, hit a police checkpoint, smashing several cars and blowing the windows out of police SUVs. Gravel, debris, and leaves littered the ground, as investigators inspected the area and masked troops stood guard with automatic weapons. "We heard the blast and rushed to the scene and found police vehicles damaged," said Abdel Hamid Abdulla, who was nearby. "We saw some police were injured, and some of their legs had been cut off," he said.

State-run news agency MENA said the blast targeted security forces but did not elaborate on what caused the explosion. A security official said that two bombs placed in the area exploded during a security patrol. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he

was not authorized to brief journalists. A shadowy group called Hasm, or "Decisiveness," which the government suspects is linked to the now-banned Muslim Brotherhood, claimed responsibility for the attack. It has claimed previous attacks in Cairo, including a shooting against the country's former chief Muslim theologian and a car bomb against the chief prosecutor's deputy. Both escaped unhurt.

"There is no safety or security for you as long as we hold our weapons in jihad for God, there is either victory or martyrdom," the group said in a statement posted online.

Insurgents have carried out a number of attacks in Egypt since the 2013 military ouster of an elected Islamist president. The violence has been concentrated in the northern Sinai Peninsula, where Islamic State-linked militants are battling the army.

Yesterday's attack was the deadliest in Cairo since May, when gunmen opened fire on a microbus filled with plainclothes police in the suburb of

Helwan, killing eight of them. IS claimed the attack. Most of the attacks in Cairo have been small-scale bombings, including one in October that targeted a police convoy and killed a pedestrian bystander. Yesterday's attack comes as President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi is defending tough economic measures undertaken by his government to address a growing financial crisis and secure a \$12 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund.

The government floated the Egyptian pound last month and slashed fuel subsidies, steps that were welcomed by the IMF and the business community but caused a spike in the price of many goods, worsening the economic plight of ordinary Egyptians. The austerity measures could fuel a backlash against Al-Sisi, who rose to power after leading the military ouster of President Mohammed Morsi three years ago. Morsi had been freely elected a year earlier, but his rule proved divisive and the military stepped in amid massive protests demanding his resignation. — AP

FROM DOCTOR TO MAFIA-HUNTER: WHO WILL GET ITALY'S TOP JOB?

ROME: Prime minister Matteo Renzi's resignation has left Italy's top job up for grabs. Who are the frontrunners to replace him? President Sergio Mattarella would like it to be someone from Renzi's centre-left Democratic Party (PD), which is still ahead in the polls despite the PM's fall.

But with a rebel faction within the PD plotting to seize the party, and opposition parties determined not to have a Renzi ally at the helm, Mattarella may have no choice but to plump for an institutional rather than political figure.

Carlo Padoan

Padoan, 66, is a seasoned economist with the potential to reassure financial markets and a jittery Europe.

Tapped by Renzi in 2013 to be his finance minister—a job few appeared prepared to do—Padoan has been a prominent frontline figure, dealing with a banking crisis and wrangling over budget flexibility with Brussels. The professor is considered a safe pair of hands, though some analysts

warn he may be too close to Renzi for the opposition's taste.

Graziano Delrio

Delrio, a doctor with nine children, is Renzi's closest ally and confidant. The 56-year-old studied medicine in Britain and specialised in endocrinology before moving into politics, becoming Renzi's state secretary, then minister of transport in 2015. He would be seen as a continuation of the previous administration, possibly with the plus of being able to bring the PD's rebel wing into line.

Paolo Gentiloni

Gentiloni, 62, is Italy's foreign minister and a PD stalwart. A former journalist with a degree in political science, he was communications minister in prime minister Romano Prodi's government between 2006 and 2008. Analysts say he is a known and trusted figure in Europe, but may be seen as too much of an establishment figure—and, once again, too close to Renzi.

Dario Franceschini

Franceschini, 58, is Italy's minister of culture. A former lawyer and occasional novelist, he was initially considered one of the frontrunners for Renzi's job. But Franceschini has since been tied by Italian media reports to three-time billionaire former premier Silvio Berlusconi. Though he denies linking up with Berlusconi to secure the support of his centre-right Forza Italia party, the rumours are believed to have severely damaged his chances.

Pietro Grasso

The former anti-mafia prosecutor, 71, is Italy's senate speaker and has a straight arrow reputation. He rose to fame in the 1980s as an associate judge in the first "maxi-trial" against the Sicilian Cosa Nostra and led the probe into the murder of Piersanti Mattarella, a Sicilian president mown down by the mob. The slain man was current president Mattarella's older brother. Grasso is the top choice if the job goes to an institutional figure.

Laura Boldrini

Boldrini, 55, is speaker of the lower house of parliament and an outsider's choice. A fierce human rights defender, she would be Italy's first female prime minister if she got the job.

A former journalist and spokeswoman for the UN's refugee agency, she has been the victim of violent trolling but is admired by many for her stand against xenophobia, homophobia and violence against women.

Matteo Renzi

That's right, the outgoing 41-year-old prime minister himself is being touted as a possible contender for his own job. Some observers say he fears bowing out now would leave the door open to populist parties like the anti-euro Five Star Movement. But others say Renzi—already slammed as arrogant by critics—would be burning his bridges and would risk losing when the country returns to the ballot box, possibly as soon as early next year. — AFP

STAGNATION, RESIGNATION REIGN AHEAD OF ROMANIAN VOTE

BUCHAREST: When Romania's leftist government collapsed a year ago amid outrage over a deadly nightclub fire, many people spied an opportunity for sweeping change in a country plagued by corruption and inept public services.

But after the upswelling of public anger over the deaths of 64 people in the Club Colectiv, which lacked emergency exits and fire safety permits, the clamour for change to make Romania a safer, more secure and prosperous country has dimmed. Instead, the campaign for Sunday's parliamentary election has been dominated by a sense of exhausted resignation about chronic poverty and politicians' unfulfilled promises of reform and investment in a now derelict infrastructure.

Polls forecast the leftist Social Democrats (PSD), who advocate both higher wages and pensions and lower taxes, will regain power, despite the corruption shadows around them, with their party chief convicted of vote rigging.

"People are tired of promises, they want something they can see, like wages. And it's about time these rise, they're very low," said Grigore Constantin, a Bucharest taxi driver.

Romania's average monthly wage is 2,094 lei (\$493), the second lowest in the European Union, with average pensions less than half that. Germany's minimum wage is 1,440 euros (\$1,528.56), illustrating the enduring chasm between the western EU and the emerging economies in its ex-communist east. Economists warn that pension and public sector wage rises pledged by the PSD and also rival parties will come at a cost - potential tax increases and a drain on resources urgently needed to build modern hospitals, highways and more schools with heating and plumbing - that are likely to disappoint voters.

Increasingly bloated state budgets - which had been slashed in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis - may rile the European Union executive, which has pushed Bucharest to create leaner, modern public services and stamp out graft. Leftists in power from 2012-2015 reversed much of the belt-tightening by cutting taxes and raising the minimum wage and public-sector pay.

The European Commission now expects Romania's deficit to quadruple from 0.8 percent in 2015 to 3.2 percent in 2017 under European accounting terms. It would be the second largest deficit in the EU after Spain.

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

The current technocratic government of Prime Minister Dacian Cioloș, a former European commissioner who took over for one year after Victor Ponta quit in November 2015, has sought to make public administration more transparent.

It also adjusted wage imbalances in health care and launched a four-year plan to lift hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty - with benefits ranging from solar panels on roofs of 100,000 homes that lack electricity to cash incentives to help reduce school drop-out rates. — Reuters



Migrants sit on the ground after storming a fence to enter the Spanish enclave of Ceuta yesterday. The Interior Ministry says some 400 migrants from Africa have stormed a border fence to enter Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta from Morocco early yesterday. — AP

400 AFRICAN MIGRANTS STORM BORDER AT SPAIN'S CEUTA

BIGGEST GROUP TO CROSS INTO CEUTA IN DECADE

MADRID: Some 400 African migrants forced their way into the tiny Spanish enclave of Ceuta yesterday, authorities said, the biggest group in a decade to storm the walled city bordering Morocco in search of asylum. The group forced their way through two entry points in the six-metre-high (20-foot) barrier that surrounds the enclave, a local government spokesman said.

Footage posted online by the El Faro de Ceuta newspaper showed dozens of migrants, including men without shoes and shirts, letting off joyous cries of "Spain!" as they crossed into Ceuta.

The Red Cross said it had treated 103 people for minor injuries sustained during the assault, and that 25 had been taken to hospital. About 20 percent of the group who rushed the gates had not been located by authorities as of midday yesterday, Spain's

Interior Minister Juan Ignacio Zoido said. Ceuta along with Melilla, another Spanish territory in North Africa, have the European Union's only land borders with Africa.

They are favoured entry points for African migrants seeking a better life in Europe, who get there by either climbing over the border fence or by swimming along the coast.

The objective for migrants entering Ceuta illegally is to reach a temporary Spanish residency rights centre where they can, in principle, request asylum.

But Amnesty International and other rights groups have qualified Ceuta and Melilla as extralegal territories and denounced police mistreatment of migrants there. In 2014, 15 migrants drowned as dozens tried to swim to Ceuta from a nearby beach. At the time, rights groups and migrants said Spanish police tried to keep

them from reaching the shore by firing rubber bullets and spraying them with tear gas. In October a group of about 220 people managed to storm two entry points into Ceuta, injuring 35 migrants and three security officers. "You have to go back to the early 2000s to see numbers like this," the government spokesman told AFP. Carmen Echarri, editor of El Faro de Ceuta newspaper, told AFP that Spanish security forces had been overrun as migrants had struck at several different parts on the border barrier, using scissors and cutting tools to get through wire fencing. "Everyone was surprised" by the assault, she said. Spanish junior minister for security, Jose Antonio Nieto, announced a visit to Ceuta, where he will brief reporters later yesterday. Some 10,800 migrants have arrived in Spain in 2016, according to the International Organization for Migration. — AFP

'WORLD'S HEAVIEST WOMAN' TO FLY TO INDIA FOR SURGERY

NEW DELHI: An Egyptian who is believed to be the world's heaviest woman is to fly to India for weight reduction surgery after the country's foreign minister personally intervened to secure her a visa. Indian surgeon Muffazal Lakdawala had offered to carry out the procedure free of charge after hearing about Eman Ahmed Abd El Aty, who weighs around 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds). But her request for a visa was initially rejected, prompting Lakdawala to tweet a request for help to India's foreign minister Sushma Swaraj.

"She is a bundle of diseases. She needs surgery urgently," the surgeon said of Abd El Aty, 36, who is expected to fly to the western city of Mumbai next week for the procedure. "Her sister said she hasn't left her room in 25 years. I just thought 'Oh my god, I have to help. I'll do it pro bono, no problem'."

Lakdawala said he was astonished when Swaraj, who is herself ill in hospital awaiting a liver transplant, replied to his plea within hours. Abd El Aty's sister had approached him about two months ago, saying her sister needed

urgent medical attention. Her family told the doctor that as a child she was diagnosed with elephantiasis, a condition that causes the limbs and other body parts to swell, leaving her almost immobile.

Later she suffered a stroke and was rendered bedridden, triggering a series of ailments including diabetes, high blood pressure, hypertension and sleep apnoea. Lakdawala, who has operated on government ministers in the past, said he was nervous but would do all he could to make Abd El Aty comfortable.

"I would be lying if I said I was 100 percent confident. There are many challenges, but I will try my level best to help her," he told AFP by phone. Abd El Aty would need a couple of months in post-surgery care in India before heading back home in Egypt, he said.

Bariatric surgery is essentially a stomach-shrinking bypass procedure carried out on those wanting to lose excessive weight. It is increasingly common in India, which has a growing problem with obesity, particularly in urban areas. India is a key destination



Eman Ahmed Abd El Aty, who weighs around 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds).

for medical tourists because it offers quality services at a fraction of the cost of western countries and no waiting lists. — AFP



Vijay Mallya @TheVijayMallya · 8m
Hello
We are back with -
Vijay mallya's assets at several bank
All known passwords of Mr. Mallya.
thevijaymallya@gmail.com-sidleantant
vijaymallya.in-sit@5999
vijaymallya@submail.com-omc@5999
vijaymallya@aol.com-omc@5999
boozemaster@gmail.com-sidleantant
gooking@hotmail.com-boozeman007
india@ash@aol.com-daisy@5999
boss@pegasusyachts.com-elsa@5999
celebrations@vnm60.com-sit@5999
Twitter - @thevijaymallya - sidlean
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MALLYA CRIES FOUL OVER TWITTER HACK

MUMBAI: Fugitive Indian businessman Vijay Mallya said yesterday that his Twitter account had been penetrated by a hacking group called Legion, which posted links to what it alleged were details of Mallya's bank accounts, offshore investments and luxury cars.

Mallya, a flamboyant former billionaire who made his fortune from a liquor and beer empire, moved to Britain in March after being pursued in courts by banks that his now defunct Kingfisher airline owed around \$1.4 billion. "Legion will find you, hack you, expose you," read one of several postings tweeted by the hackers on Mallya's official Twitter account before they were erased at around 1215 IST (0645 GMT).

Mallya, who denies being an absconder, was not immediately available for a comment, and a spokesman for his UB Group also declined immediate comment on the hack. But a response was tweeted on his verified Twitter account. "Outfit called Legion has hacked my e-mail accounts and are blackmailing me !! What a joke." Legion came to public attention earlier last month when it claimed to have hacked the Twitter accounts of India's Congress party, and its vice chair Rahul Gandhi.

Mallya is wanted by law enforcement agencies and is subject to a non-bailable warrant from a court. The government has also revoked Mallya's diplomatic passport which he had received as a member of the upper house of parliament. And the Indian authorities have sought ways to have Mallya deported by Britain.

The Enforcement Directorate, a government agency set up to fight financial crime, has accused Mallya's UB Group of using some of the funds lent to Kingfisher Airlines to buy property overseas.

Mallya has denied wrongdoing, calling the charges against him "preposterous". He had also offered a settlement to creditors, which they refused to consider. — Reuters

US PENTAGON CHIEF REASSURES AFGHANS AS TRUMP ERA DAWNS

CARTER MEETS, GHANI, AMERICAN TROOPS

KABUL: Pentagon chief Ashton Carter sought to reaffirm US commitment to Afghanistan yesterday, as uncertainty lingers over President-elect Donald Trump's strategy on America's longest war in the face of a resilient Taliban insurgency.

Carter met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and American troops on his last official trip to Afghanistan before he hands over the reins to Trump's pick for defense secretary, the hardline retired general James Mattis. Carter's surprise visit comes as concerns mount over growing insecurity in Afghanistan, where around 10,000 US troops are assisting struggling Afghan forces to combat a dogged Taliban insurgency along with Al-Qaeda and Islamic State militants.

"America is, and will remain, committed to a sovereign and secure Afghanistan," Carter told reporters at a joint press conference with Ghani. "We stand with the people of Afghanistan who have put themselves at risk and sacrificed so much." Ghani thanked Carter for the US military support and the sacrifices of American troops in Afghanistan, even as uncertainty looms over Trump's presidency.

Trump has given surprisingly little details on his expected foreign policy, with even fewer specifics on how he will tackle the war in Afghanistan. Afghanistan got scarcely a passing mention in the bitterly contested US presidential election—even though the situation in the conflict-torn country will be an urgent matter for the new president.

The Taliban are ramping up nationwide attacks despite the onset of winter, when fighting usually ebbs, even as international efforts intensify to jump-

start peace talks. Fifteen years and hundreds of billions of dollars since the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the security situation in the country remains fraught and Afghan forces are struggling to contain the conflict. One of the most important questions facing Trump on Afghanistan is how many American troops will stay in the country, observers say.

President Barack Obama was forced to slow a planned withdrawal of US troops in the face of Taliban gains, and about 8,400 will remain in the country when he leaves office early next year.

Mattis, whose nicknames in the mili-

tary include "Mad Dog" and the "Warrior Monk", has led troops in Afghanistan and has previously criticised Obama's plan to pull forces from the country.

Carter landed at Bagram Airfield, the largest US military base in Afghanistan, where four Americans were killed in a suicide bombing in November, in a major breach of security.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the bombing inside the heavily fortified base, north of the capital Kabul, which left 16 other US service members and a Polish soldier wounded as the insurgents step up attacks on Western targets. — AFP



KABUL: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani (right) and US Defense Secretary Ash Carter (left) wave after a press conference at presidential palace in Kabul yesterday. — AP

HK LEADER SAYS WILL NOT RUN FOR RE-ELECTION

HONG KONG: Hong Kong leader Leung Chun-ying said yesterday he will not stand for re-election in a 2017 vote for chief executive for family reasons, in a surprise announcement that throws open the race to govern the financial hub. Leung has been backed by the central government in Beijing which he said had accepted his decision not to contest the March election.

"The central government has highly regarded my work," Leung told a news conference. "In a family, my children only have one father, my wife only has one husband." Leung did not elaborate but media has reported that a daughter has been hospitalized. Speculation on a new leader for Hong Kong is likely to focus on John Tsang, the city's financial secretary, or Regina Ip, a former city security chief.

All candidates have to be approved by a 1,200-strong Election Committee, largely made up of pro-Beijing establishment figures, which will then vote from among them for a new leader. Hong Kong's next leader faces a host of challenges with concern growing over the influence of Beijing in city affairs as well as a fledgling independence movement that has alarmed China's Communist Party leadership. Beijing's leaders have signalled they want Hong Kong's next chief to forge consensus across a politically and socially divided city, boost incomes and safeguard security in a place that remains significantly more free



HONG KONG: Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying leaves after a briefing to media in Hong Kong yesterday. — AP

than the mainland.

Tens of thousands of protesters clogged city streets for weeks in 2014 to demand a one-man-one-vote election for chief executive but they failed to win any concessions from Beijing. Tensions have risen in recent weeks amid a Beijing-backed legal crackdown against pro-independence and pro-democracy city lawmakers accused of mocking their oaths of office in gestures of protest against Beijing. Two have been disqualified after court cases and another four

are facing legal challenges led by Leung and his justice secretary.

'PROBLEMS'

The mainland's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office said it "deeply regretted" Leung's personal decision for family reasons but respected it, the Xinhua news agency reported. Leung had resolutely implemented the one-country, two systems policy, the office said, referring to the formula for Hong Kong's autonomy under

which the former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997. Leung had "dependably handled a series of important political issues", it said. Tsang, who is less closely identified with Beijing's Communist Party leadership than Leung, has not ruled out standing but he has declined to say if Beijing has given him any sign about a possible bid. Tsang has experience in city government dating back to British rule. "Many people, no matter if they know me or not - or even those on the internet - are very supportive of me joining the election," Tsang in a radio interview last week.

Ip, who is seen as close to the Beijing leadership and is also a former British-trained civil servant, is expected to announce her candidacy next week, according to media.

Commenting on Leung's announcement, Ip said she was "touched and felt sympathetic" about his bid to strike a balance between official duties and family life. Leung's popularity has recently dipped to 38.5 points from 52.5 at the beginning of his term, according to a public opinion poll by the University of Hong Kong.

But the departure of the unpopular leader would not solve the city's problems, a democracy activist said. "These problems come from the system itself. Until this moment, we still can't get universal suffrage," said Joshua Wong, 20, a leader of the 2014 protests. — Reuters

DUTCH FIREBRAND MP FOUND GUILTY OF DISCRIMINATION

SCHIPHOL, Netherlands: Populist anti-Islam Dutch MP Geert Wilders was found guilty yesterday of discrimination against Moroccans, but acquitted of hate speech in a closely-watched trial ahead of next year's key election.

But the judges decided not to impose any sentence or fine, and Wilders immediately vowed to appeal against what he said was a bid to "neutralise" him ahead of the March polls. "I will never be silent. You will not be able to stop me," he vowed in a video message sent swiftly after the verdict was handed down. Wilders, whose Freedom Party (PVV) is eyeing an upset victory in the March 2017 polls, was charged with two counts arising out of comments he made in 2014 around local elections. After a three-week trial which Wilders had largely snubbed, the three judges ruled "the inflammatory character of the way in which the statements were made have incited others to discriminate people of Moroccan origin."

But they added there was "insufficient evidence" his words amounted to incitement to hatred. The judges also dismissed the prosecution's request to impose a 5,000-euro (\$5,300) fine. "In this case, the most important question is whether Wilders has crossed a line. This judgement has answered that question," the judges said in their verdict. "Therewith, the chamber finds that justice has been done. Consequently, no punishment is imposed." The most recent opinion polls predict the PVV will top the March vote, saying it could seize 34 spots in the 150-seat lower house of Dutch parliament, some 10 ahead of his nearest rival, Prime Minister Mark Rutte's Liberals. Rather than hurting the controversial lawmaker, observers say his trial has boosted his popularity among Dutch voters, worried about the influx of immigrants and driven by eurosceptic sentiments.

Amid a string of populist victories in Europe and the November election of Donald Trump as the next US president, the outcome of the Dutch vote will be keenly watched.

'Fewer Moroccans'

The trial had focused in particular on a statement made at a 2014 local government election

rally in The Hague, when he asked supporters whether they wanted "fewer or more Moroccans in your city and in the Netherlands". When the crowd shouted back "Fewer! Fewer!" a smiling Wilders answered:

"We're going to organise that." Prosecutors said they were satisfied with the verdict. "For us it was important that we set a norm, namely that a politician cannot discriminate against a group based on their origin."

This principle and setting the norm was more important than the fine," prosecutor Frans Zonneveld told AFP. The police had received 6,400 complaints about Wilders's comments. He "singled out an entire group of citizens without making any distinction," the judges ruled.

"This group has less rights to reside in the Netherlands. Therewith, this statement can be regarded as affecting the dignity of this group as a whole. It is insulting for the entire group." But after the judgement, Wilders said in a tweet: "Three PVV-hating judges declare Moroccans to be a race and convict me and half of the Netherlands. Madness."

And in a video message, posted to YouTube, he added: "Today I was convicted in a political trial, which shortly before the elections attempts to neutralise the leader of the largest and most popular opposition party."

Outside the courthouse, a Wilders supporter who asked not to be named told AFP: "I'm not worried... He will win on appeal."

Presiding judge Hendrik Steenhuis however had harsh words for the platinum-blond haired Wilders saying his disparaging comments about judges and the judiciary in The Netherlands "are unworthy of an elected politician."

If elected as the lowlands country's new prime minister, Wilders has among other things vowed to confiscate Korans, close mosques and Islamic schools, shut Dutch borders and ban migrants from Islamic countries.

His views have seen him receive death threats including from terror groups such as the Islamic State group and Al-Qaeda. He is guarded at all times and called the "best protected man in The Netherlands". — AFP

THAI NAVY SHOWS OFF TECHNOLOGY TO FIGHT FISHING ABUSES

SAMUT SAKHON, Thailand: Thailand's navy yesterday showed off new technology to monitor fishing boats in a renewed effort to crack down on illegal fishing, forced labor and corruption in the seafood industry. New equipment the navy has been testing includes a GPS tracking system to monitor fishing vessels, a central database and a scanner for officials to check documents.

The system, demonstrated to reporters, won't fully be in place until April, but outside groups are already skeptical it will achieve what it's set out to do unless more human enforcement is put into place. Thailand has been under pressure from the European Union after revelations that it relied heavily on forced labor, and is facing a potential total EU ban on seafood imports unless it reforms its fishing industry.

"We're doing this to increase the effectiveness of inspection, because putting humans in the loop has caused some errors in the past," said Cdr. Piyanan Kaewmanee, head of a Thai navy group that oversees illegal fishing, who pointed to corrupt officials as a major issue. "We can ensure that our workers are accounted for, and aren't lost at sea or transferred from ship to ship."

New on Friday was a handheld scanner that can read crew identification and other papers to make sure workers are documented and the fishing gear is licensed. During the inspection demonstration, workers crouched and huddled together, holding up green identification cards, as Thai navy sailors boarded their ship, looked through documents, and patted down workers.

The scanners will be integrated into a vessel monitoring system which will keep track of the location of all Thai fishing vessels using GPS technology and a central database.

The monitoring improvements follow international pressure after an Associated Press report last year revealed that Thai boats were using slaves from countries including Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos to catch fish, putting a spotlight on illegal practices in the industry including unregistered boats and unsustainable fishing.

In April 2015, the European Union gave Thailand a "yellow card" on its fishing exports, warning the country that it could face a total ban if it didn't clean up its act - prompting Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to exercise executive powers to create a Command Center for Combating Illegal Fishing soon after.

Independent observers cautiously welcomed the new equipment, but said Thailand must go beyond technology to ensure its seafood is caught without forced labor.

"To put more muscle into enforcement of Thai labor law, you've got to engage directly with workers," said Jason Judd, senior technical officer at the International Labor Organization office in Bangkok. "Technology can help us to develop that, but really it's not a substitute for what's needed most, which is a face-to-face interaction between those who are responsible for enforcing the law - the Thai government - and the fishermen."

Thailand recently lifted a ban on hiring foreign nationals for its inspection crews, paving the way for Cambodian and Myanmar translators to interpret between Thai police and migrant fishing workers. But the translators will only interview workers if a vessel is explicitly flagged for abuse or wrongdoing, Thai navy officials said. EU officials will visit Thailand next month to see what progress the government has made, following up on a visit in January this year. — AP

US-CHINA RELATIONSHIP MUST IMPROVE: TRUMP

CONGRESS LIKELY TO PULL PLUG ON MEDICAL DEVICE TAX

DES MOINES, Iowa: President-elect Donald Trump said on Thursday the United States needed to improve its relationship with China, which he criticized for its economic policies and failure to rein in North Korea. "One of the most important relationships we must improve, and we have to improve, is our relationship with China," Trump told a rally in Iowa. The United States and China are the world's two biggest economies.

"China is not a market economy," he said. "They haven't played by the rules, and I know it's time that they're going to start." Trump criticized China repeatedly during his presidential campaign and drew a diplomatic protest from Beijing last week after speaking by phone with President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan, which China considers a wayward province.

It was the first such top-level contact with Taiwan by a US president-elect or president since President Jimmy Carter adopted a "one-China" policy in 1979, recognizing only the Beijing government. Trump kept up his criticism of Beijing during the rally, which was part of a "thank you tour" to express gratitude to states that helped him win an upset victory over Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton last month. "You have the massive theft of intellectual property, putting unfair taxes on



DES MOINES: President-Elect Donald Trump looks on in Des Moines, Iowa on Thursday during the USA Thank You Tour 2016 at the Hy-Vee Hall in the Iowa Events Center. — AFP

our companies, not helping with the menace of North Korea like they should, and the at-will and massive devaluation of their currency and product dumping," Trump said of China. "Other than that, they've been wonderful, right?"

Trump repeated his campaign message that he planned to prioritize the United States and American workers over global interests. The Trump administration, which takes office on Jan 20, would focus on two rules: "Buy American and hire American," he said, adding he would keep pressuring com-

panies not to move jobs overseas.

Medical service tax

When Donald Trump takes over as president on Jan 20, one of the first business tax breaks he delivers is likely to go to the US medical device industry and companies like Mark Throdahl's. The chief executive of OrthoPediatrics Corp, based in northern Indiana, said his company has been able to hire more workers since the temporary suspension effective last January of a federal tax on medical devices. —Agencies

ALABAMA INMATE COUGHS, HEAVES, DURING EXECUTION BY INJECTION

ATMORE, Alabama: Thirteen minutes into his execution by injection, an Alabama inmate heaved and coughed and appeared to move during tests meant to determine consciousness. Ronald Bert Smith Jr, 45, was finally pronounced dead at 11:05 pm Thursday night - about 30 minutes after the procedure began at the state prison in southwest Alabama.

Alabama uses the sedative midazolam as the first drug in a three-drug lethal injection combination. Smith and other inmates argued in a court case that the drug was an unreliable sedative and could cause them to feel pain, citing its use in problematic executions. The US Supreme Court has upheld the use of the drug.

Smith was convicted of capital murder in the Nov 8, 1994, fatal shooting of Huntsville store clerk Casey Wilson. A jury voted 7-5 to recommend a sentence of life imprisonment, but a judge overrode that recommendation and sentenced Smith to death.

At the beginning of his execution, Smith heaved and coughed repeatedly, clenching his fists and raising his head. A prison guard performed two consciousness checks before the final two lethal drugs were administered. In a consciousness test, a prison officer says the inmate's name, brushes his eyelashes and then pinches his left arm. During the first one, Smith moved his arm. He slightly raised his right arm again after the second consciousness test.

The meaning of those movements will likely be debated. One of Smith's attorneys whispered to another attorney, "He's reacting," and pointed out the inmate's repeated movements. —AP



Ronald Bert Smith

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ORLANDO: Jessica Silva pats her brother's dog, Juicy at the re-opening of the D'Magazine Salon on Thursday in Orlando. Silva's brother Juan Rivera Velazquez, the original owner of the salon and partner Luis Daniel Conde, were both killed in the Pulse nightclub shooting. —AP

MONTHS AFTER BROTHER DIED AT PULSE, SISTER REOPENS HIS SALON

ORLANDO, Fla: Six months after her brother and his longtime partner were killed in Orlando's gay nightclub massacre, Jessica Silva is re-opening the couple's beauty salon.

Half a dozen black salon chairs are in place. One of them faces a large photo of the brother Juan Rivera Velazquez and his partner Luis Daniel Conde, who died June 12 in the worst mass shooting in modern US history. It's the same chair where Velazquez once styled hair. Velazquez's black toy-sized dog, Juicy, again roams the salon in a purple tutu, just like before. Velazquez's big sister, Jessica Silva, her mother and a cousin are ready to welcome back the customers who relied on Velazquez and Conde to make them feel beautiful.

The two men had owned the salon for about six years. "I remember when he was starting, he said he was going to be an artist. He was going to make changes for women, make them feel more beautiful, free the best in them, and he did," said Jessica Silva, Velazquez's sister.

She spoke Thursday, shortly before a small ceremony to reopen the business. Silva and other family members shouted "woooo" as they cut a red ribbon outside the salon in a strip mall. Later, they ate ceviche on cocktail tables. The new salon has a different location, and a slightly different name. Silva considered re-opening in the Kissimmee, Florida, space where it once was, but she and her mother were haunted by his memories there and decided to move shop five miles away to south Orlando.

"My mom used to work with him. She worked behind him and when she moved her head halfway, she would see him," said Silva, who is five years older than her little brother, who was 37 when he died. "When she went back to the old salon, she started getting nervous and anxious." The name also is now D'Magazine By Juan P, instead of Alta Peluqueria D'Magazine, as a tribute to Velazquez. Velazquez and Conde were a couple for 16 years. Silva and her parents view re-opening the salon as continuing Velazquez's legacy, as painful as his absence may be.

"This was his dream," Silva said. "You can see me smiling but it's not been easy what we're doing today. There's a lot of tears every time we put something that belongs to him, that was in another location, and he's not going to be here to tell us, 'OK, I don't want this here. I want this there.'"

Velazquez's father, Ramon Rivera, said, "He left but he's here like an angel for me." The doors to the salon have been closed in the six months since Velazquez and Conde were killed in the Pulse nightclub, along with 47 others. Dozens of others were hospitalized, many with severe injuries. Gunman Omar Mateen, who was killed in a shootout with SWAT team members after a three-hour standoff, had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group. Silva remembers being awakened by a caller, then rushing to find her brother. "A friend of us called us at five in the morning telling me that something happened there and they were there, and they posted pictures during the night," she said. "I got in my car and I went looking for my brother. But unfortunately, I had to wait 24 hours to find out that I was not going to be able to hold him, kiss him, and have him near us anymore." Monday marks the six-month anniversary of the attack, and hundreds of central Florida residents are expected to join officials in a memorial observance that day.

The opening of the salon is part of the healing process for the family and the community, said Cheryl Grieb, vice chair of the Osceola County Commission. "They really wanted to keep the salon open because, initially, afterward, it was 'Do we keep it? Do we not? Finances?' It was a back-and-forth experience for them," Grieb said. "In the end, they knew that this is what he wanted and they wanted to keep that dream alive." —AP

TRUMP SPENT \$66M OF HIS OWN CASH ON CAMPAIGN

ENTIRE STOCK PORTFOLIO WORTH \$40M SOLD FOR ELECTIONEERING

WASHINGTON/NEW YORK: US President-elect Donald Trump pumped a total of \$66 million of his own money into his campaign - far from the \$100 million he frequently boasted he was going to spend, according to campaign finance disclosures filed on Thursday night. Trump-related business industries - those bearing his own name, including his private jet and the Manhattan building that served as his campaign headquarters - received \$11 million in payments from his campaign.

