

SUBSCRIPTION



Saudi King
concludes
official visit
to Kuwait



Reformation,
progressiveness
essential for
better future: PM



Russia interfered
in US election
to help Trump
win: CIA report



Vardy hat-trick
shreds
Man City,
Arsenal go top



150 FILS
NO: 17077
40 PAGES

AMIR ISSUES DECREE TO FORM CABINET AS ASSEMBLY OPENS

SHEIKH SABAH HOSTS NEW MINISTERS, EXPRESSES GOOD WISHES



Min 06°
Max 17°
High Tide
09:42 & 21:04
Low Tide
03:20 & 15:16



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the ministers of the newly-formed Cabinet yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah issued a decree yesterday to form the new Cabinet. The Amir congratulated HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah for accepting and bearing the premiership's responsibility, wishing him success in his tasks. Meanwhile, HH the Amir will today open the first session of the National Assembly's 15th legislative term at 10:00 am.

Sheikh Sabah later hosted the newly-formed Cabinet at the Amiri Airport, where Sheikh Jaber presented HH the Amir the new ministers. The Amir praised the tremendous efforts exert-

ed by the prime minister to form the new Cabinet, praising the efforts exerted by the ministers for bearing such a responsibility with all dedication and loyalty, hoping they will be successful in performing their duties.

The Amir said in a cable that "great responsibilities and ambitious economic aspirations sought by the homeland and citizens are awaiting you, which requires tremendous efforts to be harnessed to speed up the pace of development in the country". Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad added that this will only be achieved through working as a team, positive cooperation

between the legislative and