Trump shocked the political world when he defeated Democratic rival Hillary Clinton in the Nov 8 election for the White House, overcoming a spending deficit and outperforming polls in several swing states to propel him to victory. Earlier this week, Trump's campaign revealed that he sold his entire stock portfolio in June, a holding that was estimated at about \$40 million.

Opting to liquidate his assets could have been a move to pump cash into his campaign, which at the time was struggling to raise funds from private donors. The move to sell his stocks came weeks after he forgave about \$47 million in loans he had already given his campaign.

In total, Trump raised \$339 million and spent \$322 million - a far cry from the \$565 million spent by Clinton, according to the latest Federal Election Commission disclosure reports. Trump spent \$94 million in the final days of the campaign, compared with the \$132 million spent by Clinton.

Trump frequently promised to run a shoe-string campaign and argued his self-funding model meant he wasn't obligated to any special interests. He blasted polling as a useless art and pollsters as a waste of money as he overcame 16 Republican foes during the primary election season in early 2016. Trump rode to victory on more than \$5 billion in "free" television on news programs that provided wall-to-wall coverage of his every word, according to data analytics firm mediaQuant.

But when the realities of the general election began to sink in - and Trump's poll numbers sank - he shifted and began spending money on polling and television ads.

In total, Trump spent \$107 million on advertising, including television ads, and another \$85 million in digital and online advertising. His second largest expense was air travel, totaling \$26 million and accounting for more campaign spending than his payroll. —Reuters

VIDEO SHOWS STRUGGLE, THEN SHOOTING THAT PARALYZED IOWA MAN

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa: An unarmed black driver struggled with an Iowa officer and a police dog before the officer shot the motorist as he tried to get away in his pickup truck, paralyzing him, dashcam video released Thursday shows. Driver Jerime Mitchell managed to get back inside the vehicle with officer Lucas Jones clinging to his body by the open driver's side door. The video shows Jones shooting Mitchell at close range after the truck starts to roll.

The video seems unlikely to resolve a debate over whether the Cedar Rapids policeman acted appropriately during the Nov. 1 shooting of the 37-year-old Mitchell. A Linn County grand jury decided Monday not to indict Jones. County Attorney Jerry Vander Sanden said the video shows that Mitchell resisted Jones and the officer fired in self-defense.

Mitchell disputes that account, arguing that the officer was the aggressor. His supporters have blasted the prosecutor for ending the secret grand jury inquiry without obtaining any statement or testimony from Mitchell, who is hospitalized with a bullet lodged in his neck and unable to move most his body. "I was unarmed. I never struck the officer, or the dog. This has changed my life forever," Mitchell said in a statement released Wednesday. "No one should ever be treated the way I was that night."

After keeping the dashcam video from the public during the investigation, the Cedar Rapids Police Department released it to news media Thursday. The conversation between Jones and Mitchell can't be heard. Police said Jones' body microphone wasn't working.

The video shows Jones pulling Mitchell over at 1:17

a.m. Investigators say Jones initiated the stop because the light bulbs that illuminate the license plate on Mitchell's truck were burned out - an \$87 infraction. Police have said that Jones asked Mitchell to get out of the vehicle after smelling marijuana. After Mitchell gets out, Jones stands behind him and begins to handcuff him. The two exchange words and Mitchell appears to resist being cuffed. Jones pushes Mitchell against the truck, then takes him to the ground. With the officer clinging to his back, Mitchell gets up from the ground. The barking dog runs toward Mitchell, but it's not clear if the animal bites him.

Mitchell climbs back inside the vehicle with Jones holding on to him. Jones reaches for his gun, then the truck begins to roll. Jones fires three times before falling to the street as the truck speeds off. —AP

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Saudis order crude cuts to US, Europe

17 Big business warns Trump against mass deportation

18 China economy reflatens as producer prices rise

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2016



20 Cairo traffic poses daily survival test



INNING, Germany: A cyclist rides over a bridge on Lake Woerthsee close to this village in southern Germany yesterday. — AFP

GERMAN, FRENCH PATHS DIVERGE

GROWTH DIFFERS IN EUROZONE'S TOP ECONOMIES

PARIS: Growth paths in top eurozone economies Germany and France are headed in different directions, central bank data showed yesterday, raising the prospect of tension between the two powerhouses. France's central bank yesterday trimmed its growth forecasts for 2016 to 2018 citing a worsening of the global economy and Brexit, while Germany's Bundesbank lifted its outlook. The diverging projections in the eurozone's two top economies came a day after the European Central Bank extended measures to underpin the bloc's economy as it grapples with political uncertainties.

Germany and neighboring France both hold crunch elections in 2017. The EU must also negotiate with Britain on its looming exit, as well as navigate Italy's future after the resignation of Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi. Revising its GDP growth forecasts down, the Bank of France said in a statement that it was "mainly due to the deterioration in the international environment".

No wriggle room

"The projection is thus particularly affected by less favorable foreign demand prospects., notably as a result of the impact of Brexit on the UK economy and of its dissemination to the euro area economies." The French central bank revised its 2016 and 2017 growth forecast down to 1.3 percent, having previously expected growth of 1.4 percent this year and 1.5 percent next year. It also predicted growth of 1.4 percent in 2018, down from its previous figure of 1.6 percent.

ECB board member Benoit Coeure, a Frenchman, warned presidential contenders in next year's elections not to expect any financial wriggle room. Candidates should not expect to find on winning "a kitty or budgetary margins of maneuver that they're going to be able to spend", Coeure said on Europe 1 radio. "These margins of maneuver don't exist and there's a risk of a rise in interest rates," he said. And he pointed out that growth in France would be weaker than in the rest of the eurozone. "France is lagging behind in terms of growth," he added.

IHS Markit economist Howard Archer said he saw lower growth rates for French GDP growth this year and next. "We suspect that political uncertainty will take an appreciable toll on French economic activity in the first half of the year. Meanwhile, French structural problems remain a concern," he said in written comments. Michael Hewson, of CMC Markets, said the figures highlighted the challenges for Francois Hollande's successor and "any reluctance to look at structural reforms in the coming months is only likely to heighten tension between Berlin and Paris".

'Sound upward path'

Meanwhile European economic powerhouse Germany is "on a sound upward path" for faster-than-expected growth in 2016 and 2017, its central bank said yesterday, but remains at risk from Donald Trump and Brexit. The country's "main driver is buoyant domestic demand, which is being bolstered by the favourable situation in the labour market and by rising household income," Bundesbank president Jens Weidmann said in a statement

accompanying the semi-annual report. The economy should expand by 1.8 percent in both 2016 and 2017, the bank's forecasters predict, upping their previous forecasts of 1.7 percent growth this year and 1.4 percent next year. But looking to the wider world, the economists warn that "risks are tilted to the downside" in the years ahead, with potential danger from a slowdown in China, Britain's exit from the EU and uncertain economic policy under US President-elect Donald Trump.

Britain voted on June 23 to leave the EU, and Prime Minister Theresa May has promised to trigger the two-year divorce process at the end of March. ECB chief Mario Draghi on Monday highlighted the risks which the referendum result poses for European economies. "Looking at the recent events, it is quite clear that geopolitical uncertainty has become the major source of uncertainty for the months to come," he said. Increased energy prices in future are also expected to cut the amount consumers have in their pockets to spend in both Germany and France, both central banks said. — AFP

CRUDE MAKES SHAKY GAINS

LONDON: Oil prices were edging higher for a second session yesterday on hopes that non-OPEC producers meeting in Vienna would agree to cut output to bolster the group's own agreement to limit production. Still, a strong US dollar sapped some of the price strength, and both benchmarks remained roughly 2 percent below the highs reached just after the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries announced plans to cut production late last month, and were on track to close the week with small losses.

Today, oil ministers from OPEC countries will meet non-OPEC producers in Vienna to seek help in curbing a global glut. Brent crude for February delivery was up 5 cents at \$53.94 a barrel by 1257 GMT, after trading as high as \$54.46 and rising 1.7 percent on Thursday. The contract hit its highest since July 2015 at \$55.33 on Monday. US crude for January delivery was up 22 cents at \$51.06 a barrel after trading as high as \$51.50.

Gains in the US dollar index versus a basket of currencies, which makes oil more expensive to many of the world's buyers, helped pull prices back from the highs reached earlier in the day. Russia has said it would cut 300,000 barrels per day, meaning other non-OPEC producers combined would need to pledge the same amount to lower output by the 600,000 bpd OPEC wants. Russia's No. 2 oil producer Lukoil said yesterday it was ready to take part in the output cut commitment.

Azerbaijan has said it will come to the Austrian capital with proposals for its own reduction, while Kazakhstan's energy minister said they may offer to freeze output at last month's level. Still, questions remained over such output plans. "The market wants to find an excuse to move higher and is therefore inclined to believe," Commerzbank analyst Eugen Weinberg told the Reuters Global Oil Forum. "It's questionable whether those beliefs are sustainable."

Weinberg said "so many questions remain" on the implementation of non-OPEC cuts that the plan could fall to pieces. "Since the oil sector in Russia is only partly state-owned the companies will need to get compensated for any production freeze/cuts," he said, adding: "Talking to the Russian companies, there is no indication or intention to cut as well." — Reuters

EURO DROPS

NEW YORK: The euro dropped yesterday for the second consecutive day after the European Central Bank on Thursday extended its bond-buying program longer than many had anticipated, even as it cut the size of the monthly purchases. The ECB said it would reduce its monthly asset buys to 60 billion euros starting in April from 80 billion currently and extend purchases to December from March. It reserved the right to increase the size of purchases again.

Underlying its promise for extensive stimulus, the ECB predicted inflation at 1.7 percent in 2019, arguing that more-costly energy could boost consumer prices even without lifting the underlying trend. "The extension of the program was longer than most had expected, and a lot of the language ... was pretty dovish," said Erik Nelson, a currency analyst at Wells Fargo in New York. "Inflation forecasts were pretty subdued all the way out to 2019, and growth forecasts were pretty low, and the risks are tilted to the downside." The euro dropped to \$1.0548, its lowest since Monday, and was last down 0.47 percent at \$1.0566.

The US Federal Reserve is widely expected to raise interest rates for the first time this year when it meets next week but may take a cautious tone on the economy. Traders will focus on the Fed's economic projections, known colloquially as the dot plot, for indications of any change in expectations following Donald Trump's surprise election as US president on Nov 8. Trump's victory increased market expectations of greater fiscal stimulus that could boost economic growth and inflation. "In the last three or four meetings, we've seen a continual marking down in the dot plot," Nelson said, "so even if you see the officials maintain the current forecast, it could be viewed as mildly hawkish."

The dollar gained 0.37 percent to 101.47 against a basket of six major currencies. — Reuters

WORLD STOCKS SQUEEZE OUT GAINS, ITALY BANK TREMBLES

LONDON: Global stock markets eked out further gains yesterday after a strong week, but Milan equities were held back by more bad news for the world's oldest bank, Monte dei Paschi. Key European indices rose by up to around half a percent as positive sentiment inspired by the European Central Bank's continued support for the eurozone spilled over from Thursday. "Markets across Europe are clinging stubbornly onto the gains made throughout the week," said Joshua Mahony, analyst at IG trading group.

"Yesterday's ECB meeting marked the penultimate risk event of the year," he said, ahead of next week's Fed meeting which is now the main focus for markets. "The key to the meeting is likely to be how many rate hikes the Fed is forecasting for next year given that markets are currently only pricing in one by November," said analyst Craig Erlam at Oanda.

Wall Street also opened on a slightly firmer note. But Milan shares dropped by more than one percent, dragged down by Monte dei Paschi di Siena (BMPS), whose stock tumbled over 13 percent after reports the ECB had denied it more time to raise the cash it needs to avoid being wound down.

ECB's reported 'No'

BMPS on Wednesday asked the European Central Bank for two more weeks to find the funds, saying political instability created by Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's resignation had left investors reluctant to commit funds. But the ECB's supervisory board was reported to have said "no" Friday, upping pressure on the Italian government to bail



TOKYO: A woman walks by an electronic stock board of a securities firm yesterday. — AFP

out the ailing institution. European equities had risen Thursday, with Paris hitting a 2016 high, and US stocks hit new records after the European Central Bank extended its massive stimulus program beyond March. Stocks have rallied all week, as markets also brushed off political uncertainty in eurozone member Italy triggered by Renzi's resignation.

Oil producers

Focus was also on the oil market as OPEC and non-OPEC crude producing nations meet in Vienna today to nail down details on implementing a deal to cut output. "Market sentiment today will be driven by expectations for tomorrow's summit between OPEC and non-OPEC members, with the commitment

of the latter pivotal for last week's production cut deal to succeed," Accendo Markets said in a note to clients.

After months of disagreement, OPEC members last month hammered out a deal to cut oil output for the first time in eight years. Moscow - which is not a member of the oil cartel - has said it is ready to reduce crude output by 300,000 barrels a day in the first half of 2017. In Asia yesterday, Japanese stocks rose as a weaker yen provided further support to exporters. Hong Kong-listed casino operators plunged however after a report said officials had halved the amount that cash gamblers can withdraw from ATMs in the gaming city of Macau, as China tries to choke off a flight of capital from the country. — Reuters



KARACHI: Pakistani stockbrokers sit under an index board during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) yesterday. — AFP

PAK BOURSE TO SELL 40% STAKE

KARACHI: Pakistan's main bourse is to sell a 40 percent stake next week, a company official said yesterday, citing Chinese and British consortia as among the prospective buyers. At least 17 entities have expressed an interest in the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), whose benchmark stock index was one of the best performing indices worldwide in 2016, gaining 38 percent so far. The PSX is currently owned by more than 300 Pakistani brokers. "We are opening bidding for the 40 percent share of the PSX on December 15," Shahzad Chamdia, chief of a PSX divestment committee, told AFP.

Analysts estimate the deal will be worth around \$225 million, but the committee declined to comment. "We have the reference share price being evaluated by a third party and will reveal it only on the bidding day," Chamdia said. Sources at the PSX said a consortium consisting of the Shanghai Stock Exchange, the Shenzhen Stock Exchange and a Chinese fund is bidding, as well as another consortium of UK financial institutions led by NASDAQ Technology.

Chamdia did not reveal the names of either consortia but confirmed that Chinese and British stock companies were

in the running. Other bidders include Pakistani banks and financial institutions, but their chances of winning are thought to be unlikely. Following the sale, the company plans to offer 20 percent of its shares to the public, Chamdia said. Under its stock exchange reforms, Pakistan merged its three stock exchanges - the Karachi Stock Exchange, the Lahore Stock Exchange and the Islamabad Stock Exchange - to form the PSX in January this year. The benchmark KSE index of 100 shares was at its highest ever level of 45319 points yesterday, compared with 32816 points on Jan 1. — AFP

SAUDIS ORDER OIL CUTS TO US, EUROPE

SINGAPORE/TOKYO/DUBAI: Saudi Arabia has told its US and European customers it will reduce oil deliveries from January as Russia signalled that a commitment from non-OPEC producers to join OPEC's output limits still faced challenges. Saudi Arabia told the customers about lower supplies in line with the output reduction agreed by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries last week, according to a Gulf oil industry source familiar with Saudi oil policy.

"We told our customers of the allocations and the compliance with allocations (for the cuts) for Saudi Arabia is 100 percent," the source said. He said cuts to Asian refiners would be lower than those to Europe, the United States and to major oil companies. "We are cutting more in the US because the inventories ... are very high," the source said. OPEC will meet

non-OPEC producing countries in Vienna on Dec 10, hoping non-OPEC will commit to cutting 600,000 barrels per day after its own members agreed to cut 1.2 million bpd last week.

OPEC sources said nine non-OPEC countries were set to join the meeting: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Oman, Mexico, Russia, Sudan, South Sudan, Bahrain and Malaysia. So far only Russia and Oman have pledged cuts, with one OPEC source saying Mexico could also contribute. In contrast, Kazakhstan plans to boost output in 2017 as it launches the long-delayed Kashagan project. Russia is expected to shoulder half of the non-OPEC cut, but yesterday Moscow signalled there were snags that needed to be addressed before a deal could be reached.

"Russia sees risks ahead of the deal if questions are not resolved," a Russian government source told

Reuters. "One hundred percent compliance is critical for the deal ... It's essential for non-OPEC to have a responsible approach towards the deal," the source said, adding there was also concern about rising OPEC supplies.

No cuts for Asia

Sources at eight refiners in Asia told Reuters they had been notified by state oil giant Saudi Aramco that in January it was set to supply full crude amounts. Of those eight, three refiners said they would load extra volumes they had requested. The sources declined to be identified as they were not authorized to speak to the media. "It's quite telling as there are not only no supply cuts, but they have given extra volumes," one of the sources said, indicating that the move underscored that producers were eager to

maintain market share in Asia. Some of the extra volumes were committed before the OPEC meeting on Nov 30, when output cuts were agreed. "It seems that Saudis do not trust Mr Sechin after his mockings back in 2008/2009 as he repeatedly promised and disappointed them on cuts," Commerzbank analyst Eugen Weinberg told the Reuters Global Oil Forum, referring to Igor Sechin, the CEO of top Russian oil producer Rosneft.

"I see the Saudi strategy for January deliveries to Asia as a confirmation of this distrust." Sechin has long been a harsh critic of cooperation with OPEC. However, Sechin has kept a low profile recently and this week agreed to sell a stake in Rosneft to a consortium of commodities trader Glencore and Qatar - a key ally of Saudi Arabia in OPEC. — Reuters

TUNISIA PARLIAMENT REJECTS TAX REFORMS

TUNIS: Tunisia's parliament has voted against two articles in next year's budget imposing taxes on lawyers and pharmacists, in a blow to government efforts to cut the deficit and implement economic reforms. The vote late on Thursday came a day after the government backtracked on plans to freeze public sector wages in 2017 following a deal with the powerful UGTT union. These reversals raise questions about Prime Minister Youssef Chahed's promises to impose economic changes to revive the battered economy. They could also deepen the country's financial difficulties in 2017.

Finance Minister Lamia Zribi said Tunisia would need \$3.7 billion in foreign loans in 2017, \$1 billion more than anticipated two months ago. The agreement signed on Wednesday with the UGTT will cost the government about \$418 million next year alone. Lawyers had campaigned against the planned taxes and held three nationwide strikes in a month and demonstrations in front of parliament and the prime minister's office. The UGTT had threatened a public sector general strike but called it off after the compromise deal.

In a tense session in parliament, lawmakers from the governing coalition - many of them attorneys by trade - refused to back the proposed taxes for lawyers, which would have imposed a charge ranging from \$8 to \$25 for each file presented in court. Despite holding a comfortable majority in parliament, the government also failed to push through a tax on imported drugs, a measure over which pharmacists had threatened to strike on Dec. 14.

A measure requiring liberal professions including lawyers to include their tax code on official papers was introduced, but analysts were skeptical about whether it would help reduce tax evasion. Zribi said about half of Tunisia's 8,000 lawyers do not declare their income. Tunisia has won praise for its democratic transition following a 2011 uprising. But successive governments have failed to create jobs or cut the public deficit. Chahed was brought in as prime minister by President Beji Caïd Essebsi in the summer to speed up economic reforms demanded by international lenders.

Economic analyst Moez Joudi said the country's financial position could worsen next year after the backtracking on budget measures. "It was the wrong message to send to tax evaders, to all Tunisians seeking tax justice and also to international lenders after the ruling coalition parties had announced their support for reforms," he told Reuters. — Reuters



ATHENS: Hundreds of people gather before taking part in a protest march marking a 24-hour general strike on Thursday. — AFP

THOUSANDS DEMONSTRATE IN GREECE OVER BUDGET CUTS

'LIVING STANDARDS WORSENING DAILY'

ATHENS: Thousands of Greek trade unionists demonstrated on Thursday against planned new cuts demanded by international creditors in a general strike that shut down several key sectors. According to police, some 15,000 people took part in separate union protests in Athens and another 5,000 in Thessaloniki. Civil servants, bank staff, merchant seamen, railway workers and state-employed doctors were among professionals taking part in the 24-hour stoppage against the measures, which are scheduled to be approved by lawmakers at the weekend.

The country's international creditors - fellow EU states and the International Monetary Fund - want Greece to overhaul its labour legislation to make crippling strikes less likely while also facilitating layoffs. Official data on Thursday showed persistently high unemployment figures at 23.1 percent in September, with an increase of some 60,500 jobs compared to a year earlier. Unions say hidden unemployment is far higher. A new budget

containing around one billion euros (\$1.07 billion) from extra taxation on items including cars, fixed telephone service, pay TV, fuel, tobacco, coffee and beer is to be approved by parliament early today. Public spending on salaries and pensions will also be cut by 5.7 billion next year.

Unions are also angry about plans to raise over €2.0 billion next year from privatizations, including 1.2 billion euros from the sale of regional airports. "These (austerity) policies worsen our living standards every day," said Evi, a Communist unionist who declined to give her surname. Seeking to sweeten the pill, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announced late Thursday new measures to help pensioners and the Greek islands in the frontline of Europe's migrant influx.

In a televised message, Tsipras announced the reinstatement of a 13th-month annual payment on the lowest retirement pensions, a benefit which had previously been removed as part of aus-

terity measures. The government will also postpone the planned sales tax rise for the east Aegean islands, which currently hold more than 16,000 migrants and refugees, the prime minister added. "The time has come for Europe to recognise that Greece is carrying a load for the whole of Europe, both with the refugee crisis and the economic crisis," Tsipras said.

He stressed that the new measures would not breach a third major loan deal reached with the country's EU and IMF creditors in 2013, as this year's primary budget - not including debt repayments - had bettered the fiscal goals. Already huge, Greece's debt after the three consecutive bailouts is on course to reach a mammoth €315 billion, or around 180 percent of gross domestic output this year, according to the latest EU data. Greece on Tuesday rejected pressure to extend its painful austerity program beyond 2018 as part of a deal to bridge differences between the squabbling international creditors. — AFP

BMPS REELS FROM ECB DEADLINE REPORTS

MILAN: Italy's Monte dei Paschi di Siena saw its stock tumble more than 10 percent yesterday over reports the ECB had denied it more time to raise the cash it needs to avoid being wound down. The world's oldest bank had on Wednesday asked the European Central Bank for two more weeks to find the funds, saying political instability created by Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's resignation had left investors reluctant to commit funds. But the ECB's supervisory board was reported to have said no Friday, upping pressure on the Italian government to bail out the ailing institution to avoid a financial crisis in the eurozone's third-largest economy.

The board is believed to have ruled two extra weeks would be of little use in turning around the historic bank. Both Monte dei Paschi di Siena (BMPS) and the

ECB declined to comment when contacted by AFP. The Italian bank's new CEO Marco Morelli, who took over the reins in September, had a meeting at the finance ministry on Friday to take stock, according to a source close to the ministry who declined to confirm the reports of the ECB's decision.

The bank was due to hold a board meeting later Friday. The savings of thousands of retail investors would be lost if it went belly up. The country's third-biggest bank is trying to pull off a five billion euro (\$5.38 billion) equity injection and had requested an extension of a deadline to find the money from the end of December to mid-January. It has lost nearly 85 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.

Banking crisis woes

Renzi's resignation has added to deep worries about the failure of the Italian banking sector - which features no fewer than 700 banks - to make meaningful progress towards consolidation. Non-performing loans on their books amount to a combined 360 billion euros, roughly a third of the eurozone's total bad debt. Italy is in political limbo following Renzi's crushing referendum defeat on Sunday. President Sergio Mattarella is currently holding political consultations to try and reach an agreement on who should be made caretaker PM.

The next general election had been scheduled for early 2018 but could be brought forward by up to a year. Though Renzi's centre-left Democratic Party (PD) is currently leading in the polls, the outgoing PM's downfall has opened the door to the possibility of the populist anti-euro Five Star movement coming to power. Among those in the running



MILAN: This photo taken on Jan 19, 2016 shows the logo of the Monte Dei Paschi di Siena bank. — AFP

for the top job are Finance Minister Pier Carlo Padoan - a seasoned economist with the potential to reassure financial markets and a jittery Europe - and Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni. Renzi, 41, is also

being touted as a possible contender for his own job and could cite the BMPS problem as a reason for him to stay on and ensure the political stability needed to avert a banking crisis. — AFP

BIG BUSINESS WARNS TRUMP AGAINST MASS DEPORTATION

EMPLOYERS FEAR ECONOMY WILL BE HURT

WASHINGTON: Still grappling with Donald Trump's surprise election, the nation's business community has begun to pressure the president-elect to abandon campaign-trail pledges of mass deportation and other hardline immigration policies that some large employers fear would hurt the economy.

The push, led by an advocacy group backed by New York billionaire Michael Bloomberg and media mogul Rupert Murdoch, is still in its infancy as the business world struggles to understand the tough-talking Trump's true intentions on an issue that defined his outsider campaign. Some groups, such as the US Chamber of Commerce, are holding off, doubtful that Trump will actually create a deportation force, as he suggested before his election, to expel those estimated 11 million immigrants in the country illegally.

But others are assembling teams of public officials and industry leaders on the ground in key states to encourage Trump to embrace a more forgiving immigration policy - in the name of economic development, if not human compassion. "This election clearly showed that Americans are wildly frustrated with our broken immigration system," said Jeremy Robbins, executive director of the New American Economy, a group whose board includes Bloomberg, Murdoch and leaders of business giants Marriott, Disney and Boeing. "But it would be a mistake to equate their desire for someone to secure the border with support for mass deportation or other hardline policies that would both devastate the economy and undermine core American values."

Robbins' organization has in recent days unveiled coalitions of business leaders and public officials that oppose an immigration crackdown - many of them Trump supporters - across Utah, California, South Carolina, Florida and Colorado with more coming in Arizona, Idaho, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Texas. Backed by its directors' deep



DES MOINES, Iowa: US President-Elect Donald Trump speaks to supporters during a rally on Thursday. — AP

pockets, the group is working to create a permanent infrastructure that will pressure the new administration and members of Congress in key battlegrounds even before the debate officially begins on Capitol Hill.

Trump railed against the dangers of illegal immigration throughout his campaign, several times sharing the stage with parents of children killed by immigrants in the country illegally. He also pledged to build a massive wall across the vast majority of the 2,100-mile border with Mexico. And, early in the campaign, he promised to create "a deportation force" to remove more than 11 million immigrants, although as Election Day approached, he left open the possibility for a pathway to legal status for some who entered the country illegally.

Softer approach

Trump's transition team declined to answer questions about his immigration plans this week. He hinted at a softer

approach in a Time magazine interview published this week, saying he would "work something out" to help immigrants who were brought to the United States illegally as children and granted work permits by President Barack Obama. On deportation, Trump told "60 Minutes" shortly after the election that he would prioritize deporting between 2 and 3 million "people that are criminal and have criminal records - gang members, drug dealers".

Such a plan would largely be in line with the Obama administration's current policy. The business world was caught flat-footed when Trump won. Business leaders had invested far more time coordinating immigration policy with Democrat Hillary Clinton before the election. None of the major players have had regular contact with Trump's transition team since his victory, even though Trump has vowed to make immigration a focus of the early days of his presidency. — AP

ALL EYES FOCUSED ON CLUES FOR US FED FUTURE HIKES

PARIS: Just how fast the Federal Reserve hikes rates next year will be the all-important question global investors will be hoping to get answered when the US central bank meets next week. But Fed policymakers are likely to leave them guessing until the Trump administration clarifies its tax cutting and infrastructure spending plans, economists say. There is little doubt that the Fed will raise interest rates for the first time in a year on Wednesday, with markets pricing in a near 100 percent chance for a quarter percentage point increase in its target range.

"With a rate hike being fully priced in, the focus will be on the statement and the updated Summary of Economic Projections," Unicredit economists wrote in a research note. "While financial markets have gotten excited about the prospects of fiscal stimulus by the incoming administration, we expect that FOMC members won't incorporate such a scenario into their forecasts until it has been approved," they added. The Fed increasingly stands out among major central banks with its tighter monetary policy after the European Central Bank extended its asset purchases on Thursday until at least the end of 2017, albeit at a slower pace.

Meanwhile, the Bank of England is widely expected to keep its key rate steady at 0.25 percent at a policy-setting meeting on Thursday and well beyond as it juggles risks from inflation, growth and Britain's decision to quit the European Union. On the data front, flash purchasing manager indexes from major economies on Thursday and various US business confidence surveys will offer clues as to how well confidence is holding up heading towards the end of the year.

Along with US retail sales data on Wednesday, investors will in particular be looking for any signs that the prospect of anticipated tax cuts and stimulus is already boosting morale. "Anecdotes and surveys suggest that business and consumer confidence has improved following the election," Bank of America Merrill Lynch economists Michelle Meyer and Alexander Lin wrote in a research note. — Reuters

CHINA HALVES CASH WITHDRAWALS IN MACAU

SHANGHAI: China is to halve the cash machine limit for certain cardholders visiting the gambling enclave of Macau, in its latest effort to curb massive capital outflows caused by the falling yuan, Hong Kong media reported yesterday. From today, punters using the UnionPay system - around half of those visiting the city from the mainland - will only be able to get 5,000 patacas (around \$600) from ATMs every day, the South China Morning Post reported.

The news sent casino stocks plunging, with Sands China down 4.93 percent in Hong Kong, Wynn Macau 5.82 percent lower and Galaxy Entertainment also losing 4.25 percent by the midday break. AFP was unable

to confirm the report and the Monetary Authority of Macao did not respond to requests for comment. UnionPay International said in a statement to AFP that its overseas cash withdrawal policies "remain the same" - 10,000 yuan per day with an annual cap of 100,000 yuan (\$14,500) - but added it complies with regulations and laws issued by relevant authorities.

The move, if it happens, appears to be the latest attempt by Chinese authorities to stem a growing tide of capital flowing out of China as locals seek safer investments abroad. Capital flight is estimated by Bloomberg to have reached \$1 trillion in 2015 and has continued during 2016, despite recent efforts by Beijing to tighten

restrictions on currency flows. DS Kim, an analyst at JPMorgan Chase & Co. in Hong Kong, described the move as "sending a message to safeguard against potential capital outflow abuses, amidst the continued decline in China's foreign exchange reserves", Bloomberg reported.

China's foreign exchange reserves, the world's largest hard-currency stockpile, dropped for the fifth-straight month in November to \$3.05 trillion, prompting authorities to step up control on capital flight. Beijing had earlier this week warned against "irrational" overseas acquisitions as more domestic funds were being spent overseas with Chinese company's increasing shopping spree on foreign asset. It also

indicated it could relax restrictions on foreign investment in some sectors.

Analysts predicted the latest move would impact the city's gaming revenues. "Union Pay is the mainland banks' credit card system, equivalent to Visa and Mastercard," Francis Lun of Hong Kong-based GEO Securities told AFP. "By shutting that off, that will really close the tab on the insurance industry and the gaming industry." China's State Administration of Foreign Exchange Reserve had already capped the amount of money UnionPay cardholders could spend overseas on insurance products earlier this year as wealthy Chinese have been buying up insurance policies in Hong Kong using credit cards. — AFP

APPLE INVESTS IN CHINA WIND FARMS

SHANGHAI: Apple has struck a partnership with the world's largest wind turbine maker, the American company said, marking the tech giant's largest clean energy project to date. It bought a 30 percent stake in subsidiaries of China-based Goldwind to run four projects that will produce 285 megawatts of power. The projects are located in Henan, Shandong, Shanxi and Yunnan provinces, Goldwind said in a statement to the Shenzhen stock exchange.

Apple is striving to improve the environmental impact of its supply chain, which is responsible for more than 70 percent of its total carbon footprint, the official Xinhua news agency reported. CEO Tim Cook had previously announced Apple would boost the efficiency of its manufacturing partners in China by building solar projects and other sources of clean energy. "We should help our supply chain become greener and more sustainable. So, instead of giving them fish, we want to teach them how to fish," Apple's vice president of environment, policy and social initiatives Lisa Jackson said, according to Xinhua. — AFP

ERDOGAN CALLS ON TURKS TO DO MORE TO BOOST CURRENCY

ISTANBUL: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan urged Turks yesterday to step up efforts to boost the Turkish lira by converting more foreign currency, as the campaign launched earlier this month showed only limited effect. Erdogan has spearheaded a national effort to boost the national currency, calling on people to change money "under their pillow" after the lira lost almost 20 percent in value so far in 2016. "I thank my people very, very much. But is it enough? It is not. I think my people should push this more," he told reporters in Istanbul.

Since his call on Dec 2, Turks across the country have rallied to support the ailing currency through incentives while state institutions have converted assets into lira including the defense industry support fund. In the latest move, Istanbul municipality said it was converting some \$42 million of assets held in US currency into Turkish lira. Some local businesses have made headlines by offering free wedding packages, kebabs, shaves and even a gravestone for changing money.

But economists doubt such moves will have a significant long-term impact in the face of political uncertainty and concerns over the already fragile economy. The lira rallied briefly earlier this week but has lost ground over the last two days and was trading on Friday at 3.47 to the dollar, a loss in value of 1.2 percent on the day. Inan Demir, economist at Nomura International, said that Prime Minister Binali Yildirim had disappointed markets on Thursday by failing to announce sustained and concrete measures to support the lira.

"In our view, the authorities' response to the exchange rate developments have been underwhelming so far," he said in a note to clients. — AFP

CHINA ECONOMY REFLATES AS PRODUCER PRICES RISE

FACTORY-GATE INFLATION HITS 5-YEAR HIGH

BEIJING: China's producer prices rose at the fastest pace in more than five years in November as prices of coal, steel and other building materials soared, boosting industrial profits and giving firms more cash flow to pay off mountains of debt. The stronger-than-expected 3.3 percent surge in prices, along with upbeat factory readings from China, the United States and Europe, add to views that the global economy may be slowly reflating again thanks to a pick-up in industrial activity.

"This (the PPI jump) confirms our view that China has emerged from a multi-year deflationary trap," ANZ said in a note. While some heavy industries such as coal mining, steel mills and metal processors saw the biggest rebound, official data yesterday showed the price recovery was also becoming more broad-based, with more sectors emerging from deflation.

Consumer inflation also picked up more than expected to 2.3 percent from a year earlier, the highest since April, due to higher food prices. Though the price gains were modest, they reinforced views that the central bank will be in no rush to loosen monetary policy again anytime soon, and even fueled speculation as to when the People's Bank of China may start tightening conditions. China's central bank has not cut interest rates since October 2015, when worries about deflation were more pressing, opting instead for regular injections of funds into the financial system and targeted infusions of cash into the weakest parts of the economy, such as rural areas.

"While there remains no immediate pressure on the central bank to raise interest rates, the uptick in inflationary pressures in November, combined with downward pressure on the renminbi-exchange rate, highlight the risk that monetary policy tightening may begin earlier than The EIU currently expects," said Dan Wang, China analyst at The Economist Intelligence Unit. Wang currently expects the PBOC will start to raise interest rates from the fourth quarter of next year.



HANGZHOU, China: People buy meat at a supermarket in eastern Zhejiang province yesterday. — AFP

Analysts polled by Reuters had expected producer prices to rise by a more modest 2.2 percent, up from 1.2 percent in October, while consumer prices had been expected to pick up marginally to 2.2 percent from 2.1 percent. "Today's data shows future (PBOC) easing is even less likely. I don't see any need for a RRR cut," Capital Economics' China economist Julian Evans-Pritchard said, referring to a cut in banks' reserve requirements.

"With what is going on with China's declining foreign reserves, if PBOC injects liquidity to replenish it, it is already kind of tightening without having to resort to such high-profile measures," he said, adding that the PBOC has plenty of tools at disposal to adjust liquidity in the market. The central bank said in its third-quarter monetary policy implementation report it will maintain ample liquidity in the financial system while taking steps to prevent asset bubbles in an increasingly leveraged economy.

Reflation Game

China's producer prices rose in September for the first time in nearly five years thanks to a rebound in com-

modity prices. A construction boom led by higher government spending and a blistering housing market rally have boosted prices for materials from steel and copper to glass and cement, with speculators adding fuel to a months-long rally in China's commodity futures markets. Government efforts to reduce excess capacity in industrial and mining sectors have also buoyed prices by creating shortages in some areas, such as coal. That helped boost industrial profits 9.6 percent in October from a year earlier.

Chinese steel and iron ore futures rose for a sixth straight session on Friday, spurred by upbeat trade data on Thursday and worries over tighter supply as Beijing intensifies efforts to cut excess steel capacity. Futures prices for steel reinforcement bars used in construction have surged to 31-month highs, while iron ore is at its strongest since late 2014.

China's November imports expanded 6.7 percent on-year, the fastest in more than two years, as factories replenished inventories of raw materials, helping to lift commodity prices globally.—Reuters

BUSES GRIND TO HALT IN VENEZUELA CRISIS

CARACAS: All William Faneite needed to keep driving his old bus in Caracas was a new carburetor. Surely, in a city of two million people, that couldn't be hard to find? But getting his hands on a spare took four months - par for the course in an economic crisis that has seen one in two public buses in Venezuela grind to a halt. Filling a bus's tank with petrol in oil-rich Venezuela is super-cheap. But getting the parts to run it these days is an ordeal.

In Faneite's case, it meant four months without work for the 51-year-old father of four. Rampant inflation has driven up the price of tires, batteries and carburetors. "We couldn't get hold of a spare. We had to spend four months looking around," he told AFP. When he did find one, "it was super expensive." The bus's owner leases the vehicle, a battered old blue 1987 model, to him and he earns a commission based on the number of passengers.

Luckily for Faneite, the owner paid the bill for the repair. Now Faneite is back at the wheel, anxiously wondering when the bus will break down again. Dozens of buses and minibus-style public vehicles stand abandoned and rusting in wastelands. "Fifty percent of the fleet is out of action across the whole country," or about 100,000 vehicles, said Erick Zuleta, president of the National Transport Federation. "And the situation is getting worse."

Oil and Gas

Falling prices for its crucial oil exports have left Venezuela short of dollars to import supplies. The government's special low fixed exchange rate is meant to



CARACAS: This photo taken on Oct 13, 2016 shows abandoned buses in a public bus parking in the Catia neighborhood of the Venezuelan capital. —AFP

help Venezuelans afford essential goods, such as tires and engine oil. But there just aren't enough to go round. Drivers have to buy spares on the black market, where they cost five times the official price. The price of a bus ticket meanwhile recently rose to the equivalent of about 10 US cents at the official rate.

That seems like little, but in Venezuela's lopsided monetary situation nothing is as simple as it looks. Driving his routes in eastern Caracas, Faneite earns about 5,000 bolivars a day. That gives him nearly eight

dollars of spending power at the official fixed exchange rate. But it is worth little more than one dollar on the black market, where Venezuelans are forced to buy much of what they need to live. If Faneite wants to buy lunch, it eats up half of his daily earnings. "It is impossible to operate with the current prices," says bus drivers' union leader Hugo Ocando. He spoke standing in a yard where a handful of mechanics toiled trying to repair about 20 broken-down buses.

Waiting for the bus

Used to queuing for rations of food and medicine, Venezuelans also form long lines to catch one of the dwindling numbers of buses. Victor Rojas, 25, crosses the city from west to east to get to his job at a cinema. "You waste a lot of time waiting for the minibus to come," he said. "And when you do get on, it is falling to pieces." Those who have to travel from town to town often see their trip turn into an Odyssey as the few buses available make detours to cover extra routes.

Ginette Arellano, 42, sits on the bus with her son for up to nine hours to get to Caracas from her hometown of Barquisimeto, about 350 km away. On top of that, public buses are prey to violence in one of the world's most dangerous cities. Driver Faneite says he has been the victim of three armed robberies. Socialist President Nicolas Maduro has vowed to pull Venezuelans out of an economic crisis which he says is a capitalist conspiracy. Maduro, 54, is a former bus driver. —AFP

CAIRO TRAFFIC POSES DAILY SURVIVAL TEST

DISREGARD OF RULES MAIN CAUSE OF CHAOS

CAIRO: In an endless cacophony of car horns, Mostafa Ekram each day confronts the frenzy of Cairo's traffic jams: Pedestrians darting out into the street, swerving tuk-tuks and even donkey carts. At the wheel of his SUV, in the heart of Egypt's bustling capital, he doesn't bat an eyelid as he narrowly dodges a black tuk-tuk, a three-wheeled vehicle, driving in the wrong direction. It's an everyday occurrence in Cairo, a sprawling metropolis of 20 million inhabitants where traffic laws are rarely respected and traffic jams can grind on well into the night. "I feel like a prisoner in a car looking for an escape," says Ekram, a young sales manager. "Traffic jams use up your energy and your time."

If a stretch of road is clear, drivers, often with a mobile phone in one hand, race in the streets, competing for speed, in the general absence of traffic lights and pedestrian crossings. Two years ago, Egyptian authorities adopted an ambitious plan to install cameras at all intersections - 80 percent completed so far - and radars on roads most prone to accidents.

The cause of the chaos on the roads of Cairo is clear to traffic police official Emad Hammad. "The main problem is the citizens' attitude," he says, giving the common example of parking in no-parking areas that contributes to the congestion. With complete disregard for other motorists, drivers will often slow down to ask directions or to greet a friend, to exchange cigarettes or money.

Public transport

According to official figures, 3.3 million cars ply the roads of Cairo. In spite of a ring road, intertwining highways and flyovers, the bottlenecks persist. Congestion

cost Egypt around \$8 billion, or 3.6 percent of GDP, in 2011, according to the World Bank, which estimates the figure will more than double by 2030. The high economic losses were calculated on the basis of delayed deliveries and fuel wasted in traffic jams.

Ossama Okail, a university professor specializing in traffic, doubts that the measures proposed by the authorities will bring an end to the jams. "The best remedy is high-quality public transport... to convince people to use them instead of using their cars," Okail says. Regardless of the costs, those with the means still opt to drive their own car or take a taxi rather than use public transport. "A bus can transport 50 passengers, which would normally take 40 cars to do," says Okail.

The authorities also plan to extend the Cairo metro, whose three existing lines are used by as many as 3.5 million commuters a day. Most public buses, in contrast to the relatively new metro, are worn out, rickety, uncomfortable and always crowded.

Escape the jams

"If public transport were better organized... I would have abandoned my car," says engineer Mohamed Mohamed. Still, "when I can, I take the subway". And while waiting for change, Heba Essam, an employee of a multinational corporation, has found another solution to escape the traffic jams: she works two days a week from home. Driving to work and back takes four hours. "I'm already tired by the time I arrive at work in the morning," says the 36-year-old, who always drives in fear of accidents on Cairo's roads. —AFP



CAIRO: A general view shows pedestrians walking between cars stuck in a traffic jam on a highway in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, on November 7, 2016. —AFP

BREXIT THE WRONG FIT FOR ENGLISH FANCY DRESS FIRM

GAINSBOROUGH, England: With Christmas music blaring, staff at English fancy dress company Smiffys are stuffing elf outfits and Santa Claus suits into boxes to send to clients across Europe. Before long, the headquarters of the 122-year-old family business will be heading to the Netherlands too - a sign of how uncertainty over Britain's exit from the European Union is forcing some companies to rethink their plans. The company, based in Lincolnshire, central England, says it has been badly hit by the fall of the pound since Britons voted for Brexit in June, because it imports most of its products from manufacturers in China.

Smiffys, which says it exports to 42 countries and has an annual turnover of £56 million (\$70.5 million), is also concerned about the lack of clarity on when Britain will trigger the divorce process from the EU and whether companies will be able to access the bloc's tariff-free single market post-Brexit. "We cannot afford to wait on a wing and a prayer for the government to negotiate something," said Director Elliott Peckett. "If there are no deals in place prior to us pulling out then we will be faced with exporting 30-40 percent of our sales to Europe, which will carry a tariff that will make us uncompetitive."

He declined to say when the firm would shift its base to the Netherlands. It is also opening a distribution site in Germany next week, and has offices in Australia and the United States. Smiffys currently employs dozens of non-British EU nationals among its 250 staff in the UK, and Peckett complained at the lack of clarity from members of parliament or the government about whether they would have the right to stay. "We've had absolutely no commitment from any MPs or government agencies or bodies to say the jobs of those people are safe and that they can continue to live and work in the UK." —Reuters

Weekender

Kuwait Times
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India's colonial opera house restored to past glory

SEE PAGE 29

A picture taken on December 8, 2016 shows the Eiffel Tower through a haze of pollution in Paris.—AFP





Kris Jenner has reportedly told Blac Chyna there's 'no beef' between her and the family

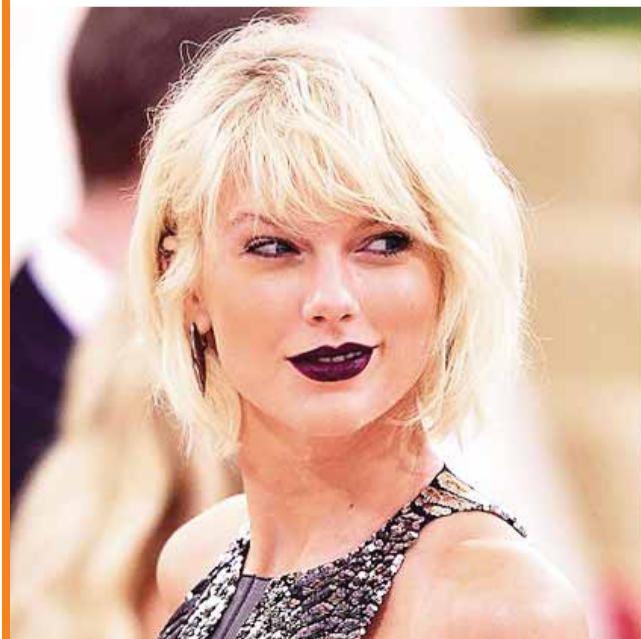
The 28-year-old model attempted to submit a request to trademark her full name - which would only include the famous surname when she marries fiance Rob Kardashian - earlier this week, but was met with difficulty when the legal representatives for sisters Kim, Kourtney, and Khloe Kardashian filed documents to block her request from going through. Now, 61-year-old momager Kris has stepped in to cool the feud between the girls, and has reportedly reassured Chyna that it was merely a "simple mix-up". According to TMZ, Kris told Chyna "there's no beef ... it was a simple mix-up and she's calling off the legal eagles". The publication also reports that Kourtney, 37, Kim, 36, and Khloe, 32, have "reached out" to their future sister-in-law - who shares newly born daughter Dream Renee Kardashian with 29-year-old Rob - to reassure her that "their lawyers were following standard operations" when the documents were filed. It isn't the first time the feud has been speculated to be

a big misunderstanding either, as a source close to the family previously stated the girls' lawyers "automatically oppose" anyone who places a trademark request for their name. The insider claimed: "Their trademark attorneys automatically oppose anyone trying to trademark 'Kardashian'. I doubt the girls were even aware. Everyone loves each other. It's just business." The news comes after Chyna - who also has four-year-old son King Cairo with ex-partner Tyga - was reportedly left "heartbroken" by the feud. A source said: "Chyna is really heartbroken over this whole name feud. "She thinks it's just sad that the Kardashian family can't stop thinking for themselves and just accept her as one of them. Her and Rob [Kardashian] are practically married and she's the mother of his child - why can't they accept that? "She thinks they are total fakes, pretending to welcome her into the family. It was all bulls**t."

Taylor Swift and Zayn Malik have released a surprise duet

The 'Bad Blood' hitmaker has teamed up with the former One Direction hunk on 'I Don't Wanna Live Forever', which is taken from the 'Fifty Shades Darker' soundtrack and is the 26-year-old singer's first new music this year. Taylor shared the artwork and a clip of the track on her social media accounts before it unexpectedly appeared in the US iTunes Store late on Thursday (08.12.16) night. The description of the track on iTunes says it features "two of pop's brightest stars [teaming up] for a passionate duet". 'I Don't Wanna Live Forever' is already top of the iTunes chart. Taylor took a screenshot of the figures and wrote on Instagram: "Well that escalated quickly." The mid-tempo song sees Taylor and Zayn taking turns to deliver lines including, "Baby, baby, I feel crazy/Up all night, all night and every day/Give me something, oh, but you say nothing/What is happening

tonight?" and "I don't wanna live forever/'Cause I know I'll be living in pain/I don't want to fit wherever, I just want to keep calling your name/'Til you come back home." The 'Shake It Off' singer - who previously dated Zayn's former bandmate Harry Styles and is close friends with her collaborator's girlfriend Gigi Hadid - teamed up with Sam Dew and Jack Antonoff to write the song, and the track came together in just a week. Jack revealed on Twitter: "I don't wanna live forever came together very quickly. wrote it with Taylor and sam dew and produced it at home mostly on paper sounds. "recorded Taylor at my house. Zayn sent parts from LA - we did it in a week basically. I've never had something come out that quick.(sic)" It is not yet known when the song will be released outside of the US.



Kirk Douglas has admitted to feeling 'lonely' as he celebrates his 100th birthday

The iconic Hollywood actor reached the milestone age as he rang in his birthday on Friday (09.12.16), but said he finds it difficult to understand the movie industry these days as he "doesn't know" the stars of today. Speaking to Variety magazine, the 'Spartacus' star said: "I am now 100 years old. I read about Hollywood, and I don't know the people. Where is Burt [Lancaster]? Where is Laurence Olivier? They're all gone. I miss them. I feel lonely." Life for the 'Champion' actor - who is often hailed as one of the last remaining survivors of the golden age of film - hasn't been easy though, as he was previously involved in a helicopter crash in 1991, which killed two people and left him with a compressed spine. The star also suffered from a stroke in 1996, which resulted in debilitated speech. Variety reports that Kirk interrupted the interview to apologise for his slow manner of speaking, when he said: "I hope you understand me, because I used to talk better than this." Meanwhile, the 'Paths of Glory' actor said in an interview in 2011 that he doesn't "think about death" and instead was focusing his energy on "writing". He said at the time: "I don't think about death, I think about life. Since my stroke interfered with my speech I find myself writing more." And the 'Lonely Are the Brave' star still isn't planning on giving up any time soon, as he says he'll do another milestone interview "when I'm 200". He said: "I didn't realise when I reached 100 years old I would be doing interviews. I thought by now I would relax, and I'm doing more interviews than I used to. "But I think now it's time for me to relax. We're doing this again when I'm 200."



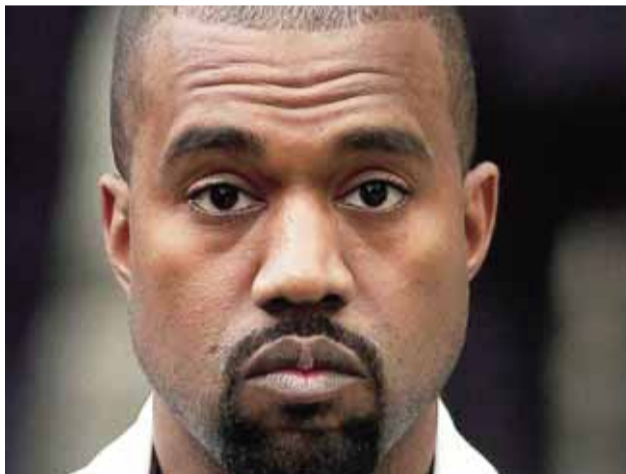
Conor McGregor has landed himself a role in the upcoming season of 'Game of Thrones'

The 28-year-old professional mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter has been offered a small role on the HBO hit fantasy drama, and will join the cast in time for start of season seven. The news was announced by Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) President Dana White during an appearance on FOX Sports Live earlier this week. He said: "I knew that a few months ago that they were interested in putting him in the show. And I'm glad he did it. It'll be great. Yeah, the show's huge, it's awesome and I'm excited for him." The casting choice has left fans of both Conor and the show with tongues wagging as speculation circles about the kind of role the UFC star will play in the production. 'Game of Thrones' fan website Watchers on the Wall - which is known for having insights into the show - reported that Conor would be portraying a member of Euron Greyjoy's crew on the ship Silence, and won't have any lines as all the shipmates have had their tongues removed. The website reported: "Conor McGregor will be playing a pirate belonging to Euron Greyjoy's crew, on the ship Silence. The part is a fairly small one, a cameo, so fans who are worried about his acting ability, don't sweat it. There is no speaking involved with this part, and it's definitely a short-term gig." Conor's role in the program comes as he is known to be a close friend of Hafþor Julius Björnsson - the Icelandic professional strongman who plays The Mountain - sparking speculation for a fight scene between the two.

GIGI HADID HAS BEEN BATTLING WITH HASHIMOTO'S DISEASE FOR TWO YEARS

The 21-year-old supermodel has revealed her metabolism has changed "like crazy" over the past year because of the condition, which is a thyroid disease and means the body fights against its own tissue, and has been taking medication to slow the disease down since she was diagnosed. Speaking to Elle.com about the condition, the blonde beauty said: "My metabolism actually changed like crazy this year. I have Hashimoto's disease. It's a thyroid disease. "It's now been two years since taking the medication for it." And the catwalk icon has revealed due to the illness, she was determined not to drop anymore weight prior to gracing the runway for the annual Victoria's Secret Fashion Show, which took place in Paris, France, on Monday (05.12.16). She explained: "So for the [Victoria's Secret] show I didn't want to lose any more weight." And the star has hinted she is frustrated by the disease because

all she wants is to have "muscles in the right place" instead of having her body attic her toned limbs. She said: "I just want to have muscles in the right place, and if my butt can get a little perkier, then that's good." Meanwhile Gigi - who is the daughter of Yolanda Hadid, who opened up about her battle with Lyme disease last year - has revealed when times get tough she thinks about her high school coaches and what their opinion of her might be now. She explained: "[During stressful times] I try to sit myself down and say, 'If it wasn't for the world's opinion, do I think I did a good job?' 'Would my coaches in high school be proud of me?' Those little things I try and think of. When my high school volleyball coach will text me and say, 'I think that was bad ass.' That's what makes me happy."



Kanye West has been spotted for the first time since his hospitalization

The 39-year-old rapper was admitted to UCLA Medical Centre last month after suffering from sleep deprivation and exhaustion, and was discharged last week to continue medical treatment in the privacy of his own home. On Thursday (09.12.16) the 'Bound 2' hitmaker was photographed for the first time since his ordeal - which saw him cancel 21 dates of his 'Saint Pablo Tour' - as he visited an art exhibit in Los Angeles. In a photo posted on Instagram by artist Giovanni Bassan, the 'Famous' rapper can be seen sporting newly dyed blonde hair, and looked relaxed as he sat backstage at MOCA's Pacific Design Centre. The photo - which was posted to Giovanni's private account and made public by multiple sources - was reportedly captioned: "K s in da house (sic)" The news of the 'Gold Digger' singer's venture out of the house comes after it was previously reported the Kanye - who shares three-year-old daughter North and 12-month-old son Saint with wife Kim Kardashian West - was feeling more relaxed now that he's returned to his Bel-Air mansion. Kanye has even built a temporary studio in his mansion and is now making new music, according to the gossip website TMZ. But the decision to launch himself back into his work might not come as a surprise to his famous family, as he reportedly wanted to work on his music and clothing line whilst he was still recovering in hospital. A source said: "Kanye keeps wanting to work. At the hospital, he requested that recording equipment be brought to the hospital so he can record in his bed. And he has kept asking to see sketches of his fashion lines. "He continues to want to work and Kim has to keep telling him to rest."

Nick Cannon and Brittany Bell are expecting a baby boy

The 'America's Got Talent' host is already a father to five-year-old Moroccan and Monroe - who he has with ex-wife Mariah Carey, and now a source has confirmed to Us Weekly magazine that his former girlfriend is seven months along with his second son. Nick recently admitted he thinks becoming a father again is "outstanding" news, even though it is in "unexpected" circumstances as he and Brittany are not together. He gushed: "It's outstanding. Honestly they say even in unexpected situations, you still embrace the beauty of bringing a life into this world, because that is what life is all about." The 36-year-old star recently spent Thanksgiving in Hawaii with his ex-wife and their twins because he feels it is important to put the kids first. He said: "Yeah man, it's all about the kids." Nick previously joked he was "doing the Lord's work" when he confirmed Brittany is having his baby. Asked about Brittany's pregnancy, he said: "Who said it wasn't mine? "I've got a baby on the way ... absolutely ... God said be fruitful and multiply. "I'm doing the Lord's work ... everybody get a baby! I'm passing them out." While he was open about his baby, Nick, played coy when asked about Mariah's recent split from fiancé James Packer. After being told "Mariah's available again", he replied: "Is she? You know better than me. Is she?" And after he was then informed the couple have called off their engagement, Nick acted surprised and said: "Did they? I thought they were working it out. "I'm on a need-to-know basis. As long as my kids are good...I don't want to know none of that other stuff."



France to unveil copy of landmark prehistoric art cave

The last of four boys who discovered the Lascaux cave paintings, a stunning display of prehistoric art in southwest France, will visit a new replica of the site today.

Simon Coencas, now 89, will join President Francois Hollande for the inauguration of the display at a visitors' centre in Montignac, a village at the foot of the hills where he discovered the cave as a teenager.

More than seven decades after he got his first look at the site, Coencas will—health permitting—visit a complete copy of the caves. The tale of how he and three friends discovered the site, in the Dordogne region in southwestern France, is like something out of a children's adventure book.

On September 14, 1940, with World War II raging and the Nazis already in Paris, a friend of Coencas enlisted him and the other boys to explore a hole in the ground in the hills above the village that his dog had found a few days earlier.

One of the boys had to carve out a space with his knife so they could get into the cave and continue their search by the light of a paraffin lamp. "With my pals, we climbed down to explore a hole, we advanced bit by bit and at some point we came up upon the chamber of the bulls," he told AFP.

It was by that light that they first saw the paintings: horses, bulls and deer jumping out of the walls of the cave.

Copies to save the original

The spectacular cave of prehistoric art is thought to be 18,000 years old. Such is its importance that it has been on UNESCO's list of world heritage sites since 1979. But tourists have been kept away from the original site since 1963 because the carbon dioxide they exhaled was damaging the paintings, playing havoc with the cave's fragile ecosystem.

And the early work preparing the site for visitors also disturbed its environment more than the authorities foresaw. Lascaux 2, an earlier copy of the site, opened in 1983, but it reproduced only 90 per cent of the cave's wall art.

Lascaux 3 is a travelling exhibition showing highlights from the site. Lascaux 4, the latest version which will be inaugurated on Saturday and open to visitors the following week, was the logical next step. "It's the first time that we've reconstructed the entire Lascaux cave," said Jean-Pierre Chadelle, an



archaeologist working with the Dordogne regional authority.

The new reproduction of the site took a team of 30 workers four years to complete at a cost of 66 million euros (\$70 million). One problem with Lascaux 2 was that it is up the hill and too close to the original site, given the volume of visitors and traffic.

The new site, located in the village, will take the pressure off the hillside site.

'It was a sanctuary'

As for the original site, even experts in the field have had their access to the original site severely restricted. Yves Coppens, the paleontologist who leads the scientists charged with preserving the original cave, insisted the measures were necessary. But after years of problems, they had finally managed to stabilize the site's environment, he added. "That said, we remain extremely vigilant. The cave

remains fragile." Coppens, 82, also has vivid memories of his first visit to the site, as a 13-year-old boy. "I got goosebumps," he recalled. "It was a sanctuary. We were in a religious world." Coencas moved away from the village soon after the discovery as his family returned to Paris.

From a family of Jews, he barely escaped deportation to the wartime death camps. His parents were not so lucky. After the war, he rebuilt his life back in Paris, but in 1986 he returned to his old haunts to meet up with his three boyhood friends, who have all since died. He still has fond memories of the games his gang played hunting for treasure. "We were hoping to find a treasure. We found one, but not the one we thought we would," he said with a smile. — AFP



This file photo taken on November 18, 2016 shows French Simon Coencas, the last living member of a group of teenagers who in 1940 discovered the Lascaux caves near Montignac in Southern France, posing at his home in Paris on November 18, 2016.



This file photo taken on December 8, 2015 shows painters working on a fac simile from the bull room, a famous painting of the Lascaux cave, at the future international cave arts museum, Lascaux IV, at Montigny-Lascaux. — AFP photos



A person visits on November 28, 2016 the true-to-life replica of the renowned Lascaux's Stone Age cave with its Paleolithic paintings, in Montignac, southwestern France.



In this Dec 1, 2016 photo young people stand in front of a fountain that is decorated with Christmas lights in downtown Frankfurt. — AP

German Christmas markets draw crowds

The aroma of hot mulled gluehwein wine mingling with the scent of bratwurst, roasted almonds and gingerbread: these are among the signature attractions of Germany's outdoor Christmas markets.

People huddle together amid the wooden huts of the outdoor Christmas markets under festive lights, a scene replicated around the nation from the smallest villages to the largest cities during the time of Advent. The tradition of street markets in the month before Christmas dates to the 15th century in central Europe.

Today, the first markets open at the end of October, selling food, drinks, seasonal crafts and other goods. Some offer Ferris Wheels and other fairground rides for the children. For many of the adults, the hot gluehwein - sometimes fortified with a shot of brandy or rum - is a popular brace

against the winter cold and the frenzy of the holiday season. Regional specialties like hot apple wine in western state of Hesse or stollen, a sweet bread with dried fruit and sugar coating, from the eastern state of Saxony, give most of the markets an individual flair.

German Christmas markets are also increasingly important to local economies, drawing people from around the world. A 2013 study by a business association that specializes in Christmas markets and public festivals suggested that revenue from the larger markets in Germany alone exceeds a billion Euros (US\$1.1 billion) per year. Some 85 million people visited Christmas markets that year, a 70 percent increase since 2000. — AP



In this Dec 8, 2016 photo people walk over the Christmas market in the center of Muenster, Germany.

NEW FILM EXPLORES RUSSIAN SOCIETY THROUGH DASHCAMS

Drivers keep their cool as they plunge into a river, race through a forest fire or see a falling meteorite in a new documentary made from Russian dashcam footage that the filmmaker says represents a national characteristic.

Dmitry Kalashnikov, 29, from Saint Petersburg, spent a year piecing together footage he found online, including on YouTube, to make a 67-minute film called "The Road Movie" that features short sequences of unaltered life in Russia.

Russian dashcam footage has become a global phenomenon thanks to the video devices that drivers here often fix inside windshields in case of insurance claims or police wrongdoing. It first caught worldwide attention in 2013 when a meteorite fell on the Urals city of Chelyabinsk and a wide range of dashcam footage was posted online. Many noted the drivers' calm as well as their failure to stop as a giant flying object lit up the sky right in front of them.

For Kalashnikov the film is as much about the reaction of the unseen drivers and passengers—or even what is playing on the radio—as bizarre or violent events unfold. He cites a clip where a plaintive pop song called "Where does our childhood go?" plays on the radio as a family watches armed police surround the car in front of them—and shout "Smash the windshield!"—and the police actually do so. In another example of calm under pressure, a car speeds off a bridge and plunges into a swirling muddy river.

The male driver comments wryly: "Well we've landed in it." Then he says: "We'll battle through" and the passenger even starts telling him which way to steer. At Moscow's Artdocfest documentary festival this month, a packed cinema audience roared with laughter while also falling silent at the grimmest moments.

The film includes one clip where passengers suffer serious injury but Kalashnikov said he

avoided footage where people died—even though it was available online.

'Fools and roads'

The film was shown last month at Amsterdam's IDFA—the world's largest documentary festival. The filmmaker said the main question from the audience was: "Are Russians really like that?"

For Kalashnikov the answer is yes. "The men are practically always calm. They don't talk much or if they are in a good mood, they talk by swearing. As for the women—they scream sometimes," he told AFP. This can be extrapolated to explain something broader about Russia, he believes. "Maybe you can partly understand why our society is like this... because our people are mainly calm, they react calmly to everything, whatever happens."

Critics agreed the film shows Russians' ability to distance themselves psychologically from events. "Witnesses but not participants—that is the state of perception in contemporary Russia, as viewed by the director through an automatic gadget," wrote Vedomosti daily.

Kalashnikov says the film's theme is Russia, quoting a famous phrase often attributed to author Nikolai Gogol that the country has two problems: "fools and roads." Kommersant daily wrote poetically: "It seems we're all driving in that car along an endless snowy road, only just dodging death as it flies at our windshield."

The road never stops in the documentary but there is little sense of where exactly it is located. In one striking exception, a short clip shows figures crossing a bridge in Moscow opposite the Kremlin—accidentally capturing the moment before opposition politician Boris Nemtsov's murder last year. — AFP



This file photo taken on March 13, 2013 shows a mini camera with a screen placed on a dashboard of a car rolling along a street in Moscow. — AFP



This picture taken on October 30, 2016 shows a body bag in a funeral ambulance containing the body of an alleged drug dealer who was gunned down by unidentified men inside his house in Manila. — AFP

Undertaker misery on frontlines of Philippine drug war



This picture taken on December 2, 2016 shows embalmers Alejandro Ormeneta (R) and Orlando Cadiante embalming a body inside the morgue of Veronica Memorial Chapel in Manila.



This picture taken on October 30, 2016 shows embalmer Alejandro Ormeneta displaying embalming instruments before operating on a body inside the morgue of Veronica Memorial Chapel in Manila. — AFP photos

Business has never been busier for undertaker Alejandro Ormeneta but, after five months on the frontlines of the Philippines' brutal drug war, he just wants the killings to stop.

Ormeneta and his colleagues at one funeral parlor in Manila say they are retrieving an average of five corpses a night, mostly from slums, and his grisly new routine has left him questioning the savage forces unleashed by President Rodrigo Duterte's crackdown on crime. "This shouldn't happen, they are people, not animals," Ormeneta, 47, told AFP as he recalled taking out three nails hammered into the skull of an alleged drug trafficker. "I think he was still alive when they hammered the nails. They tied him up first, put tape around his head, then hammered the nails in... that must have been so painful. I felt so sorry for him."

On a typical night recently, Ormeneta walked down a narrow slum alleyway into a shanty where masked assailants had shot a man dead, the victim's body still smelling of alcohol that he must have been drinking shortly before being killed.

The victim's sister wailed as police turned over his body on the concrete floor soaked in blood and revealed multiple gunshots to his head and body. Police later told AFP that Danilo Bolante, 47, had sold shabu, the cheap crystal methamphetamine that Duterte says is ruining society and must be eradicated. But his sister, Chona Balina, insisted he had stopped and had even reported himself to police as part of Duterte's campaign to pressure drug traffickers and users into surrendering, known as Tokhang.

"Why launch Tokhang if that's what they

are going to do with people who are already changing," Balina said.

'Supply bodies'

Duterte won presidential elections this year in a landslide after promising an unprecedented war on drugs in which tens of thousands of people would be killed.

Part of his stump speech on the campaign trail was jocular business advice for people to set up funeral homes in preparation for the killings. "The funeral parlors will be packed... I'll supply the dead bodies," he said, to cheers and laughter at one campaign rally.

Duterte has been true to his word with police reporting killing more than 2,000 people they accused of being drug suspects and another 3,000 people murdered by unknown gunmen, triggering fears of widespread extrajudicial killings.

The deaths look certain to continue with Duterte saying in September he would be "happy to slaughter" three million addicts and repeatedly vowing no let-up until the illegal drug trade has been eliminated. While there are vocal critics of the drug war at home and abroad, surveys show an overwhelming majority of Filipinos support Duterte's crusade.

Still, funeral parlors, while busy, are not necessarily making lots of money, with relatives of many victims often too poor to be able to pay for a funeral. "I don't know how we can afford this because I have no job," Balina said after agreeing to a funeral package worth 62,000 pesos (\$1,250) with Veronica Memorial Chapels for services that include embalming, a casket and the wake.

Funeral director Rico Teodocio said prices



This picture taken on October 19, 2016 shows a worker arranging cadavers in various stages of decomposition at the morgue of Henry's Funeral Homes in Manila.

ranged from 18,000 to 400,000 pesos (\$360 to \$8,000). However Teodocio said he often gave discounts, especially for families of alleged drug users, some of whom paid in coins or raised money from gambling at wakes. He said some also begged cemeteries for free caskets. "I don't know if pathetic is the right term to use but you really pity them. We suffer too because we give our lowest price," he said.

Veronica and other funeral parlors AFP visited also reported that bodies were frequently left unclaimed because relatives of the victims did not know about the death, were afraid of being linked to drugs or were simply too poor.

In these situations, the bodies are kept for two to three months then buried in public cemeteries, at the expense of funeral homes. "It's sad. They die without anyone coming for them," Ormeneta said, pointing to black corpses at the back of the morgue.

Commissions

Another barrier to funeral parlour success is corruption, with some policemen taking commissions for informing funeral parlours of people who have been killed. Duterte openly

joked about the graft during the campaign. "These policemen are naughty. It's true they have a contract. They call the funeral home: 'There's a body. Claim it here... I'll just drop by for the commission tomorrow'," he said.

Two funeral parlor owners told AFP on condition of anonymity that it was the victims' families who shouldered the burden of this long-running practice. "How do you recoup that cost? You have to add it on to the price," said an executive who has been in the funeral industry for decades.

But while some undertakers treat the profession as just a business, Ormeneta, a father of four and Catholic who has been in the industry for 18 years, has been emotionally impacted by the drug war. He said he often thought about the person with nails in his skull, and had a firm conviction small-time traffickers did not deserve to die. "They are victims of drugs. They needed to stave off hunger, perhaps for their children. They should have been given a chance to change," he said. "Isn't that written in the Bible? Thou shalt not kill." — AFP



This picture taken on October 19, 2016 shows a cadaver inside a coffin at the morgue of Henry's Funeral Homes in Manila.



Donald Trump, billionaire developer and producer of NBC's "The Apprentice," with his wife, Melania, and their son, Barron, pose for a photo after he was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles. — AP photos

DONALD TRUMP REMAINS PRODUCER ON 'NEW CELEBRITY APPRENTICE'

Donald Trump is gone from the boardroom of NBC's reboot of "Celebrity Apprentice" but he's kept a business connection to the reality show.

President-elect Trump has an executive producer credit on "The New Celebrity Apprentice," said Clare Anne Darragh, a spokesman for "Apprentice" creator Mark Burnett. She declined further comment on Trump's participation in the show that taped last February. Trump's representatives did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The series debuts Jan 2 with Arnold Schwarzenegger replacing Trump as host. Schwarzenegger is an executive producer on the new show, as Trump was on the original. Trump's continued stake in a TV series is yet another unusual aspect of the election of a businessman and reality star to the presidency. Questions have been raised on how his extensive holdings may intersect with his actions as president.

Trump has tweeted that he will disclose plans on Dec. 15 to "take me completely out of business operations" without detailing what that means. He previously said that he plans to hand over management of his business to three of his adult children. That falls short of what some government ethics experts are pushing him for, which is that he sell his assets and put the money in a "blind trust" overseen by an independent manager not related to him.

In TV, a producer's tasks can range widely, but the credit also can be given as a so-called vanity perk and for compensation without actively working on a project. Trade publication Variety first reported he had retained the title.

NBC, which declined comment Thursday, previously faced scrutiny over its business dealings with Trump, which included beauty pageant telecasts as well as "Apprentice." In July 2015, NBC said it was severing its business ties to Trump following his claims that many undocumented Mexicans immigrants are criminals and rapists. The network licenses "New Celebrity Apprentice" from MGM, which produces it.

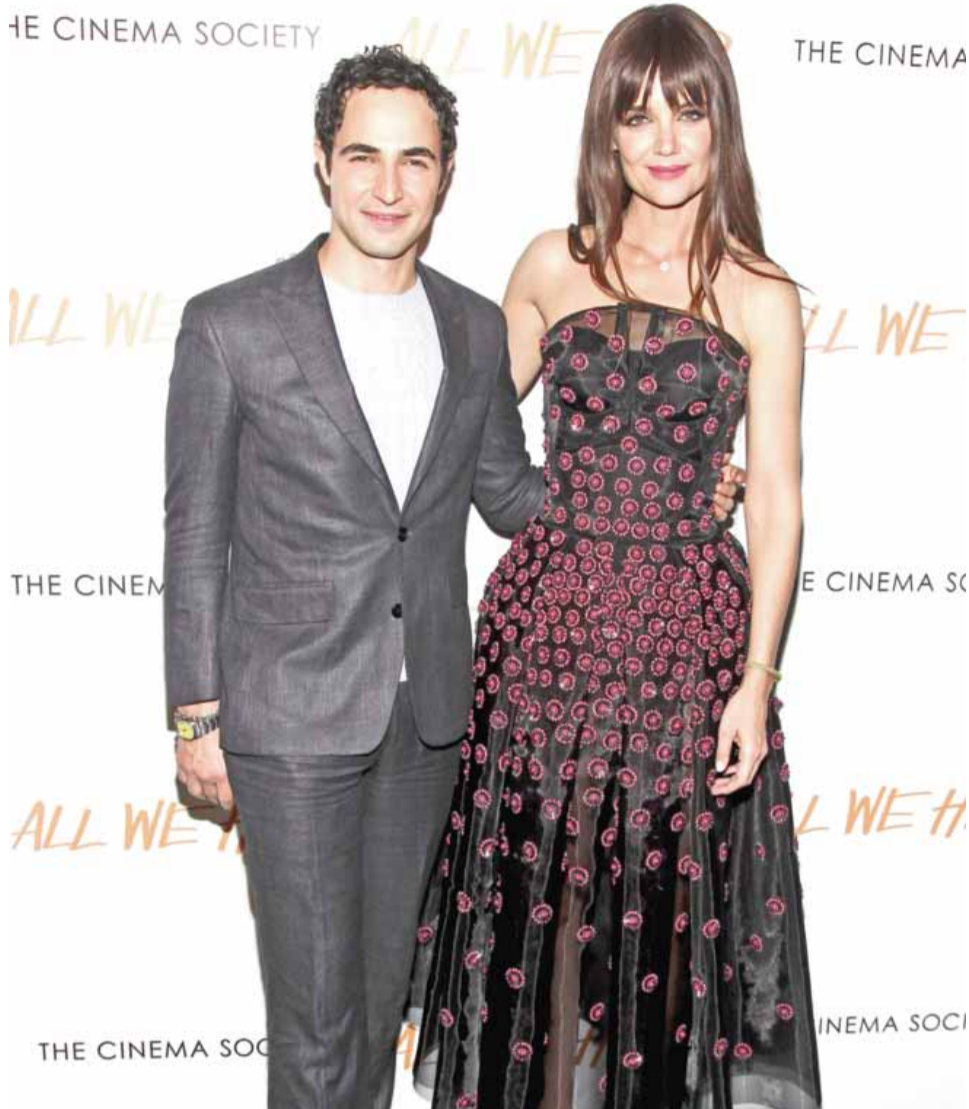
Burnett, a mega-producer whose other programs include "Survivor" and "The Voice," also answered for his Trump relationship. He released a statement last October distancing

himself and his wife, actress Roma Downey, from the GOP contender. "I am not now and have never been a supporter of Donald Trump's candidacy. I am NOT "Pro-Trump." Further, my wife and I reject the hatred, division and misogyny that has been a very unfortunate part of his campaign," said Burnett, who in 2015 was named president of MGM Television and Digital Group. The statement followed pressure on Burnett and MGM to make public "Apprentice"



In this Jan 16, 2007, file photo, Donald Trump, center, the billionaire and developer and producer of NBC's "The Apprentice," is honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles.

outtakes after an Associated Press report that, during the show's production, Trump repeatedly demeaned women with sexually tinged comments. That report was followed by release of an "Access Hollywood" audio tape with graphic Trump comments. MGM said in October that it, not Burnett owns "The Apprentice" and would honor confidentiality and artist's rights agreements in regard to "Apprentice." No outtakes were released. — AP



Zac Posen, left, and Katie Holmes, attend a special screening of "All We Had," hosted by The Cinema Society and Ruffino, at the Landmark Sunshine Cinema on Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2016, in New York. — AP

Katie Holmes probes mom-daughter bond in directorial debut

Katie Holmes is a single mom raising a daughter and that's the subject of her feature film directorial debut, "All We Had."

The 37-year-old actress stars alongside 18-year-old Stefania Owen in the film about a mother who finds herself living in a car with her daughter and looking for a new start. Holmes said it's a specific story but one she can relate to. "I think the universal theme of that love you have for your daughter and that love you have for your mother is so powerful. And I think that is very relatable wherever you fit in economically," Holmes said. "And definitely being a daughter and being a mother, I understand that love and that bond. And I think it's something that should be highlighted and celebrated in film."

Holmes, who in real life is raising her daughter Suri, said her work for directors like Curtis Hanson and Ang Lee over the years taught her how to lead actors on a set. She also said she found inspiration in such films as "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore," "My Own Private Idaho" and "Thelma and Louise."

"I have figured out how I like a set to run and what makes me feel good as an actor. And that's what I try to do for my actors. Then you just kind of go for it. It's like the starting gun goes off and you're just running," she said.

The movie, based on Annie Weatherwax's novel, is set during the 2007 economic crisis and features Holmes teetering on the edge of poverty. It co-stars Luke Wilson, Richard Kind and

Mark Consuelos, and comes out on Friday. "It was important to me to inhabit this role because there are so many people who struggle so much on a daily basis," Holmes said. "She never loses hope. There's so many people that work so hard and they aren't celebrated."

Owen plays the daughter, Ruthie, and said she was inspired by Holmes' transition from movie star to the person behind the camera. "I learned a lot," she said. "It never felt like a big deal transitioning from being an actor to a director. And I really do want to direct my own film and also act in it. She added: "That's definitely on my bucket list."

Holmes was promoting her movie a few days after Lucasfilm head Kathleen Kennedy implied in an interview that there weren't women directors with enough experience to helm an upcoming "Star Wars" movie.

"I was inspired by people like Kathleen, by people like Jane Rosenthal, Jodie Foster - to take on this role as a director and to find this material in particular," Holmes said. "Because I do feel as a woman, you have to be proactive and you have to find the roles, you have to create the roles for yourself. At least, I want to do that for myself, because I want to play certain kinds of roles. I don't want to wait." — AP

RIZ AHMED LIVES THE DREAM WITH OWN 'STAR WARS' FIGURE

Riz Ahmed has just celebrated his 34th birthday, but with his slender physique, cut-glass cheekbones and neat, jet-black hair, the "Rogue One" star could just about pass for a teenager.

It's hard to believe a decade has passed since the British actor emerged as one of the most interesting figures in British cinema in Michael Winterbottom's docu-drama "The Road to Guantanamo."

A dozen movie roles in the intervening years have won him acclaim for the virtuosity of his performances and diversity of acting choices. But even he could not have predicted the stratospheric turn his career would take in 2016. "It was a kind of a surreal, amazing moment," the London-born son of Pakistani immigrants says as he recalls first holding that most coveted of trophies, his own "Star Wars" figure. "I remember playing with those toys as a kid, and to be part of that universe in plastic is an amazing thing."

Ahmed's turn in "Rogue One"—the latest multimillion-dollar iteration of the "Star Wars" universe—comes at the end of a year in which he transformed from respected indie actor into major player. Still basking in acclaim for 2014's "Nightcrawler"—his first big Hollywood part—he took another step toward Tinseltown's A-list with a key role in Paul Greengrass's "Jason Bourne."

He cemented his fame with a starring part in the HBO crime miniseries "The Night Of" as Naz Khan, a Pakistani-American college student accused of murdering a girl on New York's Upper West Side.

'Gritty'

In "Rogue One," Ahmed plays cargo pilot Bodhi Rook, a shill for the Empire who changes sides to fight for the rebels. "It's a 'Star Wars' movie, but at the same time it's quite different," he tells AFP at Lucasfilm's Industrial Light and Magic special-effects studio in San Francisco. "It feels more like a gritty, realistic war movie—dirt under fingernails, boots on the ground—that immersive kind of feel which is exciting to me."

Ahmed's story—a working-class kid who won a scholarship to private school and studied politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford University—surprises those who only see the actor refracted through the roles he has played.

Ahmed has portrayed suspected jihadists in "The Road to Guantanamo" (2006) and "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" (2012) and drug dealers in "Shifty" (2008) and "Ill Manors" (2012). His breakout performance came in the role of the idealistic but murderous leader of a British jihadist cell in Chris Morris's controversial, critically acclaimed 2010 satire "Four Lions." "I always look for flawed characters," Ahmed says. "I don't know why, but I love characters with a strong sense of regret, or feel a burning desire to put something right."

Roles in more independent films fol-

lowed alongside a sideline career as rapper "Riz MC," in which the outspoken actor has rified on politics, race and inequality as one half of the hip-hop outfit "Sweet Shop Boys."



British actor Riz Ahmed takes part in a Q&A on "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" at Lucasfilm's Industrial Light and Magic special effects studio in San Francisco on December 4, 2016. — AFP

'Retreating into tribalism'

The duo recently produced a track titled "T5," which name checks Donald Trump before the chorus line: "Oh no, we're in trouble, TSA always wanna burst my bubble/Always get a random check when I rock the stubble." The refrain refers to Ahmed's frustration and anger at being racially profiled—and sometimes brutally treated—at airports in Britain and America, about which the unashamedly political performer has written and spoken extensively.

It's not surprising Ahmed's entry into the 'Star Wars' universe has come through a part in what the trade press has described as the most overtly political movie of the franchise. "If you look back even at the prequel movies, they're very political," he says. "They're all about the UN and the end of the League of Nations and the rise of authoritarianism, fascism." "With timeless stories like this, or Greek mythology, stuff that we all decide we're going to invest in as stories, you can actually project whatever meaning you want onto it."

However, "Rogue One" has a clear message, Ahmed says—that people of different backgrounds need to come together to take on adversity. "At a time when everyone is talking about 'us and them' and retreating into tribalism, it's good to remember that we need each other to solve the big problems." — AFP



This photograph taken on October 27, 2016 shows the interior of the newly restored 574-seater opera house, which in October held its first event in 23 years in Mumbai. — AFP

India's colonial-era opera house restored to past glory

India's only surviving opera house has been restored to its colonial-era glory, reopening to the public more than two decades after it closed in disrepair. Once the place to be seen for Mumbai's great and good it was forced to close in the 1990s after years of financial struggles.

But a painstaking seven-year project has transformed the century-old building in Mumbai from a crumbling wreck in danger of collapse to an ornate replica of its 1916 glory days, albeit with some important updates. "One of the biggest challenges was bringing in modern acoustics, sound, lighting and air conditioning, all the requirements of a 21st century theatre, while ensuring it didn't jar with restoring a listed interior," architect Abha Narain Lambah told AFP.

The Royal Opera House was built in a Baroque style complete with Italian balustrades, marble statues, crystal chandeliers and a gold ceiling. It was inaugurated by Britain's King George V in 1911 and completed in 1916.

Only operas were performed on stage for its first two decades—entertainment for the Indian elite and British administrators involved in the running of the empire. When films started to become popular, the venue, which lies near the popular Girgaum Chowpatty beach in the city's south, was altered to double-up as a cinema.

As Bollywood captured popular imagination, it soon became the place for the city's wealthy to watch the latest hit. It could also have inspired a generation of actors—superstar Amitabh Bachchan fondly recalls watching movies there as a child. It showcased productions from talent such as actor Prithviraj Kapoor

and Marathi star Bal Gandharva.

The property was bought by the Maharaja of Gondal, a royal family from nearby Gujarat, in the early 1950s, a few years after India gained its independence from Britain. And yet it could not maintain its appeal—by the 1980s the venture was struggling financially and the building was in urgent need of repairs. "The Indian cinema industry was going through one of its worst phases due to video piracy. People literally stopped going to cinema halls to watch movies.

"Most theatres shut down as there was no income to even meet daily costs. So there was no scope for any upgradation," the opera house's director, Ashish Doshi, told AFP.

Endangered

It closed in 1993, and sat crumbling for years. It was put on the World Monuments Fund list of endangered buildings. The royal family of Gondal decided they would rather see it brought back to life than consigned to history.



In 2009 they commissioned Lambah, an Indian architect specializing in conservation, to lead the mammoth restoration project. It took her team two years just to stabilize the structure. "You had these amazing steel girders that had corroded to a level where they were flaking off with a nail. The jack arches were structurally unstable and there were sections of the base-ment that were verging on collapse. "The first priority was making sure the building was safe, that the overhanging balconies weren't leaning any more, that the cracks were stitched," Lambah explained.

Over the years the Baroque interiors had been replaced to give the venue an Art Deco feel with balconies dismantled and original colors painted over, posing another challenge for Lambah. She sifted through old photos, watched video clips and listened to audio recordings to piece together exactly how the building looked in 1916.

Chandeliers, stain-glass windows, old ceramic British Minton tiles, and a domed ceiling with paintings of famous writers have all been exquisitely restored. The cosy 574-seater venue held its first event in 23 years in October, hosting the opening ceremony of the Mumbai film festival with Bollywood star Bachchan in attendance.

December will see the start of regular events with opera, music, theatre and panel discussions planned. "It's a magical space. It's for everyone to enjoy, not just the chosen few," Asad Lalljee, the opera house's curator, told AFP. — AFP



MICROSOFT SHOWCASES SOLUTIONS TO EMPOWER TELECOM SECTOR

ZAIN TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE 2016

KUWAIT: In line with its commitment to drive digital transformation across different sectors, Microsoft participated in the sixth annual Zain Technology Conference held from 5th December to 7th December, at Le Royale Hotel in Amman, Jordan. The event, under the theme of "Moving Forward" focused on Zain's strategy execution as it continues towards its transformation on becoming a digital lifestyle provider.

Microsoft showcased innovative solutions at the conference; Azure, Internet of Things (IoT) and Office 365, to enable and aid Zain's strategy execution and support its strategic goals.

Steve Dunbar, Microsoft's Internet of Things (IoT) Commercial lead, delivered a session titled "IoT - From the Edge to the Analytics", that focused on how Internet of

Things is opening a whole new set of strategies, possibilities and opportunities, resulting in a global explosion of new business ideas and leading the way in digital transformation.

"We are very excited to partner with Zain, to help them deliver on their bold vision of Digital Innovation and participate in the Zain Technology Conference, which is a unique platform for exchange of knowledge and information for attendees to envision what technology can actually do for customers and the difference it can make in their lives." Said Charles Nahas, General Manager, Microsoft Kuwait "Microsoft remains committed to developing solutions for the telecom industry enabling them to empower their employees gain insights, optimize operations and change the nature of business models to achieve more."

Delegates visiting the Microsoft stand were able to immerse into discussions with Microsoft experts on the Azure cloud platform and Office 365, along with Internet of Things, learning more about Microsoft's Digital Transformation framework. Illustrating the scale of disruption seen today, Microsoft team elaborated on how cloud intelligence can be leveraged to drive business efficiency and cater to industries in different stages of digital transformation. The IoT session discussed how enterprises can deploy cloud based solutions to generate valuable data insights, improve customer relationship management and enhance organizational agility.

Zain Technology Conference 2016 comprised of seven basic stream of topics; Smart Networks, Core Evolution, BSS and OSS Digital Future, IT Evolution, Quality of

Experience, Service Innovation and Energy Efficiency and Site Optimization. Shared discussions were held around related technology areas amongst business professionals over the course of three days, also comprising of advanced level interactions on Network Evolution to 5G and Use Cases, Cloud and Virtualization opportunities, Telecom Data Analytics, IoT use cases, VoLTE and Video services.

A big number of attendees came to the conference, with more than 60 representatives from technology partners. Zain established its utilization of latest technologies for the development of solutions in areas of Machine to Machine communications, Enterprise Offerings and Smart City connectivity, enhancing its existing business infrastructure and customer services.

KENYAN SINGLE MOTHERS, WIDOWS USE MOBILE MONEY TO ESCAPE POVERTY

NAIROBI: Almost 200,000 Kenyan households, many headed by poor, rural women, have lifted themselves out of poverty using mobile money services, experts said on Thursday, calling for the technology to be introduced in other developing countries.

The impact was most dramatic among single mothers who used M-Pesa, a text message-based mobile payment system, after switching from farming to business and retail sales, the journal Science found. "What we saw over six years was impressive," Tavneet Suri, associate professor of Applied Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said in a statement.

"When M-Pesa came to an area, women shifted their occupations and their savings went up."

The expansion of M-Pesa, which is used in virtually every Kenyan home, lifted 194,000 households—over two percent of households nationwide—above the poverty line in six years, the study found. It provides further evidence

that mobile phone technology can help to bring financial services to the 80 percent of African women who do not have a bank account and bolster growth of the world's poorest continent.

M-Pesa is a cheap way of sending, receiving and saving money via more than 110,000 local agents, often operating out of tiny kiosks in remote parts of Kenya.

It gives people who would otherwise be unable to access traditional financial services a simple, reliable and fast way of moving and saving money. Mobile money's impact on the lives of poor women was one of the most exciting aspects of the study, experts said, as policymakers have struggled to understand what kinds of projects are most effective at reducing poverty.

Researchers found that the number of female-headed households living in extreme poverty fell by 22 percent within a 1 kilometre radius of an area where six new M-Pesa agents opened between 2008 and 2010. —Reuters

VIZIO'S CHINESE OWNER HALTS TRADING AMID CASH CRUNCH

SHANGHAI: Fast-growing Chinese tech firm LeEco, which earlier this year purchased US television maker Vizio, has suspended trading of its listed arm's shares amid fears that a cash crunch had caught up with the company. In a filing with the Shenzhen Stock Exchange, LeEco said it had suspended shares of Leshi Internet Information & Technology Wednesday after the stock plunged 7.85 percent the previous day.

Originally a video-streaming provider, LeEco has expanded rapidly with investments in sectors as wide-ranging as self-driving cars, sports broadcasting rights, smartphones, film production, and television manufacturing. CEO Jia Yueting, who has previously dismissed US technology giant Apple as no longer innovative, admitted in a letter to employees that LeEco had "over-extended," Bloomberg News reported earlier this week.

"We blindly sped ahead, and our cash demand ballooned," Bloomberg quoted the letter saying.

LeEco announced in July that it would buy US smart-TV maker Vizio for \$2 billion.

LeEco has announced plans to take on US tech giants in their home market with smartphones, televisions, bicycles, self-driving electric cars, virtual reality headsets, and a platform to connect all of its offerings to movies, television shows, services, and more in the Internet cloud.

But Bloomberg said the sprawling conglomerate had only one profitable entity, the video-streaming service LeShi. LeShi stock has dropped 36 percent since it resumed trading in June following a half-year suspension imposed as it sought government approval for financing arrangements to help fund its breakneck expansion. —AFP

ONE BILLION MALWARE FILES HELD IN KASPERSKY LAB'S CLOUD DATABASE

DUBAI: Kaspersky Lab's cloud malware database now carries a billion malicious objects, including viruses, Trojans, backdoors, ransomware, and advertisement applications and their components. A fifth were discovered and identified as malicious by Astraea - a machine-learning based malware analysis system working inside Kaspersky Lab's infrastructure.

The number of cyberthreats appearing every day is now so big that it is impossible to process each one of them manually. That's why automating the malware discovery and analysis process, in combination with human expertise, is the best approach when it comes to fighting modern cyberthreats.

The percentage of malware discovered and added automatically to the Kaspersky Lab cloud database by Astraea has been growing steadily over the last five years: from 7.53 percent in 2012, to 40.5 percent in December 2016. The proportion is growing in line with the number of new malicious files discovered daily by Kaspersky Lab experts and detection systems. This has increased from 70,000 files per day in 2011 to 323,0001 per day in 2016.

"One billion unique malicious files is a remarkable milestone. It shows the scale of the cybercriminal underground, which has developed from several small forums offering customized malicious tools, to the mass production of malware and tailored cybercriminal services. It also highlights the quality and evolution of our automated malware analysis technologies. Out of these billion files, more than 200 million have been added by the Astraea machine-learning system. Our advanced systems now not only detect the vast majority of known malware we get on a daily basis, but also discover the unknown threats. Although the remaining 800 million files have been added by other internal detection systems, or by experts, the contribution to the Kaspersky Lab cloud database by machine-learning systems is substantial and will continue to grow," says Vyacheslav Zakorzhevsky, Head of Anti-Malware Team at Kaspersky Lab.

Astraea is one of the machine-learning malware analysis systems that form part of the Kaspersky Lab protection infrastructure. Astraea automatically analyzes notifications from protected computers and

helps uncover previously unknown threats. By using the threats' metadata (like age, origin, filename, file path and more) the system is able to fully detect threats without information about the file contents.

Kaspersky Lab's 'Number of the year' forms part of the Kaspersky Security Bulletin for 2016. Other sections include the Threat Predictions 2017 published on 16 November and available here, the topic of the year: Ransomware, and the main report's Executive Summary, Review and Statistics, all available in December.

Kaspersky Lab is one of the world's fastest-growing cybersecurity companies and the largest that is privately owned. The company is ranked among the world's top four vendors of security solutions for endpoint users (IDC, 2014). Since 1997 Kaspersky Lab has been an innovator in cybersecurity and provides effective digital security solutions and threat intelligence for large enterprises, SMBs and consumers. Kaspersky Lab is an international company, operating in almost 200 countries and territories across the globe, providing protection for over 400 million users worldwide.

BANKING ON CHANGE: TECH STARTUPS TARGET FINANCIAL SERVICES

SAN FRANCISCO: It may not be much longer before bank branches join video-rental stores and record shops as relics of a bygone era.

Silicon Valley is pressuring banks to change their ways or risk becoming the latest industry overtaken by technology. Hundreds of startups are offering easier and cheaper ways to save, borrow, spend and invest. They are doing it by shifting the battleground to smartphone apps and websites, which function as digital offices that are accessible around the clock with minimal staffing, and by lowering fees.

Given how much customers dislike it, the financial services industry seems ripe for "disruption," as Silicon Valley likes to call industry upheaval. These financial technology, or "fintech," startups may also soon get further validation from a key banking regulator. Comptroller of the Currency Thomas Curry last week announced plans for a special national bank charter that would allow fintechs to offer their products without having to get regulatory approval state to state. Part of Curry's motivation lies in his belief that fintech can help consumers who either don't want or can't afford to establish accounts with traditional banks.

At this point, the fintech sector hasn't proven it can be a viable or trustworthy alternative to traditional banks and stock brokerages. Few of the startups have ever posted a profit, and one of the biggest, the Lending Club, is trying to recover from a breakdown that triggered the resignation of CEO Renaud Laplanche earlier this year. The Justice Department is investigating the events that led to Laplanche's abrupt departure.

"The disruption in banking is coming later than other areas because of the complexity of the regulations and the amount of trust required," Laplanche said in an interview earlier this year, while he was still CEO. "Trusting you with my savings is not like booking a trip online." Banks, meanwhile, have demonstrated their resiliency and resourcefulness. With the help of taxpayer-backed bailouts, the industry has survived a financial crisis of its own making, and now appears to be tackling the fintech threat. They are closing branches, laying off workers, pouring money into their own technology departments and even buying or teaming up with fintech startups.

TAKING THE THREAT SERIOUSLY

"Whenever I talk to big banks, they ask, 'What are the disruptors doing? Which of their ideas can I copy?'" says Forrester Research analyst Oliwia Berdak. A recent survey of the financial services industry by the research firm Gartner Inc. found that 70 percent of respondents considered fintech startups to be a bigger threat than their traditional rivals.

With their guard up, the much bigger banks are more likely to drive many of the fintech startups out of business if they don't acquire them first, says Gartner analyst Rajesh Kandaswamy. But even in that scenario, he predicts "many of the ideas coming out of fintech will survive in one way or another, which will be beneficial for consumers."

About \$850 billion in consumer banking revenue in the US alone is at stake. Fintech captured just 1 percent of that last year, according to a Citibank study. By 2023, though, Citibank expects fintech to control 17 percent of a \$1.2 trillion market.

Emboldened by predictions like that, fintechologists tend to be brash, like many of the entrepreneurs who have successfully reshaped other industries.

A BIG, BOLD APPROACH

"During the next 10 years, we are going to create an international company that will be like nothing the financial services industry has ever seen," boasts Baiju Bhatt, co-founder of Robinhood, a stock brokerage that does not charge any commissions for its more than 1 million customers to buy and sell shares. To make money, Robinhood recently introduced a \$10 monthly service that allows trading when the stock market is closed and offers higher borrowing limits.

At Affirm, an online lender, CEO Max Levchin is attempting to reshape finance for a second time after making his first big splash in Silicon Valley as a co-founder of PayPal, a digital payment service born in the 1990s. Helped by his pedigree, Levchin has raised \$525 million to back Affirm's focus on consumers who do not like or cannot get credit cards. Instead of providing a revolving line of credit with high interest rates that compound, Affirm has developed its own formula to identify borrowers able to repay loans in equal installments in time frames ranging from three months to one year. —AP



PALO ALTO: In this Wednesday, Dec 2, 2015, photo, Robinhood co-founders Vlad Tenev (left) and Baiju Bhatt pose at company headquarters in Palo Alto, Calif. Robinhood is a stock brokerage that does not charge any commissions for its more than 1 million customers to buy and sell shares. —AP

AT&T, TIME WARNER CEOS INVOKE BIG TECH THREAT IN MERGER PUSH

LOS ANGELES: There are five new players in the battle to win federal approval of the \$85.4 billion merger of AT&T and Time Warner: Facebook, Google, Apple, Amazon, and Microsoft.

The size, reach, and balance sheets of the tech giants were cited as a primary impetus for the AT&T-Time Warner nuptials during a hearing on the merger Wednesday with members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The nearly three-hour session marked the first real test of how the deal will play in the court of public opinion amid the populist uprising spurred by Donald Trump's victory in the presidential race.

AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson and Time Warner CEO Jeff Bewkes faced expected questions about the deal's impact on prices for consumers, the competitive landscape for Time Warner's content rivals, and whether the enlarged company would be able to squash

independent programmers. The scope of the combined company is a bipartisan concern, judging by the questioning from committee members. That concern is especially acute as the incoming presidential administration has vowed to rescind the FCC's existing net neutrality rules designed to police high-speed data providers like AT&T from erecting tollbooths on the Internet.

Related AT&T, Time Warner Chiefs Face Questions About Merger in Senate Hearing In that context, it's no surprise that the CEOs would invoke the threat posed by the tech giants who, in varying degrees, are becoming increasingly focused on video. Stephenson positioned the enlarged company as angling to drive major changes to television's status quo before they're beaten to the punch by Mark Zuckerberg and Jeff Bezos. —Reuters

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2016

MOVIES HD
ACTION

- 00:00 Child's Play 2
- 02:00 Comedown
- 04:00 Batman Unlimited: Monster Mayhem
- 06:00 Armored
- 07:45 Divergent
- 10:15 Ladder 49
- 12:15 Close Range
- 13:45 Armored
- 15:30 Last Knights
- 17:30 Divergent
- 20:00 Survivor
- 22:00 Swordfish

MOVIES
DRAMA

- 01:00 Big Eyes
- 03:00 The Yellow Handkerchief
- 05:00 Before I Disappear
- 06:45 Jappeloup
- 09:00 Rosewood Lane
- 11:00 Big Eyes
- 13:00 The Love Guide
- 15:00 Assassin's Bullet
- 17:00 Rosewood Lane
- 19:00 A Good Marriage
- 21:00 Dying Of The Light
- 23:00 The Motel Life

MOVIES HD
FAMILY

- 01:00 Ghost Squad
- 03:00 Coraline
- 05:00 The Chronicles Of Narnia: Voyage Of The Dawn...
- 07:00 Ghost Squad
- 09:00 Big Baby
- 11:00 Coraline
- 13:00 The Unbeatables
- 15:00 Eragon
- 17:00 The Tale Of Despereaux
- 19:00 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
- 21:00 It Takes Two
- 23:00 Eragon

MOVIES HD

- 01:30 Whiplash
- 03:15 My Old Lady
- 05:00 The Song
- 07:00 The Age Of Adaline
- 09:00 My Old Lady
- 10:45 Bridge Of Spies
- 13:15 Tommy Cooper: Not Like That, Like This
- 15:00 The Best Of Me
- 17:00 Big Game
- 19:00 The Man From U.N.C.L.E.
- 21:00 Dad's Army
- 23:00 Get Hard

MOVIES HD
COMEDY

- 00:00 Wanderlust
- 02:00 Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2
- 04:00 Caveman
- 06:00 The Bad News Bears (2005)
- 08:00 The Single Moms Club
- 10:00 Caveman
- 12:00 Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2
- 14:00 Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey
- 16:00 The Single Moms Club
- 18:00 All About Steve
- 20:00 Playing It Cool
- 22:00 Road Trip

MOVIES HD
FESTIVAL

- 01:00 Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life
- 03:00 Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
- 05:00 Hard Eight
- 07:00 Batkid Begins
- 09:00 God Help The Girl
- 11:00 Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
- 13:00 Memories
- 14:45 Roger Waters The Wall
- 17:00 God Help The Girl
- 19:00 The Boy
- 21:00 Unbroken
- 23:15 Starred Up

MOVIES HD
KIDS

- 01:00 The Olsen Gang In Deep Trouble
- 02:45 Scooby-Doo! Moon Monster Madness
- 04:30 The Heart Of The Oak
- 06:00 The Wild Thornberrys Movie
- 07:45 The Adventures Of Don Quixote

- 09:30 Barnyard
- 11:15 Hey Arnold! The Movie
- 12:45 Scooby-Doo! Moon Monster Madness
- 14:30 The Nutcracker Sweet
- 16:00 Jetsons: The Movie
- 18:00 Barnyard
- 20:00 Earth To Echo
- 22:00 The Nutcracker Sweet
- 23:30 Jetsons: The Movie

MOVIES HD
PREMIERE

- 00:30 The Inbetweeners Movie 2
- 02:30 See Girl Run
- 04:00 Despicable Me 2
- 05:45 The Bourne Legacy
- 08:00 Reach Me
- 10:00 The Adventurer: The Curse Of The Midas Box
- 12:00 Lila & Eve
- 14:00 Night At The Museum: Battle Of The Smithsonian
- 16:00 Reach Me
- 18:00 The Two Faces Of January
- 20:00 Infinitely Polar Bear
- 22:00 The Boy Next Door

STAR MOVIES HD

- 02:15 My Boss's Daughter
- 03:45 John Rabe: Part 2
- 05:15 Unthinkable
- 06:45 The Battle Of Shaker Heights
- 08:15 Cold Mountain
- 10:45 My Daughter Must Live
- 12:15 Crash
- 14:15 There Will Be Blood
- 17:00 John Rabe: Part 1
- 18:30 My Boss's Daughter
- 20:00 Muppets Most Wanted
- 21:45 The Matador
- 23:30 Gun Shy

sundance CHANNEL

- 01:00 Dear Lemon Lima
- 02:25 Computer Chess
- 04:00 Zombie Girl
- 05:40 The Kitchen
- 07:00 Dream School
- 08:00 A Delicate Balance
- 10:20 Glengarry Glen Ross
- 12:05 Simshar
- 13:45 Children Of Invention
- 15:15 An Evening With Mark Knopfler
- 16:20 A Delicate Balance
- 18:40 Glengarry Glen Ross
- 20:25 Stones In The Sun
- 22:00 Lamb
- 23:40 Simshar

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 River Monsters
- 01:45 Bondi Vet
- 02:40 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Gorilla Doctors
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 River Monsters
- 06:49 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert
- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert
- 09:15 Lone Star Law
- 10:10 The Vet Life
- 11:05 Wildest Europe
- 12:00 Treehouse Masters
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Untamed & Uncut
- 14:45 Rogue Nature With Dave Salmoni
- 15:40 Untamed & Uncut
- 16:35 My Wild Affair: The Rhino Who Joined My Family
- 17:30 Gorilla Doctors
- 18:25 Untamed & Uncut
- 19:20 Lone Star Law
- 20:15 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert
- 21:10 The Vet Life
- 22:05 Treehouse Masters
- 23:00 Lone Star Law
- 23:55 Gator Boys

ci

- 00:00 My Crazy Ex
- 01:00 The Haunting Of...
- 02:00 My Haunted House
- 03:00 Monster In My Family
- 04:00 My Crazy Ex
- 05:00 The Haunting Of...
- 06:00 My Haunted House
- 07:00 The First 48
- 10:00 Private Crimes
- 10:30 Private Crimes
- 11:00 Homicide Hunter

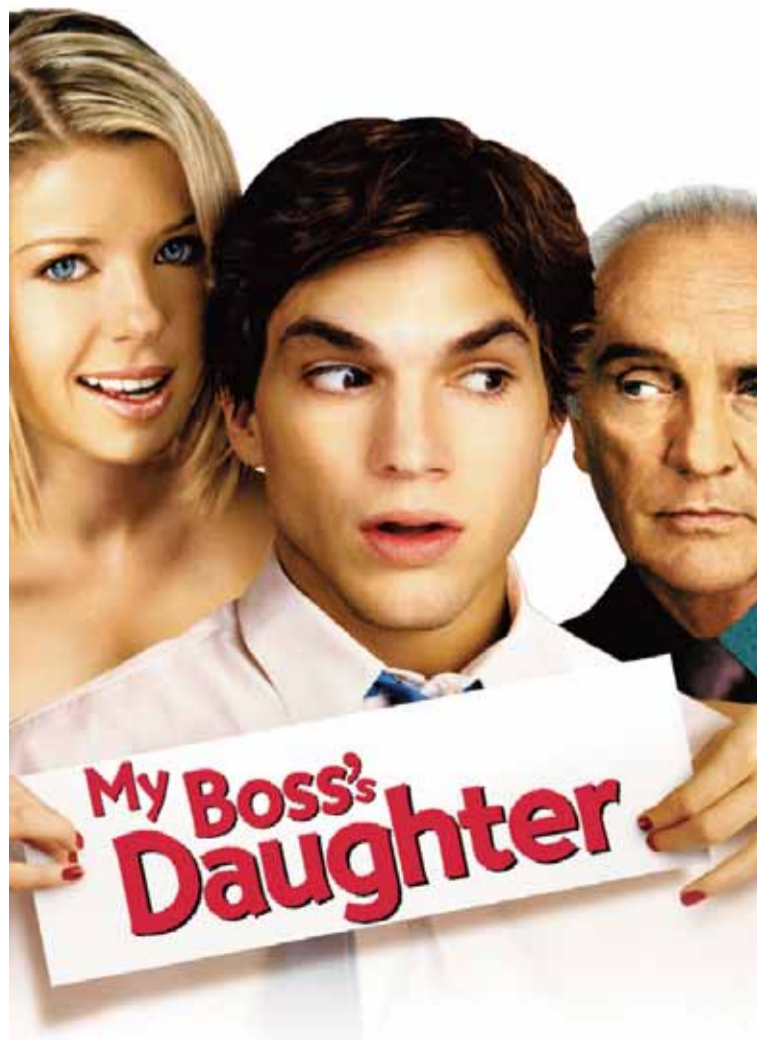
- 12:00 Frenemies
- 13:00 It Takes A Killer
- 14:00 The First 48
- 16:00 Monster In My Family
- 17:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 20:00 It Takes A Killer
- 21:00 The First 48
- 23:00 Measuring Evil: Britain's Worst Killers

Discovery Family

- 00:30 Redesign My Brain
- 01:20 Superhuman Showdown
- 02:10 Now That's Funny
- 03:00 Untamed & Uncut
- 03:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 04:40 How It's Made
- 05:05 How It's Made
- 05:30 Dirty Jobs
- 06:20 Mythbusters
- 07:00 Kenny The Shark
- 07:25 Kids vs Film
- 07:50 Doki
- 08:15 Doki
- 08:40 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 12:50 Mythbusters
- 17:00 Redesign My Brain
- 17:50 Redesign My Brain
- 18:40 Superhuman Showdown
- 19:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
- 19:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things
- 20:20 Guinness World Records Smashed UK
- 21:10 Troy
- 22:00 Untamed & Uncut
- 22:50 Untamed & Uncut
- 23:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things

HISTORY HD

- 00:20 Ozzy & Jack's World Detour
- 01:10 Counting Cars
- 01:35 Counting Cars
- 02:00 American Pickers
- 02:50 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 03:15 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 03:40 Shark Wranglers
- 04:30 American Restoration
- 05:00 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
- 06:00 Leepu And Pitbull
- 06:50 Leepu And Pitbull
- 07:40 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 08:05 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 08:30 Counting Cars
- 08:55 Mountain Men - Closest Calls
- 09:45 American Restoration



MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER ON STAR MOVIES HD

- 19:05 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
- 19:30 Tales From The Bush Larder
- 20:00 Croatia's Finest
- 20:50 The Shelbourne
- 21:40 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 22:05 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 22:55 The Shelbourne
- 23:20 Places We Go

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

- 00:10 Locked Up Abroad
- 01:00 Airport Security: Colombia
- 02:00 Nazi Megastructures
- 02:55 Nazi World War Weird
- 03:50 Kabaddi: The Great Indian Sport
- 04:45 Operation Sumatran Rhino
- 05:40 Air Crash Investigation
- 06:35 Disappeared: The Search For Cody Dial
- 07:30 Facing...
- 08:25 Dog Whisperer
- 09:20 Dog Whisperer
- 10:15 Monster Fish
- 11:10 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South
- 12:05 Science Of Stupid
- 12:30 Science Of Stupid
- 13:00 Nazi World War Weird
- 14:00 Facing...
- 15:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 16:00 Planes That Changed The World
- 17:00 Mega Factories
- 18:00 Disappeared: The Search For Cody Dial
- 19:00 Cold Water Gold
- 20:00 Planes That Changed The World
- 20:50 Mega Factories
- 21:40 Disappeared: The Search For Cody Dial
- 22:30 Cold Water Gold
- 23:20 Planes That Changed The World

NAT GEO people

- 00:10 Eat Street
- 00:35 Baking Good, Baking Bad
- 01:00 The Shelbourne
- 01:25 Carnival Eats
- 02:15 Raw Travel
- 03:05 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
- 03:30 Tales From The Bush Larder
- 03:55 Croatia's Finest
- 04:45 The Shelbourne
- 05:35 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 06:25 Poh & Co
- 06:50 Raw Travel
- 07:15 Maximum Foodie
- 07:40 Eat Street
- 08:30 Top Tables, Top Cities
- 08:55 Croatia's Finest
- 09:45 Street Food Around The World
- 10:10 Tales From The Bush Larder
- 10:35 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 11:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
- 11:50 Dog Whisperer
- 12:40 The Shelbourne
- 13:05 Places We Go
- 14:00 Fusion Forager
- 14:55 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
- 15:25 Tales From The Bush Larder
- 15:50 Croatia's Finest
- 16:45 The Shelbourne
- 17:40 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 18:10 Valentine Warner's Wild Table

NAT GEO WILD HD

- 00:20 Predator Battleground
- 01:10 World's Deadliest Animals
- 02:00 Wild Russia
- 02:50 Wild Survivor
- 03:45 South Africa
- 04:40 1000 Days For The Planet
- 05:35 Hunter Hunted
- 06:30 Monster Fish
- 07:25 Hooked
- 08:20 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 09:15 Baby Animals In The Wild
- 10:10 Amazing Animal Selfies
- 11:05 Animal ER
- 12:00 River Jaws: Monster Catfish
- 12:55 Monster Jellyfish
- 13:50 Mission Critical
- 14:45 Wild Congo
- 15:40 1000 Days For The Planet
- 16:35 Moody Beasts
- 17:30 Dangerous Encounters
- 18:25 Animals Gone Wild
- 19:20 Wild Congo
- 20:10 1000 Days For The Planet
- 21:00 Moody Beasts
- 21:50 Dangerous Encounters
- 22:40 Animals Gone Wild
- 23:30 River Jaws: Monster Catfish

DISCOVERY SCIENCE

- 00:30 How Do They Do It?
- 00:55 Food Factory
- 01:20 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
- 02:10 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 03:00 Superhuman Showdown
- 03:48 Ways To Save The Planet
- 04:36 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
- 05:24 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 06:12 How Do They Do It?
- 06:36 Food Factory
- 07:00 How Do They Do It?
- 07:26 Food Factory
- 09:26 How The Universe Works
- 10:14 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 11:50 How The Universe Works
- 13:26 How Do They Do It?
- 15:26 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
- 16:14 Redesign My Brain
- 17:02 Mind Control Freaks
- 17:50 The Science Of Fear And Lust
- 18:40 Superhuman Showdown
- 19:30 Ways To Save The Planet
- 23:40 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman

BBC FIRST

- 00:20 Doctors
- 00:50 The Coroner
- 01:40 War And Peace
- 02:25 The Kettering Incident
- 03:15 The Detectivists
- 03:45 Him & Her

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2016

04:15 The Coroner
05:00 Doctors
09:30 Eastenders
11:00 Stella
13:20 Casualty
14:15 Doctors
15:15 New Tricks
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:05 The Coroner
20:00 Death In Paradise
21:00 The Durrells
22:00 Class
23:00 The Kettering Incident
23:55 Doctors



00:00 Underground With Dave Attell
00:25 Chris D'elia: White Male, Black Comic
01:15 Broad City
01:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
02:05 I Live With Models
02:30 Broad City
03:00 Nathan For You
03:25 Workaholics
04:15 Key And Peele
04:40 Ridiculousness
05:30 Frankenfood
06:20 Key And Peele
07:15 Ridiculousness
08:30 Workaholics
09:20 Tosh.0
10:10 Catch A Contractor
10:35 Key And Peele
11:25 Ridiculousness
11:50 Catch A Contractor
13:05 Workaholics
13:55 Tosh.0
14:45 Workaholics
15:10 Key And Peele
15:35 Tosh.0
16:30 Key And Peele
16:55 Tosh.0
18:15 Key And Peele
18:39 Key And Peele
19:03 Ridiculousness
19:50 Brotherhood
20:13 Impractical Jokers | Special - Joker's Choice
21:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
21:30 South Park
21:54 Broad City
22:18 Anthony Jeselnik: Caligula
23:05 Underground With Dave Attell
23:30 The Daily Show - Global Edition



00:00 BBQ Crawl
01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:00 Man Fire Food
02:30 Man Fire Food
03:00 Chopped
04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
05:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
05:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
06:00 Chopped
07:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
08:00 The Kitchen
09:00 Siba's Table
09:30 Siba's Table
10:00 The Pioneer Woman
10:30 The Pioneer Woman
11:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
13:00 Chopped
14:00 Man Fire Food
14:30 Man Fire Food
15:00 Guy's Big Bite
15:30 Guy's Big Bite
16:00 Siba's Table
16:30 Siba's Table
17:00 The Big Eat
17:30 The Big Eat
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Man Fire Food
19:30 Man Fire Food
20:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
20:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
21:00 The Big Eat
21:30 The Big Eat
22:00 Man Fire Food
22:30 Man Fire Food
23:00 Chopped



00:30 Scrubs
01:00 Scrubs
01:30 The Detour
02:00 The Detour
02:30 You're The Worst
03:00 Black-Ish
03:30 The Goldbergs
04:00 Fresh Off The Boat
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 George Lopez
06:00 The Bernie Mac Show
06:30 Community
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:00 Fresh Off The Boat
08:30 George Lopez

09:00 Black-Ish
09:30 The Goldbergs
10:00 New Girl
10:30 Community
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 The Bernie Mac Show
12:30 Fresh Off The Boat
13:00 George Lopez
13:30 Community
14:00 The Goldbergs
14:30 The Goldbergs
15:00 New Girl
15:30 Scrubs
16:00 Scrubs
16:30 The Bernie Mac Show
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 The Mindy Project
18:30 The Mindy Project
19:00 Baby Daddy
19:30 Modern Family
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Scrubs
21:30 Scrubs
22:00 Saturday Night Live
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:00 Prison Break
01:00 Dead Of Summer
02:00 Survivor: Millennials vs Generation X
03:00 Deadline Gallipoli
04:00 Live Good Morning America
06:00 Unforgettable
07:00 Chicago Fire
08:00 Bones
09:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
10:00 Unforgettable
11:00 Grey's Anatomy
12:00 Bones
13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
14:00 Chicago Fire
15:00 Recovery Road
16:00 Live Good Morning America - Weekend
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
18:00 Bones
19:00 Grey's Anatomy
20:00 The Blacklist
21:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
22:00 Supernatural
23:00 Grimm



00:00 The Night Of
01:35 Funny Or Die Presents
02:00 Game Of Thrones
03:00 Westworld
04:00 The Knick
05:00 Cinema Verite
07:00 A Number
08:15 Path To War
11:00 Hysterical Blindness
13:00 Real Women Have Curves
15:00 The Gathering Storm
17:00 Hysterical Blindness
19:00 Preacher
20:05 Code Black
21:00 Silicon Valley
21:30 Silicon Valley
22:00 John From Cincinnati
23:00 Jonah From Tonga
23:30 Getting On



00:20 12 Monkeys
01:10 Warehouse 13
02:00 Warehouse 13
02:50 Warehouse 13
03:40 Warehouse 13
04:30 Warehouse 13
05:15 Face Off
06:00 Stargate SG-1
09:20 Dark Matter
10:10 Dark Matter
14:20 Seeds Of Destruction
16:00 Killjoys
16:50 Face Off
17:40 Sanctuary
18:30 Sanctuary
19:25 Treasure Island
21:00 Neverland
22:30 Neverland



00:00 Bones
01:00 House Of DVF
02:00 Married At First Sight
03:00 Married At First Sight
04:33 Married At First Sight
05:15 Three
06:00 Style By Jury
06:30 Style By Jury
07:00 The Secret Life Of The American Teenager
08:00 Cedar Cove
09:00 Cedar Cove
10:00 Married At First Sight

11:00 Married At First Sight
12:33 Married At First Sight
13:15 Three
14:00 Da Vinci's Demons
15:00 Transporter: The Series
16:00 Private Practice
17:00 Gallery Girls
18:00 Grey's Anatomy
19:00 Grey's Anatomy
20:00 Fashion Star
21:00 House Of DVF
22:00 Bones
23:00 Bones



00:20 Extraordinary Pregnancies
01:10 Secret Eskimo Escape
02:00 Leah Remini: It's All Relative
02:25 Leah Remini: It's All Relative
02:50 Monsters Inside Me
03:35 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
04:20 Toddlers & Tiaras
05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
06:00 Jon & Kate Plus 8
08:30 Cake Boss
09:20 Separated At Birth
10:10 Designer Darlings
11:50 Say Yes To The Dress
14:45 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day
15:35 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
17:40 Oprah's Master Class
19:20 Suddenly Royal
20:10 Cake Boss
21:00 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
21:50 Oprah's Master Class
22:40 Body Bizarre
23:30 Diagnose Me



00:00 Violetta
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Violetta
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:00 Violetta
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Mouk
06:00 Jessie
06:25 Jessie
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
07:20 Star Darlings
07:25 Austin & Ally
07:50 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:55 Jessie
08:20 Descendants Wicked World
08:25 Elena Of Avalor
08:50 Star Darlings
08:55 Alex & Co.
09:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
09:25 Girl Meets World
09:50 Stuck In The Middle
10:15 Disney Cookabout
10:40 Harriet The Spy: Blog Wars
12:10 The 7D
12:20 Liv And Maddie
12:45 Liv And Maddie
13:10 Liv And Maddie
13:35 Liv And Maddie
14:00 Liv And Maddie
14:25 Austin & Ally
14:50 Austin & Ally
15:15 Bunk'd
15:40 Bunk'd
16:05 Descendants Wicked World
16:10 Elena Of Avalor
16:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
17:00 Gravity Falls
17:25 Wendy Wu: Homecoming Warrior
19:00 Star Darlings
19:05 Disney Cookabout
19:30 Elena Of Avalor
19:55 Liv And Maddie
20:20 Best Friends Whenever
20:45 Good Luck Charlie
21:10 H2O: Just Add Water
21:35 H2O: Just Add Water
22:00 Binny And The Ghost
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:10 Hank Zipzer
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



Nickelodeon HD
00:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
00:36 Max & Shred
01:00 The Haunted Hathaways
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig



LAST KNIGHTS ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

02:12 SpongeBob SquarePants	00:54 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:36 SpongeBob SquarePants	01:17 Blaze And The Monster Machines
03:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	01:40 Zack & Quack
03:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	01:50 Zack & Quack
03:48 Henry Danger	02:01 Team Umizoomi
04:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn	02:25 Louie
04:36 The Haunted Hathaways	02:32 Louie
05:00 Max & Shred	02:37 Louie
05:24 Henry Danger	02:43 Paw Patrol
05:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn	02:57 Paw Patrol
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants	03:21 Paw Patrol
06:36 SpongeBob SquarePants	03:45 Paw Patrol
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	04:08 Wanda And The Alien
07:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	04:18 Wanda And The Alien
07:48 Winx Club	04:28 Dora And Friends
08:12 Harvey Beaks	04:51 Dora And Friends
08:36 Breadwinners	05:15 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:00 Get Blake	05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:24 Rabbids Invasion	06:00 Paw Patrol
09:48 Lost In The West II	06:14 Paw Patrol
10:36 The Haunted Hathaways	06:37 Dora The Explorer
11:00 Winx Club	07:00 Wanda And The Alien
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants	07:11 Zack & Quack
11:48 SpongeBob SquarePants	07:22 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
12:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	07:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
12:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	08:10 Paw Patrol
13:00 Rabbids Invasion	08:35 Shimmer And Shine
13:24 Rabbids Invasion	08:58 Dora The Explorer
13:48 Rabbids Invasion	09:21 Paw Patrol
14:12 Rabbids Invasion	09:45 Little Charmers
14:36 Henry Danger Movie	09:57 Bubble Guppies
15:24 SpongeBob SquarePants	10:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants	10:40 Zack & Quack
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	10:52 Team Umizoomi
16:36 The Loud House	11:15 Louie
17:00 Sanjay And Craig	11:22 Louie
17:24 Rabbids Invasion	11:30 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
17:48 Breadwinners	11:53 Olive The Ostrich
18:12 Henry Danger	11:58 Olive The Ostrich
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn	12:03 Max & Ruby
19:00 100 Things To Do Before High School	12:26 Wanda And The Alien
19:24 Game Shakers	12:37 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
19:48 SpongeBob SquarePants	12:48 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants	13:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	13:22 Blaze And The Monster Machines
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	13:45 Zack & Quack
21:24 Breadwinners	13:55 Zack & Quack
21:48 Breadwinners	14:05 Team Umizoomi
22:12 Sanjay And Craig	14:28 Louie
22:36 Sanjay And Craig	14:35 Louie
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants	14:42 Louie
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants	14:48 Paw Patrol
23:48 Henry Danger	14:58 Paw Patrol



00:20 Wanda And The Alien
00:31 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:42 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom

16:10 Wanda And The Alien
16:19 Wanda And The Alien
16:30 Dora And Friends
16:53 Dora And Friends
17:16 Blaze And The Monster Machines
17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
18:00 Paw Patrol



35 STUDENTS FROM UCMAS-KUWAIT PARTICIPATE IN DUBAI COMPETITION

Thirty five students from UCMAS - Kuwait (Abacus Mental Arithmetic) participated in the 21st UCMAS International Competition 2016 hosted by UCMAS - UAE in Dubai recently. The international competition is an annual event organized by UCMAS Education Group, Malaysia with thousands of learners from over 50 countries competing every year.

In Visual competition 11-year-old Omar Mansour won 2nd place in higher C level and 6 years old Anusha Pereira won 2nd

place in elementary B category. Omar Mansour who also participated in listening calculation competition reached to the final level till 3 digits 40 rows and to the 14th position in a tough competition amongst 180 students from all over the world. Each students participated in the competition received a paper ranging between 100-200 arithmetic math problems depending on their level and age. They get time of 8 minutes to finish as many problems as they can.

Universal Concept Mental Arithmetic System is an international education organization globally recognized as a leader in whole brain development and mental arithmetic training. This gives the children considerable improvement in academic performance as well as level of concentration. Moreover it is complementary to the School Curriculum and well accepted by education experts worldwide. Congratulations to all UCMAS students who participated and the winners.



Adeeb Shuhaiber and Maha Mutawa began Election Day on KTV2 on November 26, 2016 with extensive coverage as polling stations opened in all five constituencies. The special live show included guests, live feeds from the polling centers and special reports on Kuwait's democratic history.



HALLOWEEN AT KUWAIT NATIONAL ENGLISH SCHOOL

Kuwait National English School held recently a non-uniform day with students wearing scary costumes related to Halloween celebrations. Class doors were also decorated for the same purpose and an election took place for the year

group which decorated the funniest and students who wore the best costume. The Halloween celebration was also an occasion to fund raise for charity purpose: "to teach the unreached". The funds collected will be sent to buy resources in a remote area of

Cambodia Padol where students have no access to education and live in misery. The school management and Director Madame Chantal Al-Gharabally would like to thank all school community for their effort and support for this honorable cause.



FEATHERED DINOSAUR TAIL FOUND ENCASED IN AMBER

WASHINGTON: Researchers have discovered the partial tail of a feathered dinosaur that was preserved in amber some 99 million years ago, according to a study released Thursday. One of the lead authors, Lida Xing from the China University of Geosciences, happened upon the feathered dinosaur fossil at an amber market in Myanmar last year. The chance find lends fresh insight into the extinct feathered creatures as well as the evolution of feathers themselves.

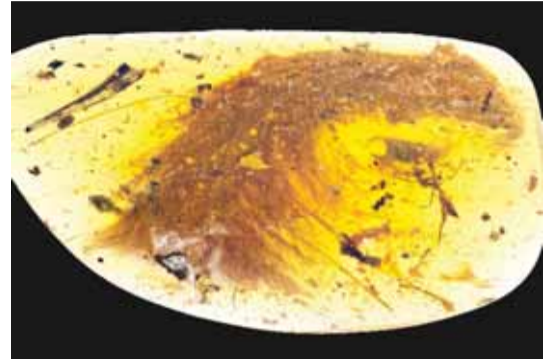
"This is a new source of information that is worth researching with intensity and protecting as a fossil resource," said Ryan McKellar, one of the scientists who worked on the study published in the US journal *Current Biology*. The researchers are sure the amber has preserved a dinosaur and not a prehistoric bird, McKellar said, because "the tail is long and flexible." "The new material preserves a tail consisting of eight vertebrae from a juvenile; these are surrounded by feathers that are preserved in 3D and microscopic detail," said the co-author and scientist from the Royal Saskatchewan Museum in Canada.

Though the entire tail was feathered, the dinosaur likely could not fly, the paleontologist noted. The plumage probably helped the animal with mating rituals or with thermal regulation, McKellar said. Feathers dating back to the time of dinosaurs have already been discovered in amber, but this is the first time scientists have been able to definitively link a specimen to a dinosaur, researchers said. Scientists analyzed the amber inclusion using CT scanning and microscopic observations.

Their analysis deduced that the feathers were dark brown on top with a pale or white underside. A soft tissue layer around the bones contained traces of ferrous iron from hemoglobin preserved in the sample. In the acclaimed science-fiction film "Jurassic Park," scientists managed to clone dinosaurs from DNA found in a piece of amber.

The fossilized tree resin is often used in jewelry, but McKellar said this find highlights the importance of amber to paleontological research. "Amber pieces preserve tiny snapshots of ancient ecosys-

tems, but they record microscopic details, three-dimensional arrangements, and labile tissues that are difficult to study in other settings." — AFP



SASKATCHEWAN, Canada: This image shows a dinosaur tail complete with its feathers trapped in a piece of amber. — AFP

IRAQ SMOKING CHIMP FINDS REFUGE IN KENYA

MANNO IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN BORN IN DAMASCUS

OL PEJETA: Separated from his mother shortly after birth, Manno the chimpanzee was smuggled to Iraq and spent his days smoking cigarettes handed to him by amused zoo visitors and posing for pictures. The four-year-old would also be dressed as a child and fed soda and sweets giving him near permanent diarrhoea-before being locked in a small cage every night in a private zoo in the Kurdish city of Dohuk.

Then came help from several conservation groups, and Manno's days as a spectacle-and smoker-are now over after arriving at a chimpanzee sanctuary in Kenya a week ago. "On the trip between Dohuk and Erbil airport, the convoy carrying him was, at the closest, about 20 kilometers from Mosul," where fierce battles are under way between the Iraqi army and the Islamic State group, said Daniel Stiles of the Project to End Great Ape Slavery (PEGAS).

After several days travelling in a small wooden box, Manno arrived on November 30 at the chimpanzee sanctuary within the Ol Pejeta conservancy at the foot of Mount Kenya, which has been taking in endangered chimpanzees since 1993. "Before joining the other chimpanzees, he has to remain in quarantine for a while," to ensure that Manno does not have any diseases that could be transmitted to the reserve's 36 other residents, said Stephen Ngulu, a veterinarian and the chimp sanctuary's director.

To avoid unsettling the delicate balance within the troop, and the creation of deadly rivalries, Manno will be slowly introduced to the other chimps before joining them in their one square kilometer of fenced territory. Manno, who is believed to have been born in a zoo in the Syrian capital of Damascus, has not had any contact with his own kind since at least the end of 2013 when he was illegally sold to the Dohuk zoo for \$15,000 (14,000 euros).

In the meantime, Manno happily swings on ropes and plays with stuffed animals and balls in his room. "He plays, he moves around constantly, he is very



ERBIL, Iraq: File photo shows four-year-old chimpanzee Manno, rescued from a zoo in Duhok after being trafficked from Syria, playing in his transport crate at Erbil International airport before his flight to Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary in Kenya. — AFP

excited by what we give him," said Ngulu. "He doesn't seem to be depressed."

'Conservation failure'

Unfortunately for many of the other chimps in the sanctuary, that is not the case. Many of them have been traumatized after experiences that make it impossible to return them to their natural habitat of tropical forests in the Congo basin and west Africa. Poco, 36, one of the oldest males in the sanctuary, was rescued from a cage of less than one cubic meter in a garage in Burundi. Another called George was a pet in South Africa whose owners could no longer handle as the chimp grew older.

Others were seized in airports while being smuggled from one place to another. The sanctuary "is not a natural environment, but it's a whole lot better than what those chimps experienced in the first part of their lives," said Richard Vigne, Ol Pejeta's director. He sees the existence of the chimp sanctuary as a sign of "con-

servation failure" regarding the species, whose current population is estimated to be no more than 250,000. Chimpanzees are listed as in danger of extinction by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

'Objects of amusement'

The main threat to chimpanzees, whose genes are 98.8 percent similar to those of humans, is poaching and the destruction of their habitat. "Adult chimps are killed for their meat in places like central Africa, and infant chimps are (captured with the view to their being sold on," said Vigne. He said that while in the past chimps were mainly captured for medical testing, they have more recently become sought after as pets in the Middle and Far East, and "objects of amusement to make cash for their owners." "When they are young... they are very cute and people like them. Then they grow up and they-particularly if they're male-start to become more aggressive and difficult to handle. — AFP

A GRIM TALLY SOARS: MORE THAN 50,000 OVERDOSE DEATHS IN US

NEW YORK: More than 50,000 Americans died from drug overdoses last year, the most ever. The disastrous tally has been pushed to new heights by soaring abuse of heroin and prescription painkillers, a class of drugs known as opioids. Heroin deaths rose 23 percent in one year, to 12,989, slightly higher than the number of gun homicides, according to government data released Thursday. Deaths from synthetic opioids, including illicit fentanyl, rose 73 percent to 9,580.

And prescription painkillers took the highest toll, but posted the smallest increase. Abuse of drugs like Oxycontin and Vicodin killed 17,536, an increase of 4 percent. "I don't think we've ever seen anything like this. Certainly not in modern times," said Robert Anderson, who oversees death statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The new numbers were part of the agency's annual tally of deaths and death rates in 2015. — AP

CALIF CONJOINED TWINS SEPARATED

PALO ALTO: Conjoined California twins Eva and Erika Sandoval have become two separate toddlers following a 17-hour marathon surgery and are recovering "quite well," officials said Thursday. The Sacramento Bee reported the 2-year-old Sacramento area girls were born conjoined from the chest down and shared a bladder, liver, parts of their digestive system and a third leg. Their parents said each girl has retained portions of the organs they shared.

Each girl still has one leg and surgeons told the newspaper both would likely need a prosthetic leg. The third limb was used for skin grafts to cover surgical wounds. Their parents were overjoyed with the success of the separation, which has been in the planning stages since before the girls were born. "They look amazing. They're amazing. They have their hair done, and they're resting," said mother Aida Sandoval. "We're just going to take it one day at a time and let them catch up on their rest."

At a news conference Thursday afternoon, she said she has seen the twins separated and awake. "The first time I saw the girls it was very surreal," she said. "And it's still very surreal." Speaking through tears and in both Spanish and English, she said it's been a "long journey to get here." "It's really been a dream come true," she said. The twins are in stable condition and are expected to remain in intensive care for up to two weeks, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford officials said. Lead surgeon Dr Gary Hartman said a team of 50 worked on the procedure. "(It's) the same goal we have for all of our children: that we end up with two, happy healthy girls," Hartman said. "Anyone who saw the girls before surgery can testify to the happy part," which he credited entirely to their parents, Hartman said. "We think that this week we made a big step toward the healthy part. — AP

OHIO PASSES SECOND, LESS RESTRICTIVE, ABORTION BILL

CLEVELAND: Ohio lawmakers passed a second piece of legislation in two days on Thursday restricting abortion access in the state by banning the procedure after 20 weeks of gestation. Senate Bill 127 was passed by the state House 64-29 on Thursday and then again later in the evening by the Senate 23-8. The Senate had approved the bill early last year but had to approve it again because of changes made by the House. The bill is less strict than the "heartbeat" measure passed on Tuesday that outlaws an abortion as early as six weeks after conception, once a fetal heartbeat is detected.

Neither of the measures make exceptions for rape or incest, although both allow for abortions that would save the mother's life. Supporters of the bill say they are trying to protect the lives of unborn babies. Both pieces of legislation await the signature or veto of Republican Ohio Governor John Kasich, who critics said on Thursday was using the dueling legislations as politic cover. "Passing both anti-abortion measures in a lame-duck session is political maneuvering by the Republican-dominated state legislature steered by Governor Kasich," said Gabriel Mann, a spokesman for the NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio.

"John Kasich has a masters degree in political calculus." Kasich could veto the six-week ban and sign the 20-week ban in an effort to appear moderate, Mann said. Twenty-week abortion bans have been passed in more than 10 states, but federal courts in Arizona and Idaho have ruled that they are unconstitutional. Under current law, Ohio prohibits abortion once a fetus is considered viable outside the womb, which is from 24 to 26 weeks of gestation. The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio testified against both bills, saying the measures unconstitutionally restricted women's access to reproductive healthcare.

"Bans such as these only hurt women and their families and waste taxpayer dollars by defending laws that federal courts have routinely declared unconstitutional," Mike Brickner, a senior policy director at the ACLU, said on Wednesday before the vote. "Governor Kasich should veto any bill that infringes upon reproductive freedom," he said. Also passed on Thursday was a healthcare bill that included a last-minute amendment that makes "knowingly assisting" in a suicide a felony punishable by up to five years in prison. —Reuters

AMERICAN SPACE LEGEND JOHN GLENN DEAD AT 95

COLUMBUS: John Glenn, who made history twice as the first American to orbit Earth and the first senior citizen to venture into space, died Thursday at the age of 95. Glenn became a symbol of strength and the nation's pioneering spirit, drawing admirers from all walks of life over a long career in the military, then NASA, and the US Senate. He was chosen along with six other military pilots as part of the "Original Seven," the very first class of US astronauts in 1959 whose saga was recounted in the classic movie "The Right Stuff."

The US space agency NASA was among the first to pay tribute to the legendary astronaut who went on to serve as a lawmaker for more than two decades, calling him "a true American hero." "Godspeed, John Glenn. Ad astra," NASA tweeted, echoing the famous words radioed by fellow astronaut Scott Carpenter to Glenn before he circled the Earth in 1962. Glenn died at the James Cancer Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, according to Hank Wilson, a spokesman for the John Glenn College of Public Affairs. The cause of death was not immediately announced. "With John's passing, our nation has lost an icon and Michelle and I have lost a friend," said President Barack Obama.

"John always had the right stuff, inspiring generations of scientists, engineers and astronauts who will take us to Mars and beyond-not just to visit, but to stay," he said. The former astronaut and veteran of two wars had been in declining health, undergoing heart-valve replacement surgery in 2014 and reportedly suffering a stroke, and was hospital-



US astronaut and senator John Glenn

ized in Columbus more than a week before he died. "John is one of the best and bravest men I've ever known," said Secretary of State John Kerry as he paid respects to his friend and former colleague in the Senate, calling him "an inspiration."

"Though he soared deep into space and to the heights of Capitol Hill, his heart never strayed from his steadfast Ohio roots," said John Kasich, the governor of Glenn's midwestern home state, in one of a stream of tributes flooding in for the national hero. President-elect Donald Trump, who happened to be in Columbus when Glenn's death was announced, paid his own tribute, telling a rally later in Iowa: "He was a giant among men, and a true American legend."

Trailblazer

The first man to orbit Earth was Russia's Yuri Gagarin in 1961. On February 20, 1962, Glenn became the first American to accomplish the same feat, uttering the memorable phrase: "Zero G and I feel fine." Glenn's flight lasted just under five hours and he circled the Earth three times, as part of NASA's Mercury project.

Thirty-six years later, on October 29, 1998, he made history again when he returned to space at the age of 77 - becoming the oldest astronaut in space. It was another shining moment in a career of trailblazing successes spanning decades. Born July 18, 1921, in Cambridge, Ohio, Glenn joined the US Marine Corps in 1943, becoming a fighter pilot. —AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Advertisement for a pediatric clinic featuring a teddy bear in a doctor's uniform. The text includes:

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

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

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

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AMERICAN SPACE LEGEND JOHN GLENN DEAD AT 95

COLUMBUS: John Glenn, who made history twice as the first American to orbit Earth and the first senior citizen to venture into space, died Thursday at the age of 95. Glenn became a symbol of strength and the nation's pioneering spirit, drawing admirers from all walks of life over a long career in the military, then NASA, and the US Senate. He was chosen along with six other military pilots as part of the "Original Seven," the very first class of US astronauts in 1959 whose saga was recounted in the classic movie "The Right Stuff."

The US space agency NASA was among the first to pay tribute to the legendary astronaut who went on to serve as a lawmaker for more than two decades, calling him "a true American hero." "Godspeed, John Glenn. Ad astra," NASA tweeted, echoing the famous words radioed by fellow astronaut Scott Carpenter to Glenn before he circled the Earth in 1962. Glenn died at the James Cancer Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, according to Hank Wilson, a spokesman for the John Glenn College of Public Affairs. The cause of death was not immediately announced. "With John's passing, our nation has lost an icon and Michelle and I have lost a friend," said President Barack Obama.

"John always had the right stuff, inspiring generations of scientists, engineers and astronauts who will take us to Mars and beyond-not just to visit, but to stay," he said. The former astronaut and veteran of two wars had been in declining health, undergoing heart-valve replacement surgery in 2014 and reportedly suffering a stroke, and was hospital-



US astronaut and senator John Glenn

ized in Columbus more than a week before he died. "John is one of the best and bravest men I've ever known," said Secretary of State John Kerry as he paid respects to his friend and former colleague in the Senate, calling him "an inspiration."

"Though he soared deep into space and to the heights of Capitol Hill, his heart never strayed from his steadfast Ohio roots," said John Kasich, the governor of Glenn's midwestern home state, in one of a stream of tributes flooding in for the national hero. President-elect Donald Trump, who happened to be in Columbus when Glenn's death was announced, paid his own tribute, telling a rally later in Iowa: "He was a giant among men, and a true American legend."

Trailblazer

The first man to orbit Earth was Russia's Yuri Gagarin in 1961. On February 20, 1962, Glenn became the first American to accomplish the same feat, uttering the memorable phrase: "Zero G and I feel fine." Glenn's flight lasted just under five hours and he circled the Earth three times, as part of NASA's Mercury project.

Thirty-six years later, on October 29, 1998, he made history again when he returned to space at the age of 77 - becoming the oldest astronaut in space. It was another shining moment in a career of trailblazing successes spanning decades. Born July 18, 1921, in Cambridge, Ohio, Glenn joined the US Marine Corps in 1943, becoming a fighter pilot. —AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem **د. فهد علي المخيزيم**
 Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
 M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Fakhruddin holder of Indian Passport No. K-3650949 & Civil ID No. 281112702289 has changed my name from Hakim Fakhruddin Ikhlas to Hakimuddin Gakher hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Hakimuddin Gakher. (C 5244) 2-12-2016

I, Mohan Lal Jangir old name S/o Omark Mal Jangir holder of Indian Passport No. M8397095 and Civil ID No.

268020305095 has changed my from Mohan Lal Jangir to Mahaveer Prasad Jangir hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Mahaveer Prasad Jangir. (C 5242)

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EMERGENCY



PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr: 05:07
Shorook 06:31
Duhr: 11:41
Asr: 14:31
Maghrib: 16:50
Isha: 18:12



APARTMENT FOR RENT

1. AL MAHBUOLLA AREA

◆ Sea View •Featured Site

2. AL JABRIYA AREA

◆ Featured Site
 ◆ Near Royale Hayat Hospital

3. AL SALMIYA (Hamad Al Mubarak Street)

◆ Features Site, Near from Al Mowasat Hospital, near from seaside.

4. AL SALMIYA (Amman Street)

◆ Featured Site, near from Fifth Ring Road

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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (08/12/2016 TO 14/12/2016)

SHARQIA-1 THE LAST KING 12:00 PM THE LAST KING 2:00 PM DHRUVA - Telugu 3:30 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 4:15 PM DHRUVA - Telugu 6:30 PM DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi 6:30 PM DHRUVA - Telugu 9:30 PM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 12:30 AM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 9:30 PM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 11:15 PM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 1:00 AM	THE LAST KING 12:30 AM	MARINA-2 THE LAST KING 11:30 AM THE LAST KING 1:30 PM THE LAST KING 3:30 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 5:45 PM THE LAST KING 8:00 PM THE LAST KING 10:15 PM THE LAST KING 12:30 AM	Special Show "MOANA" 5:30 PM MOANA 8:00 PM THE LAST KING 10:30 PM THE LAST KING 12:45 AM
SHARQIA-2 MOANA 12:45 PM MOANA 3:00 PM MOANA 5:15 PM MOANA 7:30 PM THE LAST KING 9:45 PM THE LAST KING 12:05 AM	FANAR-1 THE NEIGHBOR 1:15 PM THE NEIGHBOR 3:15 PM THE NEIGHBOR 5:15 PM THE NEIGHBOR 7:15 PM THE NEIGHBOR 9:15 PM THE NEIGHBOR 11:15 PM THE NEIGHBOR 1:15 AM	MARINA-3 MOANA 1:00 PM MOANA 3:15 PM MOANA 5:30 PM MOANA 7:45 PM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 10:00 PM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 12:05 AM	AVENUES-6 THE NEIGHBOR 11:45 AM THE NEIGHBOR 1:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 3:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 5:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 7:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 9:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 11:45 PM
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MUHALAB-1 TAHT AL TARABEZA 11:30 AM TAHT AL TARABEZA 1:45 PM DHRUVA - Telugu 4:00 PM DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi 4:00 PM DHRUVA - Telugu 7:00 PM DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi 7:00 PM DHRUVA - Telugu 10:00 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 10:00 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 1:00 AM	FANAR-3 THE LAST KING 1:30 AM THE LAST KING 1:45 PM THE LAST KING 4:00 PM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 6:15 PM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 8:00 PM THE LAST KING 9:45 PM THE LAST KING 12:05 AM	AVENUES-2 MOANA -3D- 4DX 12:00 PM MOANA -3D- 4DX 2:30 PM MOANA -3D- 4DX 5:00 PM MOANA -3D- 4DX 7:30 PM MOANA -3D- 4DX 10:00 PM FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM -3D -4DX 12:30 AM	360°-1 THE NEIGHBOR 12:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 2:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 4:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 6:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 8:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 10:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 12:45 AM
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MUHALAB-3 MOANA 1:15 PM THE LAST KING 1:30 PM MOANA 3:30 PM MOANA 5:45 PM MOANA 8:00 PM THE LAST KING 10:15 PM	FANAR-5 WOLVES AT THE DOOR 1:00 PM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 3:00 PM DHRUVA - Telugu 3:30 PM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 4:45 PM DHRUVA - Telugu 6:30 PM DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi 6:30 PM DHRUVA - Telugu 9:30 PM DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi 9:30 PM WOLVES AT THE DOOR 12:30 AM	AVENUES-4 MOANA 11:30 AM THE LAST KING 1:45 PM AE DIL HAI MUSHKIL -Hindi 4:00 PM Special Show "MOANA" 4:00 PM DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi 7:00 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 10:00 PM THE NEIGHBOR 12:15 AM	360°-3 UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS 12:15 PM UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS 2:15 PM UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS 4:15 PM UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS 6:15 PM UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS 8:15 PM UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS 10:15 PM UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS 12:15 AM
	MARINA-1 THE NEIGHBOR 12:45 PM THE NEIGHBOR 3:00 PM TROLLS 5:00 PM THE NEIGHBOR 7:00 PM THE NEIGHBOR 9:00 PM THE NEIGHBOR 11:00 PM THE NEIGHBOR 1:00 AM	AVENUES-5 MOANA 12:30 PM MOANA 11:45 AM MOANA 3:00 PM MOANA 3:00 PM Special Show "MOANA" 3:00 PM MOANA 5:30 PM	AL-KOUT.1 MOANA 1:15 PM THE LAST KING 1:30 PM MOANA 3:30 PM MOANA 5:45 PM MOANA 8:00 PM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2016



DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Saturday 10/12/2016

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
KLM	413	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:25
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
CLX	852	Luxembourg	00:35
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50
DLH	635	Doha	01:55
MSC	511	Alexandria	02:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:20
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20
KAC	344	Chennai	05:35
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25
BAW	157	London	06:40
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00
AVV	653	Sohag	10:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15
IRM	1188	Mashhad	11:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30
IRC	526	Mashhad	11:40
FDK	801	Damascus	11:45
KAC	618	Doha	11:50
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00
JZR	239	Amman	12:45
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
SVA	2617	Jeddah	12:55
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
BON	101	Sarajevo	13:30
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:35
KAC	564	Amman	13:40
KAC	788	Jeddah	13:45
KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
KAC	692	Muscat	14:30
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
KAC	542	Cairo	14:45
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
KNE	683	Madinah	15:05
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:50
KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55
SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
SVA	504	Madinah	16:00
KNE	531	Jeddah	16:05
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
QTR	1702	Doha	16:10
FDB	051	Dubai	16:25
JZR	357	Mashhad	16:25
JZR	787	Riyadh	16:25
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35
RJA	640	Amman	16:55
KAC	118	New York	17:00
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45
JZR	325	Al Najaf	17:50
NIA	251	Alexandria	17:55
SVA	500	Jeddah	18:00
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
FDB	063	Dubai	18:10
JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
IRA	669	Mashhad	18:55
SYR	341	Damascus	19:00
KAC	512	Mashhad	19:20

ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
KAC	502	Beirut	19:30
CLX	856	Luxembourg	19:35
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	104	London	19:50
KNE	381	Taif	19:55
KAC	166	Rome	19:55
MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05
OMA	647	Muscat	20:10
JZR	189	Dubai	20:15
QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
KAC	562	Amman	20:40
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45
KAC	174	Munich	20:45
KAC	616	Bahrain	20:50
FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55
KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
KAC	676	Dubai	21:45
FDB	8075	Dubai	21:50
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
KLM	415	Amsterdam/Dammam	22:05
JZR	125	Bahrain	22:05
NIA	151	Cairo	22:10
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
JZR	241	Amman	22:45
KNE	533	Jeddah	22:45
KAC	164	Paris	22:55
KAC	1544	Cairo	22:55
JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
FDB	071	Dubai	23:45
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:50

Departure Flights on Saturday 10/12/2016

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
ETD	9860	Bahrain	00:35
PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
FDB	072	Dubai	00:50
JAI	573	Mumbai	01:30
BBC	044	Dhaka	01:50
KLM	413	Amsterdam	02:00
KAC	417	Manila	02:05
CLX	853	Luxembourg	02:05
THY	773	Istanbul	02:25
SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:55
MSC	512	Alexandria	03:05
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
PGT	859	Istanbul	03:35
KAC	103	London	03:40
UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
KKK	6505	Istanbul	03:55
OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
QTR	1077	Doha	04:40
FEG	938	Sohag	05:00
QTR	1087	Doha	05:50
FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	153	Istanbul	06:50
JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	165	Rome	06:55
RJA	643	Amman	07:05
JZR	238	Amman	07:10
GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	541	Cairo	07:15
KAC	163	Paris	07:25
KAC	773	Riyadh	07:30
KAC	173	Munich	07:35
KAC	787	Jeddah	07:45
FDB	5062	Dubai	07:55
JZR	778	Jeddah	07:55
KAC	563	Amman	08:00
KAC	617	Doha	08:00
BAW	156	London	08:40
FDB	054	Dubai	08:55
KAC	691	Muscat	09:00
KAC	117	New York	09:00
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
KAC	101	London	09:35
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
JZR	356	Mashhad	10:25
KAC	411	Bangkok	10:30

FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
AVV	654	Asyut	11:10
KAC	501	Beirut	11:15
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
RBG	554	Alexandria	11:55
KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	12:05
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
IRM	1189	Mashhad	12:30
IRC	527	Mashhad	12:40
FDK	802	Damascus	12:45
IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00
JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10
KAC	511	Mashhad	13:15
JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
FDB	076	Dubai	14:05
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
SVA	9325	Jeddah	14:25
JZR	324	Al Najaf	14:25
KNE	382	Taif	14:50
BON	102	Sarajevo	14:55
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KAC	561	Amman	15:00
FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
KAC	785	Jeddah	15:15
PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	15:20
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
QTR	1079	Doha	15:40
JZR	188	Dubai	15:40
KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	1543	Cairo	15:55
KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
KAC	283	Dhaka	16:15
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:30
OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:50
SAW	706	KAC/Damascus	16:55
KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
JZR	240	Amman	17:15
FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
KAC	615	Bahrain	17:35
QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
RJA	641	Amman	17:55
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	353	BLR	18:15
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
JZR	554	Alexandria	18:55
NIA	252	Alexandria	18:55
FDB	064	Dubai	19:05
JZR	124	Bahrain	19:15
UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
SVA	501	Jeddah	19:30
MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
QTR	1081	Doha	19:50
IRA	666	Esfahan	19:55
SYR	342	Damascus	20:00
ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	383	Delhi	20:30
FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
KAC	361	Colombo	20:35
KNE	232	Riyadh	20:55
CLX	856	Hong Kong	21:05
MSR	607	Luxor	21:05
OMA	648	Muscat	21:10
KAC	205	Islamabad	21:25
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	21:30
QTR	1089	Doha	21:35
DLH	634	Doha	21:35
KAC	741	Dammam	21:45
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
KAC	351	Kochi	22:00
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
FDB	8076	Dubai	22:35
KAC	301	Mumbai	22:45
KAC	381	Delhi	22:45
UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
KLM	415	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
NIA	152	Cairo	23:10
QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
KNE	534	Jeddah	23:35

WORDSEARCH PUZZLE

Computer Jargon 1

Find and circle all of the computer words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional word.

T P I R C S A V A J L E X I P I G E
 L I A M E M O R Y M M O U S E N I L
 C R A B K S A T X I N U Y H S T F G
 D N D I R E C T O R Y E T A O E O O
 P O W E R S U P P L Y N I R F R L O
 U C O A S A E V A S S C R E T N D G
 K I R O P K T Y P S H R U W W E E L
 C D D E C P R E E A H Y C A A T R M
 A N R I M A L L T D R P E R R E A T
 B O L E N M E I E K E T S E E P H H
 R C K I P R A F C V R I I R S U L M
 E E B E I A R R I A B O O T M B O R
 N S T W R A P R G R T N W B I N G O
 N O O S G N D L O O D I N T I O I S
 A N G M A K A U L A R A O T E A N R
 C A E A S P T L T A I P O N R N D U
 S N F I R E W A L L W R E I K O O C
 T F D P R D H T O O T E U L B Y T E

- | | | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| APPLICATION | DEFRAGMENT | GOOGLE | NANOSECOND | SCANNER |
| BACKUP | DIRECTORY | HTML | NETWORK | SECURITY |
| BINARY | DISK DRIVE | ICON | PARTITION | SHAREWARE |
| BLUETOOTH | DOS | INTERNET | PASTE | SOFTWARE |
| BOOT | DRAG | JAVASCRIPT | PDF | SPAM |
| BYTE | EMAIL | KERNAL | PIXEL | TASKBAR |
| CHAT | ENCRYPTION | LCD | POWER SUPPLY | THUMBNAIL |
| CLICK | FILE | LOGIN | PROGRAMMER | UNIX |
| COOKIE | FIREWALL | MEMORY | ROUTER | WALLPAPER |
| CURSOR | FOLDER | MONITOR | SAVE AS | WIRELESS |
| DATA | GIF | MOUSE | | |

Yesterday's Solution

Comedy Movies 2

S A B R I N A R A I A I O U I L L E M
 E I S T O O I N B E S I N S H O W A L
 O P A R E N T H O O D I C E A G E T N P
 N T S T I R C R A Z Y Y O G R A P H Y A O
 N O S T I D A M Y L L I B D A V E O P L E
 S M A D A H C I A P E R G Y T T F H Y P
 H H K I N G P I N N R R A R O S F A Z S
 R O X A N N E O A T I O U A G R N I P E S E
 L M Z T I N A S L L U H M H E N D C P T E
 R E H T N A P K N L P E H T L I E Y H L
 I A B T H R I D S O C T J R R E S G I H
 G L M O I H H R A U D E D E T A P I S T
 G O G A W O I D B R I W A O R U A L A U
 N N E E G F D R B F S N M C O K C M N R
 I E A D T Y I S O E O M E S A S E O A N
 K I A H S S E N N W Y E K G P D A R N O
 R Y N H S U M Y G B L C F L L M E E A N
 O G A O L A A A O E U U A I M A F M B U
 W C L B I W M Y R D R S B E L F E E Y J
 K H O R S E F E A T H E R S E P I R T S

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| AIRPLANE | DUCK SOUP | LIFE OF BRIAN | SABRINA |
| ANALYZE THIS | EMMA | MASH | SPLASH |
| ANTZ | FARGO | OFFICE SPACE | STIR CRAZY |
| ARTHUR | GET SMART | PARENTHOOD | STRIPES |
| BANANAS | GROUNDHOG DAY | PATCH ADAMS | THE JERK |
| BEST IN SHOW | HAPPY GILMORE | POLICE ACADEMY | THE PINK PANTHER |
| BILLY MADISON | HOME ALONE | RAISING ARIZONA | THE TRAMP |
| BLUES BROTHERS | HORSE FEATHERS | RATATOUILLE | TOMMY BOY |
| BOWFINGER | ICE AGE | REAL GENIUS | TOOTSIE |
| BULWORTH | JUNO | ROXANNE | WAYNES WORLD |
| CADDYSHACK | KINGPIN | RUTHLESS PEOPLE | WORKING GIRL |
| DAVE | | | |

The hidden movie title is: MONTY PYTHON'S THE MEANING OF LIFE

CROSSWORD 1456

S H O T A R R O B A A B L S
 A A R E B A O B A B P R E P
 B O L A N C I B A K L A V A
 A M A T I L A M A E O S I N
 H A N I R H E A D B M S
 D M A E G I S A B Y L A
 F L O E T A E G U B A M
 E A E D A R A F G M E
 R I V I N A N E V A A Y I N
 I R O N E D E C L E A D
 A D U S T A N G L E S E A
 S I S L A D Y G R A B
 M U S D N A P A S C A B B Y
 A M O E B A A N E L E O A R
 R B I A S S E S S O R O T O
 K O R P A R A K E E T K E N

ACROSS

- An impudent or insolent rejoinder.
- Small genus of American herbs (American pennyroyal).
- Narrow wood or metal or plastic runners used for gliding over snow.
- A cord that is drawn through eyelets or around hooks in order to draw together two edges (as of a shoe or garment).
- (of spatial position) In or brought into line with or into proper relative position.
- Ratio of the adjacent side to the hypotenuse.
- A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
- A beautiful and graceful girl.
- Small genus of hairy herbs with yellow flowers.
- A Bantu language.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- Verse in the meter used in Greek and Latin poetry consisting of strophes of 4 tetrametric lines.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
- A Mid-Atlantic state.
- 30 to 300 gigahertz.
- The villain in William Shakespeare's tragedy who tricked Othello into murdering his wife.
- A vehicle mounted on runners and pulled by horses or dogs.
- A variety of bridge in which tricks made in excess of the contract are scored toward game.
- The dressed hairy coat of a mammal.
- A state in midwestern United States.
- A doctor's degree in optometry.
- Marked by or showing unaffected simplicity and lack of guile or worldly experience.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Swaziland or its people or their language.
- Antineoplastic drug (trade name Alkeran) used to treat multiple myeloma and some other malignancies.
- Moving upward and forward in a quick motion or series of motions.
- Devoid of any feeling of awe or reverence.
- A fixed number of lines of verse forming a unit of a poem.
- Any warm-blooded vertebrate having the skin more or less covered with hair.
- The Spanish Navy was destroyed by France and England while attempting to recover Sicily and Sardinia from Italy (1719).
- Of or relating to apnea.
- The basic unit of money in Albania.
- Of or relating to Papua or its people or language.
- Any of several fleet black-and-white striped African equines.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Extinct order of jawless vertebrates.
- An awkward stupid person.
- A large cask especially one holding a volume equivalent to 2 butts or 252 gals.
- A great raja.
- The compass point that is midway between north and northeast.

DOWN

- The scum formed by oxidation at the surface of molten metals.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Scarabaeid beetle considered divine by ancient Egyptians.
- A rosid dicot genus that includes moon carrots.
- An accidental happening.
- Fragrant resin obtain from trees of the family Burseraceae and used as incense.
- English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- Armor plate that protects the chest.
- In operation or operational.
- A genus of herbs that resemble clover.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- A long steep slope or cliff at the edge of a plateau or ridge.
- An Asian peninsula (off Manchuria) separating the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan.
- (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
- Very light colored.
- An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Sweet pulpy tropical fruit with thick scaly rind and shiny black seeds.
- A rule made by a local authority to regulate its own affairs.
- Tree of low-lying coastal areas of southeastern United States having glossy leaves and racemes of fragrant white flowers.
- A port in northwestern Israel on the Bay of Acre.
- The taxonomic kingdom of lower plants.
- Lighted up by or as by fire or flame.
- United States screenwriter and filmmaker (born in 1944).
- (prefix) Across or crossing or on the opposite side.
- A large number or amount.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- A tranquilizer (trade name Valium) used to relieve anxiety and relax muscles.
- Rim (or part of the rim) into which spokes are inserted.
- Relating to or characteristic of the state or people of Alaska.
- An artificial source of visible illumination.
- A festival featuring African-American culture.
- A South American river.
- A metric unit of length equal to one billionth of a meter.
- A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
- A city in southeastern South Korea.
- An irrational but irresistible motive for a belief or action.
- Large elliptical brightly colored deep-sea fish of Atlantic and Pacific and Mediterranean.
- Very dark black.
- A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
- A small restaurant where drinks and snacks are sold.
- 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.
- The month following March and preceding May.
- A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution

S H O T A R R O B A A B L S
 A A R E B A O B A B P R E P
 B O L A N C I B A K L A V A
 A M A T I L A M A E O S I N
 H A N I R H E A D B M S
 D M A E G I S A B Y L A
 F L O E T A E G U B A M
 E A E D A R A F G M E
 R I V I N A N E V A A Y I N
 I R O N E D E C L E A D
 A D U S T A N G L E S E A
 S I S L A D Y G R A B
 M U S D N A P A S C A B B Y
 A M O E B A A N E L E O A R
 R B I A S S E S S O R O T O
 K O R P A R A K E E T K E N

Daily SuDoku

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	2		5	7	1
7	9	2		4	3
					7
4	7	5	3	8	9
	6				
	7	3		1	8
6		4	8	3	7
9		8	6	2	

Yesterday's Solution

4	8	2	7	3	1	5	9	6
7	5	9	8	4	6	1	3	2
3	1	6	9	5	2	4	8	7
5	7	8	2	9	4	3	6	1
6	2	1	3	7	5	8	4	9
9	3	4	1	6	8	7	2	5
1	9	5	4	2	3	6	7	8
8	4	7	6	1	9	2	5	3
2	6	3	5	8	7	9	1	4

OVER 1,000 RUSSIAN ATHLETES BENEFITED FROM CONSPIRACY

LONDON: More than 1,000 Russian athletes competing in summer, winter and paralytic sport were involved in or benefited from an institutional conspiracy to conceal positive doping tests, an independent WADA report said yesterday. The second and final part of the report for the World Anti-Doping Agency by Canadian sports lawyer Richard McLaren provided more details of an elaborate state-sponsored doping scheme operated by Russia.

It said there was a systematic cover-up, which was refined at the 2012 Olympics, 2013 world athletics championships and 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, and that more than 30 sports, including soccer, were involved in concealing positive doping samples. "We are now able to confirm a cover up that dates back until at least 2011 and continued after the Sochi Olympic Games. It was a cover up that evolved from uncontrolled chaos to an institutionalized and disciplined medal-winning conspiracy," McLaren told a news conference on Friday.

"It was a cover-up of an unprecedented scale and the second part of this report shows the evidence that increases the number of athletes involved as well as the scope of the conspiracy and cover up. "We have evidence revealing that more than 500 positive results were reported as negative, including well-known and elite-level athletes, who had their positive results automatically falsified." McLaren said Russia won 24 gold, 26 silver and 32 bronze medals at London 2012 and no Russian athlete tested positive. "Yet the Russian team corrupted the London Games on an unprecedented scale, the extent of which will probably never be fully established," he said.

"The desire to win medals superseded their collective moral and ethical compass and Olympic values of fair play. "For years international sports competitions have unknowingly been hijacked by the Russians. Coaches and athletes have been playing on an uneven field." The report said a urine sample-swapping technique used at Sochi became regular practice at the Moscow laboratory that dealt with elite athletes. It added that four Sochi gold medalists had samples with physiologically impossible salt readings, while 12 Russian Sochi medalists had evidence of tampering with the bottles containing their urine samples.

The report detailed how a clean urine bank existed in the Moscow laboratory, where salt and coffee were added to clean samples to try to fool officials testing "B samples" in supposedly tamper-proof bottles. The report included evidence of DNA mismatches, where a tampered B sample did not match the DNA of previous specimens and cases of sample swapping between male and female athletes. The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) said in a statement that 53 percent of the athletes whose details had been shared with them by McLaren's investigation team had been sanctioned or were currently undergoing disciplinary proceedings.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) said the full findings of the report were unprecedented and astonishing. "They strike right at the heart of the integrity and ethics of sport," Paralympic sport's governing body said in a statement. Yelena Isinbayeva, the twice Olympic pole vault champion and now a Russian anti-doping official, however, said it was unfair to single out Russia for criticism. "If we want to clean up world sport, let's start," she said. "We don't need to concentrate on just one country. I think banning clean Russian sportsmen is impractical and unfair."

The original McLaren report, released in July, revealed widespread state-sponsored doping in Russian sport. The July report found Moscow had concealed hundreds of positive doping tests in many sports ahead of the Sochi Games and led to a partial ban of Russian athletes competing in the Rio Olympics in August. Although Russian track and field athletes and weightlifters were banned from competing at Rio, the International Olympic Committee rejected a blanket ban and let international sports federations decide which athletes should be eligible to compete. — Reuters

LE CLOS BREAKS 100M FLY WORLD RECORD

MONTREAL: Chad le Clos, rebounding from what he considered a disappointing Rio Olympics, won his second gold of the Short Course Swimming World Championships on Thursday with a world record-setting victory in the 100m butterfly. The South African's time of 48.08sec improved his own world record of 48.44, set at the previous edition of the championships in Doha in 2014. Le Clos, denied a 200m fly Olympic repeat in Rio, added another gold to the 200m fly title he captured on Tuesday when the championships kicked off in Windsor, Canada.

American Tom Shields was second in 49.04 and Australian David Morgan claimed bronze in 49.31. Hungary's one-woman wrecking crew of Katinka Hosszu, a treble gold medalist in Rio, picked up her fourth individual gold of the championships in the 200m backstroke. It was another convincing win for the "Iron Lady," who was in control from the 50m mark and steadily built her lead to win in 2:00.79 - more than a second in front of runner-up Daryna Zevina of Ukraine (2:02.24). Australian Emily Seebohm took bronze in 2:02.65.

Hosszu, winner of the 200m butterfly, 100m back and 400m individual medley earlier in the meeting, also topped the semi-final times in the 100m individual medley. But she wasn't a factor as she capped her night with an eighth-place finish in the 800m freestyle won by American Leah Smith. Smith, the 400m free bronze medalist in Rio, led all the way to head a US one-two in 8:10.17. Ashley Twichell was second in 8:11.95 and Australian Kiah Melverton was earned bronze in 8:16.51. The 800 free field was

missing reigning champion and world record-holder Mireia Belmonte of Spain, who pulled out of the event after a disappointing showing in the 400m medley on Tuesday.

Koch snags second gold

Germany's Marco Koch further soothed the disappointment of Rio with a victory in the 200m breaststroke, adding a second gold to the 100m breast title he captured on Wednesday. Koch, the reigning long course world champion who was relegated to seventh in the 200m breast at the Olympics, clocked a championship record of 2:01.21 for a comfortable win over Britain's Andrew Willis (2:02.71) with Russia's Mikhail Dorinov third in 2:03.09. Australian Brittany Elmslie, a relay gold medallist in Rio, snatched victory in the women's 100m freestyle, earning her first short course world title in 51.81.

Silver went to 2012 double Olympic sprint gold medalist Ranomi Kromowidjojo of the Netherlands, who was second in 51.92, while Canadian teenager Penny Oleksiak, who shared 100m free gold with American Simone Manuel in Rio, took bronze in 52.01. The United States capped the night with a victory in the mixed 4x50m medley relay. Michael Chadwick, swimming the final freestyle leg, hit the water in seventh place but stormed home to complete the victory in 1:37.22. The win gave breaststroker Lilly King her third gold of the championships, after an individual triumph in the 50m breast and her swim on America's world record-setting women's 4x50m medley relay. — AFP



WINDSOR: Chad Le Clos of South Africa competes in the 100m Butterfly final on day three of the 13th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) at the WFCU Centre on December 8, 2016 in Windsor Ontario, Canada. — AFP

Key points from McLaren report

LONDON: AFP Sports selects five key points from the damning report into Russian doping by Canadian law professor Richard McLaren published yesterday:

State-sponsored doping

McLaren makes no bones that what was clear in his first report remains the case in his second one that it was state-sponsored doping, 'An institutional conspiracy', involving among others the Russian Sports Ministry and Russia's FSB security service. "The summer and winter sports athletes were not acting individually but within an organized infrastructure as reported on in the 1st Report," wrote McLaren.

Sochi was not the climax

McLaren makes plain the system wasn't just set up for the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics-so Russian athletes could sweep the board in front of a home audience-but was to continue afterwards. "The swapping of Russian athletes' urine samples further confirmed in this 2nd Report as occurring at Sochi, did not stop at the close of the Winter Olympics. The sample swapping technique used at Sochi became a regular monthly practice of the Moscow Laboratory in dealing with elite and summer and winter athletes," wrote McLaren.

Over 1,000 athletes

The scale of the doping is eye-opening, McLaren states that over 1000 Russian sports people from across the spectrum, summer and winter sports and Paralympians were involved. "They can be identified as being involved in or benefiting from

manipulations to conceal positive doping tests," wrote McLaren.

Evolution theory

McLaren says that the systematic doping process was adapted through several years and major sporting events to also take into account WADA rule changes as they tried to stay ahead of the testers and their developing of more effective testing for different doping products. "This systematic and centralized cover up and manipulation of the doping control process evolved and was refined over the course of its use at London 2012 Summer Games, Universiade Games 2013, Moscow IAAF World Championships 2013 and the Winter Games in Sochi in 2014. The evolution of the infrastructure was also spawned in response to WADA regulatory changes and surprise interventions," wrote McLaren.

'Immutable facts'

McLaren-who was riled by the International Olympic Committee's reaction to his first Report in saying they were allegations when the law professor said they were facts-stipulates this Report is not based on verbal evidence for its conclusion and adds the key findings from his first Report remain unchanged. "The forensic testing, which is based on immutable facts, is conclusive. The evidence does not depend on verbal testimony to draw a conclusion. Rather, it tests the physical evidence and a conclusion is drawn from those results. The results of the forensic and laboratory analysis initiated by the IP (Independent Person) establish that the conspiracy was perpetrated between 2011 and 2015." — AFP

FLYERS BEAT OILERS FOR 7TH STRAIGHT WIN

PHILADELPHIA: Michael Raffl scored with 1:29 remaining to cap Philadelphia's rally from two goals down in a 6-5 victory over the Edmonton Oilers on Thursday night for the Flyers' seventh straight win. Claude Giroux had two goals and one assist, and Mark Streit, Pierre-Edouard Bellemare and Jakub Voracek also scored for the Flyers. Steve Mason stopped 28 shots to win his sixth straight and improve to 11-8-3. Leon Draisaitl had a goal and two assists, Connor McDavid had a goal and an assist, and Andrej Sekera, Benoit Pouliot and Oscar Klefbom also scored for the Oilers, who have blown leads in four straight games. Jonas Gustavsson finished with 25 saves.

CANADIENS 5, DEVILS 2

Carey Price lost his temper after being bumped twice in his crease and made 19 saves to help Montreal beat New Jersey. Torrey Mitchell scored twice and Phillip Danault, Artturi Lehkonen and Max Pacioretty also had goals for the Canadiens in their return from a five-game trip. Adam Henrique scored a goal and set up one by Taylor Hall for New Jersey, which ended a two-game winning streak. Montreal had a season-high 49 shots on Cory Schneider. A wild first period included three goals, four goal reviews and Price's meltdown. With 18 seconds left in the first period, Kyle Palmieri slid into Price's knees, and the goaltender jumped on him and started pummeling him with his blocker. Price was pulled away in the ensuing melee.

PENGUINS 5, PANTHERS 1

Sidney Crosby got his 18th goal and added an assist to lead Pittsburgh over Florida. Conor Sheary, Tom Kuhnhackl, Matt Cullen and Carl Hagelin also scored for Pittsburgh. Matt Murray made 28 saves. The Penguins have won four straight and five of their past six. Jaromir Jagr scored his 755th career goal, and Roberto Luongo stopped 25 shots for the Panthers. Luongo allowed three goals on Pittsburgh's first five shots. Panthers coach Tom Rowe, who replaced Gerard Gallant on Nov. 28, made his home debut. The Panthers have lost five of six under Rowe, but managed a point in three of those losses.

FLAMES 2, COYOTES 1, OT

Dougie Hamilton scored 1:09 into overtime, Chad Johnson stopped 27 shots and Calgary beat Arizona. Mark Giordano scored for the Flames in a chippy game filled with big hits and multiple fights.

Hamilton capped a fast-paced overtime by deking Arizona's Mike Smith with a forehand before flipping in a backhander. Calgary has won five straight and eight of 11 (8-2-1). Max Domi scored before leaving with an upper-body injury and Smith stopped 33 shots for the Coyotes, who have lost six straight and 11 of 14 (3-7-4). Arizona captain Shane Doan became Arizona's all-time assist leader and is the fifth player in NHL history to own his team's records for games played, goals, assists, points, game-winning goals and power-play goals.

ISLANDERS 3, BLUES 2

Anders Lee's second goal of the game with just over seven minutes remaining lifted New York over St. Louis. Lee's go-ahead score on a slap shot came after Casey Cizikas won a face-off in the Blues zone and sent the puck back to Lee, who rifled it past Allen with 7:18 left. Lee, who started the season slowly, now has seven goals in his last eight games.

John Tavares also scored and Thomas Greiss stopped 24 shots to help the Islanders improve their season-best stretch to 5-0-1 in their last six games. Robby Fabbri and Kyle



GLENDAL: Michael Frolik #67 of the Calgary Flames skates with the puck ahead of Brendan Perlini #29 of the Arizona Coyotes during the third period of the NHL game at Gila River Arena on December 8, 2016 in Glendale, Arizona. — AFP

Brodziak had goals for the Blues, who fell to 3-7-1 away from home while going 12-1-3 at Scottrade Center. Jake Allen, who came in with eight straight wins, finished with 24 saves.

HURRICANES 3, KINGS 1

Derek Ryan scored twice, Cam Ward made 21 saves and Carolina beat Los Angeles. Ryan had his first multigoal performance in 20 NHL games. A fixture in the lineup since being called up from the Charlotte Checkers of the AHL on Nov 11, Ryan has six points in the last seven games. He will turn 30 on Dec. 29 and has three goals this season and five in his career. Brock McGinn also scored for Carolina. Drew Doughty scored for the Kings and Jeff Zatkoff made 15 saves in his first 60-minute performance of the season.

STARS 5, PREDATORS 2

Jamie Benn scored his 200th career goal and added two assists, and Dallas beat Nashville. Jason Spezza had a goal and two assists, Antoine Roussel and Tyler Seguin each

had a goal and an assist, and Brett Ritchie also scored for the Stars. Kari Lehtonen stopped 33 shots, including all 21 in the second period. Viktor Arvidsson and Calle Jarnkrok scored for Nashville. Pekka Rinne came in with a 2.23 goals-against average, but gave up four goals on 18 shots in 25:47 before leaving early in the second period. Marek Mazanec came on and stopped 18 of the 19 shots he faced.

RANGERS 2, JETS 1

Kevin Hayes scored a power-play goal with 1:09 left in the third period to lift New York over Winnipeg. Jets forward Drew Stafford was in the penalty box for high-sticking when Ryan McDonagh's point shot through traffic deflected to Hayes, who capitalized for his 11th of the season. Chris Kreider also scored for New York and Antti Raanta, playing for the first time since Nov 27, stopped 17 shots. Mark Scheifele had the tying goal for Winnipeg midway through the second period, and Michael Hutchinson finished with 22 saves.

AVALANCHE 4, BRUINS 2

Matt Duchene scored his 10th goal and John Mitchell got his first, lifting Colorado over Boston. The Avalanche won for the 10th time in 11 visits to Boston, where they haven't lost since 1998. Duchene's goal 5:30 into the game was the first of three unassisted tallies for Colorado, which shut down Boston in the third period after David Pastrnak scored twice in the second to pull the Bruins within 3-2. Former Bruin Carl Soderberg added a goal for Colorado in the third and Nathan MacKinnon also scored for the Avs.

CANUCKS 5, LIGHTNING 1

Jayson Megna and Jack Skille both had two goals, Ryan Miller made 38 saves before leaving with six minutes left in the third period and Vancouver beat Tampa Bay. Erik Gudbranson also scored for the Canucks, who are 1-1 on a five-game road. Miller skated to the bench and then went to the locker room. There was no immediate word on why he departed. Tampa Bay, in a 1-5-1 slide, got a goal from Jonathan Drouin. — AP

83 CHILD SEX ABUSE SUSPECTS, NEARLY 100 CLUBS 'IMPACTED'

LONDON: Police have identified 83 potential suspects in the child sex abuse scandal that has rocked English football and believe 98 clubs from all levels have been 'impacted', the National Police Chiefs Council revealed yesterday. The scandal-in which two men have been charged with sex abuse although several of the coaches against whom allegations have been made are out of reach as they are now dead-has seen over a third of all British police forces launch investigations.

The NPCC added that 98 percent of the victims, believed to total 350, are male with their ages at the time of the alleged abuse

ranging from seven to 20. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) said the figures reflected the seriousness of the scandal. "These shocking numbers now identified by police reveal the deeply disturbing extent of abuse that has been going on within football," said an NSPCC spokesman.

The NPCC said all calls were being treated seriously—a total of 639 referrals have been relayed to Operation Hydrant which is the overall police investigation into historic sex abuse and who analyse the claims-and being dealt with as quickly as possible. "We are ensuring an efficient and effective serv-

ice-wide approach to investigating allegations, removing the potential for duplication and enabling the timely and effective sharing of intelligence and information between forces," said Simon Bailey, the lead for the NPCC on child protection.

"We are also liaising closely with the Football Association to ensure all relevant information they hold is shared to inform investigations moving forward. "As the number of calls being received across the service is higher than usual, it may take longer than normal for an officer from a local force to make contact to follow up from the initial call." — AFP

CHIEFS KO RAIDERS, SEIZE CONTROL OF THE AFC WEST

KANSAS CITY: The Kansas City Chiefs took control of the AFC West with a 21-13 victory over the Oakland Raiders on Thursday in chilly weather conditions. The result left the teams with identical 10-3 records, however, Kansas City has the tiebreak edge with two victories over Oakland this season. The loss snapped a six-game Raiders winning streak. The Chiefs suffered a big loss when inside linebacker Derrick Johnson went down with five minutes to play in the first half and needed help getting off the field.

The 34-year old first-round choice by Kansas City in the 2005 draft, missed 15 games in the 2014 season with a torn right Achilles. The Chiefs controlled the game in the first half thanks to rookie receiver-returner Tyreek Hill. He scored on a 36-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Alex Smith and added a 78-yard punt return for a touchdown. Running back Charcandrick West also contributed a three-yard scoring run. But in the second half, Kansas City was suddenly in a giving mood as Smith threw an interception and then was stripped of the ball on a sack by Oakland's Khalil Mack.

The Raiders were not able to take advantage, scoring only on a 33-yard field goal from Sebastian Janikowski. Another field goal attempt in the third quarter went awry due to a bad snap. Kansas City kept handing the ball back to the visitors, as its offense was unable to generate any first downs or long possessions. Oakland quarterback Derek Carr completed just 41.5 percent of his throws (17 of 41). The only reliable part of Oakland's offense was the running game as they rushed for 135 yards as a team with Latavius Murray contributing 103 yards on 22 carries. —Reuters

COWBOYS OUT TO AVENGE LONE LOSS AGAINST GIANTS

NFL PREVIEW

LOS ANGELES: The Dallas Cowboys aim to avenge their lone defeat of the season and clinch the NFC East title tomorrow when they clash with a New York Giants team whose pursuit of an NFL playoff spot has been slowed by a suddenly sputtering offense. The 11-1 Cowboys, led by the dynamic rookie duo of quarterback Dak Prescott and running back Ezekiel Elliott, have already become the first team to secure a post-season berth.

Prescott says he's learned a lot since the Cowboys' 20-19 loss to the Giants in week one, and he's eager to turn the tables. "I watched back the tape, and I shake my head sometimes at the things I did or the throws I didn't make because I wasn't trusting it," Prescott said of his of his first NFL game, which came two weeks after the Cowboys lost Tony Romo with a broken bone in his back. Now Prescott is the NFL's third-ranked passer with 19 touchdown tosses and two interceptions and he's looking forward to another shot at the Giants.

"They're the only blemish on our record right now. And just to be able to go up there at their place and be able to do what they did to us the first game, we're excited for the opportunity." The Giants have struggled to fulfill the promise of that

opening victory. Although they still have a slim chance of catching the Cowboys for the division crown, they must win their last four games and hope the Cowboys lose another. "This is a playoff game for us, in my mind and so are the rest of them," Giants receiver Odell Beckham jr said of the pressure on the Giants in the final stretch of the season.

RG3 back for Browns

A 24-14 defeat to the Pittsburgh Steelers last week dropped New York to 8-4. The additions of rookie receiver Sterling Shepard and the return of receiver Victor Cruz have failed to yield expected improvements in offense. Quarterback Eli Manning ranks 22nd in passer rating and in addition to 22 touchdowns has thrown 12 interceptions. Nevertheless, Manning was bullish on the Giants' chances this week. "Hey, we're the only team to beat Dallas," Manning said on his radio show. "And we're going against them at home now, and we've been playing great at home. So this is a chance to prove that we are a good team and we are a playoff team."

Elsewhere in week 14, the Houston Texans seek to stop the rot in a key AFC

South clash with the Colts in Indianapolis. Three straight defeats have dropped the Texans to 6-6, the same record as the Colts and Tennessee Titans-although the Texans still hold a tie-breaker edge should the division come down to that. The Colts, meanwhile, are on the rise, having won three of their last four. "We know what situation we're in," Colts running back Frank Gore said. "We just want to go out there and try to get a win. Get a win and put us in a better situation." With time running out for Cleveland to avert a winless season, the Browns will have Robert Griffin III starting at quarterback after an 11-game absence recovering from a shoulder injury.

Quarterback Colin Kaepernick will get the starting nod for San Francisco against the New York Jets, even after 49ers benched him in a dismal 26-6 loss to the Bears last Sunday in Chicago-where Kaepernick was sacked five times and completed just one pass. Super Bowl champions Denver could have quarterback Trevor Siemian back against the Titans as his sprained left foot continues to improve. "You want to play, you want to play well," Siemian told reporters after taking practice snaps on Thursday. "(I'm) trying not to be stupid about it." —AFP

BULLS SEND SPURS TO FIRST ROAD LOSS OF THE SEASON DEROZAN, LOWRY SPOIL WIGGINS' HOMECOMING PARTY

CHICAGO: Dwyane Wade scored 20 points, and the Chicago Bulls handed San Antonio its first road loss after a 13-0 start, hanging on to beat the Spurs 95-91 on Thursday night. San Antonio fell one win shy of matching the NBA's best road start set by the Golden State Warriors last season. The Spurs cut an 18-point deficit midway through the third quarter to four in the closing minutes, only to come up short. Kawhi Leonard scored 24 for San Antonio. Patty Mills added 16 points, hitting 4 of 6 3-pointers. Former Bull Pau Gasol had 13 points and 10 rebounds in his first game in Chicago since signing with San Antonio in the summer, but the Spurs lost a road game for the first time since Oklahoma City knocked them out in the Western Conference semifinals last season. Jimmy Butler scored all of his 13 points for Chicago in the second half. Rajon Rondo added 12 points, nine assists and 10 rebounds, and Chicago picked up the win after dropping three in a row and six of nine. The Spurs hadn't dropped a regular-season road game since Denver beat them on April 8.

WARRIORS 106, JAZZ 99

Stephen Curry scored 26 points and Golden State controlled Utah from start to finish. Curry had 14 points during a 29-1 run that made it 29-5. The Jazz's only lead of the game was 4-2. Kevin Durant added 21 points and 11 rebounds for Golden State. Jazz center Rudy Gobert had 20 points and 17 rebounds, Joe Ingles scored a career-high 21 points, and Shelvin Mack added a season-high 19.

76ERS 99, PELICANS 88

Ersan Ilyasova scored 23 points, Sergio Rodriguez added 16, and Philadelphia snapped a franchise record-tying 23-game road losing streak, beating New Orleans. The Pelicans became the first team to lose at home to the Sixers since last season when Orlando fell to Philadelphia on Jan 20. Joel Embiid had 14 points, four blocks and three steals. Nik Stauskas also scored 14 points. Anthony Davis had 26 points and 11 rebounds, and Langston Galloway added 19 points for New Orleans. The Pelicans labored through shooting droughts and made only 12 of 40 shots during the second half.

RAPTORS 124, TIMBERWOLVES 110

DeMar DeRozan had 27 points, Kyle Lowry added 25 and the



TORONTO: Toronto Raptors guard Kyle Lowry (7) makes a play in front of Minnesota Timberwolves guard Ricky Rubio (9) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Toronto on Thursday, Dec 8, 2016. —AP

Raptors handed Minnesota its 13th straight loss in Toronto. Lowry was 5 of 7 from 3-point range and had 11 assists, and Jonas Valanciunas had 20 points and 10 rebounds for his team-leading sixth double-double of the season. Zach Lavine scored 29 points for the Timberwolves, and Toronto-area native Andrew Wiggins had 25. Center Karl-Anthony Towns added 17 points and 11 rebounds. The Timberwolves last won at the Air Canada Centre on Jan. 21, 2004.

GRIZZLIES 88, TRAIL BLAZERS 86

Marc Gasol scored 36 points and Toney Douglas made two free throws with less than a second left to lift Memphis past Portland.

Douglas had 11 points, scoring the game's final six points to seal Memphis' fifth straight victory. CJ McCollum led the Trail Blazers with 24 points, and Damian Lillard had 19 on 6-of-18 shooting. Evan Turner had 15 points and 10 rebounds.

WIZARDS 92, NUGGETS 85

Bradley Beal scored 26 points and Washington overcame a sluggish start in front of a sparse, silent crowd and with a malfunctioning scoreboard. John Wall scored only 15 points one game after a career-best 52, but nine came in the fourth quarter for Washington. The Wizards trailed by as many as 14 in the first half. Nikola Jokic had 17 points for Denver. —AP

INDIA MAKE STRONG START AFTER ENGLAND POST 400

MUMBAI: Jos Buttler believed England were in a strong position despite India's impressive start to their innings on the second day of the fourth Test in Mumbai yesterday. The right-handed batsman notched a splendid 76 at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium to propel England to a commanding first innings score of 400 before India finished day two at 146 for one. "It was very pleasing to get runs when you feel like the team needs them," said Buttler, who held his nerve as four English wickets tumbled around him.

"I really enjoyed my time in the middle and getting us up to what we feel is a good score to have on the board," added Buttler, saying reaching 400 gave England optimism. India started their reply positively with Murali Vijay hitting an unbeaten 70 and Cheteshwar Pujara batting on 47 as the pair recorded the highest partnership of the Test so far with 107. However, Buttler insisted England had the upper hand. "Those two guys (Vijay and Pujara) played very well for India but we still lead by 250," the 26-year-old told reporters.

"If we can be a bit more consistent and when we build the pressure there's definitely wicket-taking balls on that surface." Buttler has only recently returned to the England Test side after a year out but said he'd benefited from some thinking time during his spell on the sidelines. "You play so much cricket that actually sometimes there's not enough time to think... about what is vital to me to get the best out of myself. "I feel like (over) the last year I've learnt the most about myself and cricket (than) in my whole career," he said candidly.

Six-wicket Ashwin

Middle-order batsman Buttler was a late call-up for the third Test in Mohali, having last played for England in October 2015. Buttler said that one of the biggest things he learnt from his time out of the squad was the strength of belief that the top players have in themselves. "That's something I have to have in my game—that I'm confident that when I get a chance I'm going to perform. "No one can do it for you. You can receive great advice but you've got to believe in yourself," he added. Buttler started the day on 18, reaching 64 at lunch as England put on 385-8 in a Test that they must win to keep the five-match series alive. He outlasted Ben Stokes, who became Ravichandran Ashwin's fifth scalp of the innings when India successfully appealed a not out decision. The left-hander was dismissed for 31 when the TV umpire ruled that the ball had nicked his bat before dropping into the hands of Virat Kohli. Ashwin's fellow spinner Ravindra Jadeja then grabbed the wickets of Chris Woakes (11), who was caught behind by wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel, and Adil Rashid, who made only four. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI: Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the fourth cricket Test between India and England in Mumbai yesterday.

England 1st innings:

A. Cook st Patel b Jadeja	46
K. Jennings c Pujara b Ashwin	112
J. Root c Kohli b Ashwin	21
M. Ali c Nair b Ashwin	50
J. Bairstow c U. Yadav b Ashwin	14
B. Stokes c Kohli b Ashwin	31
J. Buttler b Jadeja	76
C. Woakes c Patel b Jadeja	11
A. Rashid b Jadeja	4
J. Ball c Patel b Ashwin	31
J. Anderson not out	0
Extras (b 1, lb 2, nb 1)	4
Total (all out, 130.1 overs)	400

Fall of wickets: 1-99 (Cook), 2-136 (Root), 3-230 (Ali), 4-230 (Jennings), 5-249 (Bairstow), 6-297 (Stokes), 7-320 (Woakes), 8-334 (Rashid), 9-388 (Ball), 10-400 (Buttler)

Bowling: Kumar 13-0-49-0, U. Yadav 11-2-38-0, Ashwin 44-4-112-6, J. Yadav 25-3-89-0 (1nb), Jadeja 37.1-5-109-4.

India 1st innings:

L. Rahul b Ali	24
M. Vijay not out	70
C. Pujara not out	47
Extras (b1, lb4)	5
Total (1 wicket, 52 overs)	146

Fall of wickets: 1-39 (Rahul)

Bowling: Anderson 8-4-22-0, Woakes 5-2-15-0, Ali 15-2-44-1, Rashid 13-1-49-0, Ball 4-2-4-0, Stokes 4-2-4-0, Root 3-1-3-0.

To bat: V. Kohli (capt), K. Nair, R. Ashwin, P. Patel, R. Jadeja, J. Yadav, B. Kumar, U. Yadav.



MUMBAI: India's Cheteshwar Pujara (center) plays a shot on the second day of the fourth Test cricket match between India and England at the Wankhede stadium in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP

WARNER MAN OF THE SERIES AS AUSTRALIA BEAT NEW ZEALAND

MELBOURNE: Opener David Warner smashed his second straight hundred and Mitchell Starc bowled lethal reverse swing to spearhead Australia to a third emphatic win over New Zealand in the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy in Melbourne yesterday. The Australian vice-captain was run out on the last ball of the innings for 156 off 128 balls—more than half of his team's 264 for eight total—with 13 fours and four sixes. It follows Warner's 119 off 115 balls against the Black Caps in Canberra on Tuesday. Starc then led Australia to a series clean sweep helping to skittle New Zealand for 147 off 36.1 overs to reclaim the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy.

Starc bowled Henry Nicholls and Colin Munro with unplayable yorkers and then trapped Mitchell Santner leg before wicket with reverse swing to finish with three for 34. Warner, with 299 runs at 99.66 from the three matches, was named man of the match and man of the series after raising his 11th ODI century and seventh for the year. Only Indian great Sachin Tendulkar, with nine in 1998, has hit more ODI centuries in a calendar year. "It's a team performance," Warner said. "Credit to the bowlers for coming out and executing the plans.

"Our batsmen had to relay the message and they did extremely well." Warner was the difference after New Zealand had made early inroads into the Australian batting. He was involved in partnerships with George Bailey (62) and Travis Head (105) which helped Australia fight back from 11 for two and 73 for four. Warner gave a tough chance on 18 when he pulled Lockie Ferguson to deep mid-wicket, where a diving Nicholls couldn't take a difficult low catch. Then Australia's bowlers finished off the job with Starc in deadly form and supported by paceman Pat Cummins, medium-pacer James Faulkner and part-time spinner Travis Head, all with two

wickets. Cummins claimed the wicket of opener Tom Latham for 28, snapped up by Faulkner at backward square leg. Faulkner got the prized wicket of Kane Williamson, leg before wicket for 13 with the New Zealand skipper losing a review in the process.

Martin Guptill chased a wide delivery from Head, and Bailey snapped up a leaping catch at short cover for 34 off 40 balls. Eleven balls later Starc bowled newcomer Nicholls with a wicked late-swinging yorker for three to reduce the Black Caps to 83 for four in the 17th over. Starc then ripped through the defenses of Colin Munro and trapped

Santner leg before wicket to wreck the Black Caps hopes. Captain Steve Smith sealed the victory with another stunning one-handed flying catch at slip to dismiss Trent Boult off Cummins.

"The catch wasn't a bad one. It was a nice way to finish," Smith said. "We have put up a pretty complete performance in all three games. We needed to improve after (losing 5-0 to) South Africa. "It's very satisfying. We've played some very good one-day cricket, guys have been getting some big runs." The Black Caps began strongly and dismissed Aaron Finch and Smith cheaply before Bailey revived the innings with Warner. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

MELBOURNE: Complete scoreboard in the third Chappell-Hadlee Trophy one-day international between Australia and New Zealand at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday.

Australia

D. Warner run out (Boult)	156
A. Finch c Nicholls b Boult	3
S. Smith c Nicholls b Boult	0
G. Bailey c Santner b De Grandhomme	23
M. Marsh b De Grandhomme	0
T. Head b Santner	37
M. Wade c De Grandhomme b Santner	14
J. Faulkner c Guptill b Boult	13
M. Starc not out	0
Extras (lb5, w11, nb2)	18
Total (8 wickets, 50 overs)	264

Fall of wickets: 1-6 (Finch), 2-11 (Smith), 3-73 (Bailey), 4-73 (Marsh), 5-178 (Head), 6-226 (Wade), 7-262 (Faulkner), 8-264 (Warner)

Did not bat: P. Cummins, J. Hazlewood
Bowling: Southee 10-2-45-0 (3w), Boult 10-1-49-3 (2w), Ferguson 8-0-50-0 (2nb, 3w), Santner 9-0-43-2 (1w), De Grandhomme 10-0-50-2 (2w), Williamson 1-0-3-0, Munro 2-0-19-0.

New Zealand

M. Guptill c Bailey b Head	34
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T. Latham c Faulkner b Cummins	28
K. Williamson lbw b Faulkner	13
H. Nicholls b Starc	3
C. Munro b Starc	20
B.J. Watling lbw b Head	8
C. De Grandhomme c Head b Hazlewood	11
M. Santner lbw b Starc	15
T. Southee c Warner b Faulkner	4
L. Ferguson not out	4
T. Boult c Smith b Cummins	1
Extras (lb2, w4)	6
Total (all out, 36.1 overs)	147

Fall of wickets: 1-44 (Latham), 2-74 (Williamson), 3-79 (Guptill), 4-83 (Nicholls), 5-98 (Watling), 6-113 (De Grandhomme), 7-126 (Munro), 8-139 (Santner), 9-143 (Southee), 10-147 (Boult)
Bowling: Starc 10-3-34-3 (2w), Hazlewood 7-1-22-1 (1w), Cummins 5.1-0-26-2 (1w), Faulkner 7-0-26-2, Head 7-0-37-2.

Result: Australia won by 117 runs

Series: Australia 3-0

Man of the match: David Warner (AUS)

Man of the series: David Warner (AUS)

NICOSIA DERBY - MORE THAN JUST A GAME

NICOSIA: The Nicosia derby between AC Omonia and APOEL FC is the biggest event on Cyprus's sporting calendar but it's more than just a football game on an island divided by politics. Passions run high when the island's two most decorated teams come up against each other as they did this week when APOEL won 4-1 in a match that deepened the feud between clubs representing opposing political ideologies. Omonia sees itself as the 'team of the people' whose supporters are associated with the left, especially the communist party.

On the other side of town fans of APOEL are linked to the right and the ruling conservatives DISY, as well as extremist factions who associate themselves with the club. For good or ill, football in Cyprus is intertwined with the politics of an island's 42-year division into a Turkish-held north and Greek Cypriot south. "In Cyprus when it comes to the big teams-they have their own (political) colour, they are either left or right, you can know someone's politics from the team they support," psychologist

and sociologist Antonis Raftis said.

The derby used to be 'the fixture' that usually decided who would be crowned champions of Cyprus, but Omonia is not the power it once was while APOEL have been serial winners for more than a decade. "As a player you saw it as the biggest game because it was always the game where you could win or lose the title," former APOEL forward Ara Petrosian, 49 said. "In those days Omonia had the biggest fan base, but APOEL have caught up because they are winning." In the 1970s and 1980s, Omonia were the undisputed number one club securing 20 league titles and 14 cups in all. But they last won the championship in 2010.

Bad feeling

APOEL are now the most decorated Cypriot team winning 25 league titles and 21 cups. Bad feeling lingers between the two clubs since Omonia members and players split from APOEL in 1948 over politics. "In my day APOEL players never went

to Omonia or an Omonia player went to APOEL. It still doesn't happen that often," said Petrosian who played over a 100 times for APOEL from 1985-1992. The latest derby triggered a war of words between the two sides after Omonia reduced to 10 men following a sending off-accused match officials of siding with their rivals. Following Saturday's clash APOEL are third in the championship with Omonia fourth.

As Omonia's fortunes waned over the years APOEL created history by becoming the first Cypriot team to reach the quarter-finals of the Champion League (2012). They are the only local team to reach the group stage three times. APOEL's European exploits have generated millions in revenue while Omonia have struggled financially, even appealing to fans to make contributions. Sporting glory apart, sociologist Nicos Peristianis says the rivals represent two 'historical blocks' in Cyprus society-nationalists (APOEL) and anti-nationalists (Omonia). "APOEL is Helloncentric and espouses Greek identity and ideas while Omonia focuses on

Cyprus and its people including Turkish Cypriots," Peristianis said. "Today you will see fans waving different flags in the stadium, Omonia fans with their Cyprus flags and Che Guevara t-shirts and APOEL fans with their Greek flags," he added.

Omonia won their last league title when the communist party was in power, supported by then president and unabashed Omonia fan Demetris Christofias. A former friend and Omonia chairman told a court recently that Christofias encouraged him to go on a spending spree that helped win the title in 2009-10 but crippled the club financially. Omonia's success came at a time when the right was discredited as they were blamed for the 1974 Turkish invasion which was triggered by a Greek-engineered coup to unite the island with Greece. And some might argue that APOEL has risen to the top as the right gained favor in Cyprus politics. "There are two parallel contests going on, a political contest and a football contest and people want to be winners in both," said Peristianis. — AFP

FRENCH LEAGUE PREVIEW

PRESSURE ON EMERY AS PSG MEET NICE IN SUMMIT CLASH

PARIS: Unai Emery is once again a coach under pressure as his Paris Saint-Germain side prepare to face Nice on Sunday looking to close the gap on the surprise Ligue 1 leaders. A 12-game unbeaten run had appeared the perfect response to early-season criticism of Emery at PSG, but in the last week the Spaniard has seen his side humbled 3-0 by Montpellier and then left to scramble a 2-2 draw with Ludogorets in the Champions League. After two such worrying performances, it is debatable whether Emery could even survive a defeat at home to Nice, which would leave the defending champions seven points adrift of the southern upstarts with the season's halfway stage approaching.

"It is a difficult spell, but we will show a reaction on Sunday in what is a huge match for us," insisted midfielder Blaise Matuidi, just about the only PSG player deserving of pass marks against Ludogorets. PSG needed a late Angel di Maria equaliser to avoid defeat at home to the Bulgarians after a lacklustre display but the result meant they finished second in Champions League Group A to Arsenal. "This disappointment must give us the desire to lift our hands and show a different face in the last 16. We must improve, and that starts on Sunday against Nice," said Emery in his still stumbling French.

PSG have Adrien Rabiot and Javier Pastore on the sidelines while Di Maria is in wretched form, so they may look to Hatem Ben Arfa for creative inspiration against the club for whom he starred last season. Without him, the side from the Cote d'Azur-with a reported budget less than a tenth of PSG's-have gone from strength to strength this season under Lucien Favre and they have topped the table since mid-September.

They have only lost once in the league all season and impressed in beating Toulouse 3-0 last weekend to hold a three-point lead over Monaco and a four-point advantage over the capital giants.

Balotelli back?

Mario Balotelli is in line to feature after making his comeback from a month on the sidelines with a calf injury in Thursday's Europa

League meeting with Russian outfit Krasnodar. Monaco travel to Bordeaux today knowing a win would take them provisionally top of the table, above Nice on goal difference. Leonardo Jardim's prolific side are still running at an average of more than three goals per game and were able to rest key players for Wednesday's Champions League defeat to Bayer Leverkusen in Germany having already qualified for the last 16 as group winners. They are targeting the symbolic title of topping the table at the year's end and striker Valere Germain said: "It would be nice to be autumn champions and we will give everything in the final matches of the year to do that."

Lyon will aim to bounce back from the disappointment of being eliminated from the Champions League after failing to get the better of Sevilla as they host Rennes. Rennes are fourth but have struggled away from home this season and Lyon can leapfrog them with a win. — AFP

French Ligue 1 Table

French Ligue 1 table ahead of this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Nice	16	12	3	1	30	10	39
Monaco	16	11	3	2	49	16	36
Paris SG	16	11	2	3	30	11	35
Rennes	16	8	3	5	18	19	27
Guingamp	16	7	5	4	21	15	26
Lyon	15	8	1	6	28	18	25
Bordeaux	16	6	6	4	20	18	24
Toulouse	16	6	4	6	18	16	22
Saint-Etienne	16	5	7	4	16	14	22
Marseille	16	5	6	5	16	17	21
Angers	16	5	4	7	15	18	19
Montpellier	16	4	7	5	23	28	19
Metz	15	5	3	7	16	29	18
Lille	16	5	2	9	15	21	17
Dijon	16	3	7	6	22	25	16
Nancy	16	4	4	8	12	22	16
Caen	16	4	3	9	16	30	15
Bastia	16	3	5	8	12	20	14
Nantes	16	3	4	9	9	26	13
Lorient	16	3	3	10	16	29	12

GERMAN LEAGUE PREVIEW

TOP MEETS BOTTOM AS LEIPZIG FACE INGOLSTADT

BERLIN: Bottom faces top today when basement dwellers Ingolstadt host unbeaten Bundesliga leaders RB Leipzig, who are chasing an eight straight win to keep Bayern Munich off the top. RB Leipzig's coach Ralph Hassenhuettl returns to Ingolstadt, who he left in May having taken them from the bottom of the second division to Germany's top flight in his three seasons. Ingolstadt, who have slipped down to 18th in the table after their 2-1 defeat at Werder Bremen, have yet to win a match at home this season. Leipzig, meanwhile, have the best away record in the Bundesliga with five wins and two draws.

RB are the surprise package this season and have now been top of the table since Bayern's 1-0 defeat at Borussia Dortmund a fortnight ago. Timo Werner, the club's top scorer with eight goals, has been in the spotlight for the wrong reasons this week. After being awarded a penalty just 19 seconds into last Saturday's 2-1 win at home to Schalke, replays showed Werner dived. Second-placed Bayern Munich host VfL Wolfsburg on Saturday in a repeat of the match which broke four Bundesliga records last season when Robert Lewandowski scored five goals in nine minutes.

Bayern's Germany forward Thomas Mueller is without a Bundesliga goal in his 12 games so far, while Lewandowski has been regularly hitting the net. The Poland hot-shot netted twice in last Friday's 3-1 win at Mainz before drilling in the winning goal in Tuesday's 1-0 home win against Atletico Madrid in the Champions League. Wolfsburg are struggling with just two wins this season to leave them just two points from the relegation zone and their Germany forwards Julian Draxler and Mario Gomez have failed to gel. They have picked up just four league points since Valerien Ismael replaced Dieter Hecking as head coach in October.

Cologne host a Borussia Dortmund side buoyed by their 4-1 romp at home to Borussia Moenchengladbach last Saturday and Wednesday's 2-2 draw at Real Madrid. Both Cologne and Dortmund are just outside the Bundesliga's top five. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang netted twice to leave him as the league's top scorer with 15 goals so far, while Cologne crashed to a 4-0 drubbing at

Hoffenheim last weekend. The match pits the league's top strikers against each other with Anthony Modeste having hit 12 goals in 13 league games. Both Aubameyang and Marco Reus are in form as the pair both scored at Real. Andre Schubert is in danger of becoming the sixth Bundesliga coach fired this season and his Borussia Moenchengladbach badly need a win at Mainz on Sunday. Gladbach are winless in their last eight games following Tuesday's 4-0 trashing at Barcelona. Schubert's side are currently 13th, five points from the relegation places, and their last league win was in late September.

Director of sport Max Eberl says Gladbach's next three Bundesliga games, against bottom-half clubs Mainz, Augsburg and Wolfsburg are crucial. Fourth-placed Hoffenheim, who along with Leipzig are the league's only unbeaten teams, are at Eintracht Frankfurt on Friday with both sides on 25 points. Under Julian Nagelsmann, the youngest coach in Bundesliga history at 29, are one of the league's surprise packages this season. — AFP

German Bundesliga Table

German Bundesliga table ahead of the weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

RB Leipzig	13	10	3	0	29	11	33
Bayern Munich	13	9	3	1	29	9	30
Hertha Berlin	13	8	3	2	22	13	27
Hoffenheim	13	6	7	0	25	14	25
E Frankfurt	13	7	4	2	19	11	25
BDortmund	13	7	3	3	31	15	24
Cologne	13	6	4	3	18	12	22
Schalke 04	13	5	2	6	18	15	17
B Leverkusen	13	5	2	6	20	21	17
Mainz 05	13	5	2	6	23	25	17
Freiburg	13	5	1	7	17	25	16
Augsburg	13	3	5	5	11	15	14
Bor. M.gladbach	13	3	4	6	13	22	13
Werder Bremen	13	3	2	8	17	32	11
VfL Wolfsburg	13	2	4	7	12	18	10
Darmstadt 98	13	2	2	9	11	26	8
Hamburg	13	1	4	8	10	27	7
Ingolstadt 04	13	1	3	9	10	24	6

SPANISH LEAGUE PREVIEW

REAL MADRID EYE RECORD

MADRID: Real Madrid can set a club record by extending their unbeaten run to 35 games when Deportivo la Coruna visit the Santiago Bernabeu today. Deportivo's last visit to Real was Zinedine Zidane's first match in charge back in January and the 5-0 thrashing of the Galicians was a sign of things to come in a dream debut year for the Frenchman as a senior coach. Madrid haven't tasted defeat since April, winning the Champions League, UEFA Super Cup and opening up a six-point La Liga lead over Barcelona in the process. "You have to congratulate the players," insisted Zidane humbly after Madrid had to settle for qualifying for the last 16 of the Champions League in second place behind Borussia Dortmund on Wednesday.

"They are the ones that are on the pitch, that have to fight and run." Los Blancos will be looking for the perfect end to their La Liga campaign for 2016 as they head for the Club World Cup in Japan on Sunday. However, Deportivo have also been buoyed by a surprise 5-1 romp over high-flying Real Sociedad on Monday to register a first league win since early October and move out of the relegation zone in the process.

"I am always optimistic and I am going there with the hope of getting something from the game," said Deportivo boss Gaizka Garitano. "We are in the more desperate situation and we are not going to the Bernabeu just to make up the numbers." Madrid are at full strength bar the absence of Gareth Bale. Toni Kroos and Alvaro Morata made their return from injury in the 2-2 with Dortmund in mid-week and are likely to feature once more, whilst Mateo Kovacic could be recalled after being rested on Wednesday.

Barcelona can cut the gap to three points before Madrid kick-off with victory at rock bottom Osasuna earlier today. After the blow of conceding a last minute equalizer to Madrid in last weekend's El Clasico, Barca got back to winning ways with a morale boosting 4-0 thrashing of Borussia Moenchengladbach on Tuesday. Crucially the returning Andres Iniesta has starred in his first two appearances after a six-week injury layoff over the past week. With their captain restored, the Catalans looked like the Barca of old by registering a competition record 993 passes against the Germans in midweek. "The most important thing is that the team continues to believe in what it does and how it does it," said Iniesta.

"I am convinced we will get to the final months of the season in the hunt for all the trophies." Neymar is suspended so Arda Turan is expected to deputize alongside Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez in attack after netting a hat-trick against Moenchengladbach. Sevilla were the one Spanish side not assured of their place in the Champions League last 16 before this week, but ground out a 0-0 draw at Lyon to progress.

However, struggles on the road have been a common theme for Jorge Sampaoli's men as despite lying third in La Liga, seven points adrift of Real, they have won just four of their 12 away games this season. The Europa League holders will be keen to make amends for a shock 2-1 defeat at Granada last weekend and maintain a two-point lead over Atletico Madrid when they travel to Celta Vigo on Sunday. Atletico aren't in action until Monday when they visit sixth-placed Villarreal in a crucial clash in the fight to qualify for next season's Champions League. — AFP

Spanish La Liga Table

Spanish league table before this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Real Madrid	14	10	4	0	37	12	34	Malaga	14	5	5	4	23	21	20
Barcelona	14	8	4	2	34	15	28	Espanyol	14	4	7	3	17	17	19
Sevilla	14	8	3	3	25	20	27	Alaves	14	4	5	5	14	17	17
Atletico Madrid	14	7	4	3	28	11	25	Real Betis	14	4	3	7	17	28	15
Villarreal	14	6	5	3	19	10	23	Leganes	14	4	2	8	11	25	14
Real Sociedad	14	7	2	5	23	19	23	D La Coruna	14	3	4	7	18	24	13
Athletic Bilbao	14	7	2	5	20	17	23	Valencia	14	3	3	8	19	26	12
Eibar	14	6	3	5	21	19	21	Sporting Gijon	14	3	3	8	15	28	12
Celta Vigo	14	6	3	5	24	26	21	Granada	14	1	5	8	13	30	8
Las Palmas	14	5	5	4	25	22	20	Osasuna	14	1	4	9	13	29	7

ITALIAN LEAGUE PREVIEW

RELEGATION FEARS TURN FOCUS ON A TRIGGER-HAPPY PALERMO

MILAN: Jokes about Maurizio Zamparini's notoriously twitchy trigger finger abound, but the prospect of relegation for Palermo has switched the focus on the Serie A club owner's penchant for sacking coaches. Barely 15 games into the season Palermo are on their third coach after Zamparini appointed Eugenio Corini last week to replace Roberto De Zerbi, who succeeded Davide Ballardini only two weeks into the campaign. Zamparini, a 75-year-old businessman from Udine, is so notorious in Italy that Twitter pranksters quipped this week he was to blame for the downfall of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, who resigned following a referendum vote.

They posted a picture of a serious-looking Zamparini with the message: "It's not true that Renzi resigned."

Zamparini sacked him." For the man who was so unhappy with his team in 2003 he threatened to castrate the players and use their testicles as toppings in his salad, even sacking Renzi is beyond his reach. But 13 years on from that threat, Palermo, a club that developed stars like Andrea Barzagli (Juventus), Javier Pastore (Paris Saint Germain) and Paulo Dybala (Juventus), are no closer to lifting a trophy.

In 2011 a Palermo side led by Delio Rossi beat Parma and AC Milan on their way to the Italian Cup final at Rome's Stadio Olimpico, where an estimated 40,000-50,000 Sicilians travelled from all over Italy to see holders Inter Milan win 3-1. Amazingly, their Cup run saw Zamparini sack Rossi following a 7-0 rout by Udinese in February, only to recall him a month later when his successor, Serse Cosmi, lost the Sicilian derby against Catania. Months before then, Zamparini had even blasted Rossi for having "no balls" after a 1-1 draw with 10-man Bari. Corini, hopefully, has read the small print in his contract.

'36 coaches since 2002'

By rough estimates he is the 36th appointment to be made since Zamparini took control in 2002, a tally which includes the coaches, such as Francesco Guidolin (four), Ballardini (three) and Giuseppe Iachini (two), who took the helm, were sacked and returned for more punishment. Although Palermo registered a new club record of seven consecutive league defeats under De Zerbi, he was sacked following defeat on penalties to Serie B side La Spezia in the fourth round of the Italian Cup.

"I was forced to sack De Zerbi," Zamparini told Naples-based Radio Kiss Kiss the day after La Spezia set up a juicy last 16 tie with Napoli. "I'd sent him a message saying not to worry about the (upcoming) Fiorentina game, and to focus on rediscovering the team. Instead, he

played the reserves." De Zerbi, according to reports, is now attempting to sue Zamparini for refusing to honour the pledge of a sizeable pay-off in the event of his sacking. But Zamparini, who once labelled English clubs "pirates" for allegedly pillaging young players before they had a chance to sign professional contracts, retaliated in clinical fashion. "I'm sure he did it to get sacked," Zamparini said of De Zerbi's team selection for Palermo's doomed Cup tie. "So I will seek termination of his contract for gross misconduct."

Corini, a former Palermo captain who helped the Sicilians to the Serie B title in 2004, was hired thanks to him helping turn Chievo's fortunes around in one of his first coaching spells, although Zamparini admitted only he and Ballardini were "on the market".

The 46-year-old Corini was seconds away from beginning his spell in charge by ending Palermo's streak of defeats, until Fiorentina striker Kouma Babacar headed a last-gasp goal to secure a 2-1 win on Monday. Palermo host Chievo tomorrow, but on the day of his appointment Corini, unsurprisingly, admitted his six-month deal is purely performance-related. "I have a contract until the end of the season, and I will only have an extension if we survive (relegation)," he said. "I wouldn't have it any other way." — AFP

Italian Serie A Table

Italian Serie A table ahead of weekend games (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Juventus	15	12	0	3	32	13	36
Roma	15	10	2	3	35	16	32
AC Milan	15	10	2	3	27	19	32
Napoli	15	8	4	3	27	15	28
Lazio	15	8	4	3	27	16	28
Atalanta	15	9	1	5	24	17	28
Torino	15	7	4	4	31	19	25
Fiorentina	14	6	5	3	22	16	23
Sampdoria	15	6	4	5	19	20	22
Inter Milan	15	6	3	6	22	21	21
Cagliari	15	6	2	7	23	32	20
Genoa	13	5	4	4	17	15	19
Chievo	14	5	3	6	14	16	18
Sassuolo	15	5	2	8	20	26	17
Bologna	14	4	4	6	14	21	16
Udinese	14	4	3	7	18	23	15
Empoli	15	2	4	9	7	24	10
Pescara	15	1	5	9	12	27	8
Crotone	15	1	3	11	12	29	6
Palermo	15	1	3	11	11	29	6

BLATTER BLASTS INFANTINO OVER LACK OF RESPECT

LONDON: Disgraced former FIFA president Sepp Blatter accused his successor Gianni Infantino of showing a lack of respect for him in an interview with the BBC. The 80-year-old who on Monday lost his appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) over a six year ban from football for a two million Swiss franc (\$2 million/1.8 million euro) payment to then UEFA boss Michel Platini-said Infantino had dropped by his house once since he was elected in February and Blatter had raised matters he thought should be dealt with. "I am definitely not a happy man (with) what happened with FIFA," Blatter told the BBC.

"I have never seen in any company that the new president... was not paying respect to the old president. "After his election we had a very good contact and he stopped at my house and we had a chat. I told him I have a list of questions that should be solved in Fifa which has not been solved before. "(Infantino) said 'I will work on that' and he never came back." Blatter said Infantino, who was UEFA secretary-general under Platini, had not returned his phone calls since that meeting.

"I have asked him, I have sent him a letter and I have his personal number and I was told that it's still correct. Never never an answer -

never," said Blatter. Blatter, who served as FIFA president for 18 years but was subject to withering criticism during his tenure, claims he is too trusting and as a result he and his team never expected the FBI investigation that exposed massive corruption involving senior FIFA members. "I think people are good, and they are not good," said Blatter. The Swiss, who served as the faithful secretary-general under his similarly disgraced predecessor as FIFA president the late Joao Havelange, also claims he came perilously close to death late last year.

An unusually disheveled and unshaven Blatter had alluded to this when he held a press

conference last December but he went further with the BBC. "It was 1 November 2015. I was at the cemetery in my home village-where we have a family grave. And I was there... very, very weak, I couldn't move," he said. "They brought me immediately to a hospital in Zurich and they thought I was going to die in the next hours. Seriously. "It was a lady doctor there and she (asked) me: 'Who should I phone?' And I said: 'No, no, no, I will go home tonight.' And she said: 'Oh no.' "They brought another doctor and he said: 'OK calm down, calm down.' "I had time enough in the hospital to think that life is (more) than only football." — AFP

EPL PREVIEWS

ARSENAL TRUST IN DYNAMIC DUO FOR STOKE TEST

LONDON: Alexis Sanchez and Mesut Ozil will spearhead Arsenal's attack against Stoke City today as their ongoing contract talks continue to dominate the club's off-pitch agenda. The decisive duo will both be out of contract in 2018 as things stand, prompting fears they could leave the club. Arsene Wenger has vowed they will not be sold prior to the end of their contracts, but was unable to give fans any assurances about their futures at the Emirates Stadium.

"They have 18 months left on their contract and they are completely committed to do well as long as they are here," said the Frenchman, whose side trail Premier League leaders Chelsea by three points. "Beyond that, we'll try to extend their contracts, but I cannot make that the subject in every press conference because it's a normal part of every renewal when you renegotiate. "The less you talk about it, the better it is." Sanchez, 27, and Ozil, 28, have been in

sparkling form of late as Arsenal have climbed to second place in the league table and secured a place in the Champions League last 16 as group winners.

Wenger added: "These players have 18 months left. They will stay for 18 months and hopefully much longer. "They've been hugely important. You can talk a lot, but the most important thing is what they do on the pitch. "Their commitment is absolutely total. The first quality of a professional guy is to give 100 percent. It's here and now, that's what it means to be professional." Arsenal v Stoke has been regarded as a hostile fixture ever since Potters captain Ryan Shawcross broke the leg of Aaron Ramsey in 2010. Wenger appeared to upset opposite number Mark Hughes when he described his side's 0-0 draw at Stoke in January as "an old-fashioned Stoke battle".

Addressing the Welshman's reservations, which concerned Wenger's comments

about the physical nature of the game, the Arsenal manager said on Thursday: "What is wrong with an old-fashioned battle? "When you have complete commitment, that makes the English Premier League special. In my mind it was not negative at all." Stoke head for north London in excellent form, having lost just once in their last nine games following a poor start to the season.

They have maintained their momentum despite a change in formation that has consigned close-season signing Joe Allen, their stand-out player of the season's early weeks, to a place on the bench.

The Wales midfielder has paid a heavy price for being suspended, which moved Hughes to devise a 3-4-3 system in which Xherdan Shaqiri and Marko Arnautovic have license to roam alongside centre-forward Jonathan Walters.

"You're more free," said Switzerland international Shaqiri of the new set-up. "You

can stay more in the middle and you can go outside. I like it. "I think at the moment the whole team is playing well and when you're performing well and picking up results, you don't need to change the system.

"When you have more freedom, you can change positions and I can link up with Marko. Also defensively we have a very compact team and that's very important." Stoke have a dismal record at the Emirates Stadium, having lost all eight of their games there since winning promotion in 2008, but they will not lack confidence to take on Wenger's title-chasing side.

"We are in a very good way to have a good season and we have to keep our run going," Shaqiri said. "This weekend we have a difficult game in London against Arsenal, but we go there to achieve something and we know the quality to win every game. We go there trying to take three points, of course." — AFP

NOLITO KEEN TO HAVE A GO AT WOUNDED FOXES

LEICESTER: Manchester City forward Nolito admits he has been happy with Pep Guardiola's rotation policy as he eyes a return to the team to face Leicester City. Guardiola's side face the defending champions at the King Power Stadium with the City manager forced to make at least one enforced change to his starting line-up. Argentina striker Sergio Aguero, who was shown a red card for a reckless challenge on Chelsea's David Luiz last time out, is set to miss four matches through suspension.

Nolito is eager to start ahead of striker Kelechi Iheanacho but revealed that even if he is left on the bench he will accept Guardiola's decision. "Coming to a team like this I knew how difficult it would be to play in such a competitive team, with very good players," said Spain international Nolito. "The manager is rotating-sometimes he plays one player, another time he'll play another and honestly, right now, I'm very happy. "From a selfish standpoint, of course I would like to play in every game but in the end, all the Premier League and Champions League matches are demanding, very physical, and the coach is doing well to rotate the squad. "The manager is the one who decides and I'll be ready for him when he needs me."

Guardiola remains optimistic that Raheem Sterling will be fit for today's trip to the East Midlands to face Claudio Ranieri's side. The England winger has missed City's last two matches with a knee problem and Leroy Sane has deputized in the absence. "He's much better. He was not ready for the Champions League game against Celtic," Guardiola said. "Hopefully he will be ready for Leicester." Leicester return to Premier League action on the back of Wednesday's 5-0 humiliation in the Champions League at the hands of Porto. — AFP

CRUISING CHELSEA SET EYES ON CLOUD NINE

LONDON: Antonio Conte's Chelsea juggernaut rolls back into action against West Bromwich Albion tomorrow with the Premier League leaders chasing a ninth consecutive win. Chelsea produced the most impressive display of their winning streak last weekend when they came from behind to win 3-1 at Pep Guardiola's Manchester City. They have not won nine successive league games within the same season since 2007 and ahead of West Brom's visit, Marcos Alonso has urged his team-mates not to let their level drop. "Winning game after game gives you confidence, but you have to keep working," the Spanish wing-back told the Chelsea website.

"The results give you confidence to work in this way, though. We have got to use this momentum of the last eight league games and go on to have another good game against West Brom now." While most of Chelsea's title rivals have been in European action this week, Conte's side have once again had a full week to prepare for the visit of Tony Pulis's side. It is 32 years since West Brom last won at Chelsea, but they have drawn on two of their last three visits and have climbed to seventh in the table on the back of a four-game unbeaten run. "Chelsea are on a great run of form," West Brom manager Pulis told the club website.

"The manager's come in and he's changed things around and got the players playing the way they can. It's a wonderful, wonderful squad of players. But we'll go there and do our best." Guardiola's City will look to kick their title challenge back into gear when they visit unravelling champions Leicester City today. The ill-tempered defeat at Chelsea's hands left a mark, with Sergio Aguero and Fernandinho picking up red cards that will keep them out until after Christmas. City have slipped to fourth place in the table, four points below Chelsea, and although Leicester are toiling in 16th place, Pablo Zabaleta is taking nothing for granted.

Arsenal on song

"Always it's a difficult place to go. Even if they are not doing great in the domestic

competition, they are still a good team, very competitive," said the City right-back. "It is going to be a tough game. We need to win and get three points after the big defeat last weekend to stay in the fight for the title." While City have won their last three away matches in the league, they have won just four of their last 14 games in all competitions as Guardiola continues to search for a durable winning formula. His problems pale in comparison, however, beside those of Leicester manager Claudio Ranieri, who saw a second-string side trounced 5-0 by Porto in the Champions League on Wednesday.

With seven defeats already, Leicester's league form is as alarming as last season's was astonishing and has left them just two points above the relegation zone. Second-place Arsenal, three points behind Chelsea, can provisionally take over at the summit if they beat Stoke City by two goals or more at the Emirates Stadium today.

Alexis Sanchez's hat-trick fired Arsenal to a 5-1 win at West Ham United last weekend, which was followed by a superb 4-1 win at Basel in the Champions League, but manager Arsene Wenger feels there is more to come. — AFP

English Premier League Table

English Premier League table ahead of the weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Chelsea	14	11	1	2	32	11	34
Arsenal	14	9	4	1	33	14	31
Liverpool	14	9	3	2	35	18	30
Man City	14	9	3	2	30	15	30
Tottenham	14	7	6	1	24	10	27
Man Utd	14	5	6	3	19	16	21
West Brom	14	5	5	4	20	17	20
Everton	14	5	5	4	17	16	20
Stoke	14	5	4	5	16	19	19
Bournemouth	14	5	3	6	19	22	18
Watford	14	5	3	6	18	24	18
Southampton	14	4	5	5	13	15	17
Middlesbrough	14	3	6	5	13	15	15
Crystal Palace	14	4	2	8	24	26	14
Burnley	14	4	2	8	12	23	14
Leicester	14	3	4	7	17	24	13
West Ham	14	3	3	8	15	29	12
Sunderland	14	3	2	9	14	24	11
Hull	14	3	2	9	11	29	11
Swansea	14	2	3	9	16	31	9



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

English Premier League

Watford v Everton	15:30
beIN SPORTS	
Arsenal v Stoke City	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Hull City v Crystal Palace	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Burnley v Bournemouth	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Swansea City v Sunderland	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Leicester v Manchester	20:30
beIN SPORTS	

Spanish League

Osasuna v Barcelona	15:00
beIN SPORTS	
Real Sociedad v Valencia	18:15
beIN SPORTS	
Las Palmas v Leganes	20:30
beIN SPORTS	
Real Madrid v Deportivo	22:45
beIN SPORTS	

Italian League

Crotone v Pescara	20:00
beIN SPORTS	
Sampdoria v Lazio	22:45
beIN SPORTS	

German League

Bayern Munich v Wolfsburg	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Freiburg v Darmstadt 98	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Hamburger v Augsburg	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Koln v Borussia Dortmund	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Ingolstadt v Leipzig	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Hertha Berlin v Werder Bremen	20:30
beIN SPORTS	

French League

Girondins de Bordeaux v Monaco	19:00
beIN SPORTS	
Nancy Lorraine v Angers	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Lille v Montpellier	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Bastia v Metz	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Toulouse v Lorient	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Nantes v Caen	22:00
beIN SPORTS	

Sports



**Blatter blasts
Infantino over
lack of respect**

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ODESSA: Manchester United's Eric Bailly (centre) in action with Zorya's players during the Europa League group A soccer match between Manchester United and Zorya Luhansk at Chornomorets stadium in Odessa, Ukraine on Thursday, Dec 8, 2016. — AP

MKHITARYAN SHINES AS UNITED ADVANCE

PARIS: Henrikh Mkhitaryan scored his first Manchester United goal to set up a 2-0 win over Zorya Luhansk in Ukraine on Thursday and take Jose Mourinho's side into the last 32 of the Europa League. United required only a point to secure progress from Group A but Mkhitaryan's 48th-minute strike and a late Zlatan Ibrahimovic goal separated the sides and took the Premier League club through in second place behind Fenerbahce, who won 1-0 at Feyenoord thanks to a Moussa Sow effort.

The game went ahead despite concerns about the state of the icy, rock-hard pitch at the Chornomorets Stadium in Odessa, almost 1,000 kilometers away from Luhansk in the conflict-torn east of the country. After a goalless first half, United broke the deadlock three minutes into the second half as the Armenian Mkhitaryan burst forward from midfield

through the middle of the Zorya defense before finishing past goalkeeper Igor Levchenko. They wrapped up the victory two minutes from the end as a fine one-touch passing move ended with Paul Pogba sending Ibrahimovic away, the Swede running through and finishing coolly.

"I was waiting a long time for this goal. My next goal has to be at Old Trafford because I want to score at home," Mkhitaryan, who previously played in Ukraine for Shakhtar Donetsk, told BT Sport. "The first half was a little bit difficult because we couldn't find the last pass but in the second half we created some space for the wingers and the strikers. The important thing was to win today and go through." Mourinho praised the playmaker, who endured a difficult start to his United career but is now starting to show his worth. "He worked hard

physically and tactically—the talent was there, we knew that when we bought him. Now he's playing good in the Premier League, Europa League and EFL Cup—and now the goal means a little more happiness for him, so I'm very pleased," Mourinho said.

Southampton out

United will join Tottenham Hotspur, who drop out of the Champions League, in the last 32, but there was bitter disappointment for fellow Premier League club Southampton. Claude Puel's men knew a goalless draw or a win at home to Hapoel Beer-Sheva would see them advance from Group K but instead drew 1-1 with the Israelis and were eliminated. The visitors went in front in the 79th minute, Yuval Shabtai pouncing on a poor pass by Oriol Romeu and setting up Maor Buzaglo to fire

home. Virgil van Dijk equalised with a deflected shot in stoppage time but they could not get a winner and Hapoel go through instead.

A brilliant late chip by Manuel Trigueros gave Villarreal a nervy 2-1 win over Steaua Bucharest that took the Spanish club into the last 32 from Group L behind the Turkish side Osmanlispor. Fellow Spaniards Celta Vigo won 2-0 at Panathinaikos and qualify from Group G, while Fiorentina are through as winners of Group J after a 2-1 win over Qarabag in Azerbaijan secured by a 76th-minute goal from 19-year-old Federico Chiesa, son of ex-Italy striker Enrico, who was then sent off shortly after. PAOK of Greece are also into next week's draw for the first knockout round thanks to a 2-0 win against Slovan Liberec, while Gent joined Shakhtar Donetsk in advancing from Group H. — AFP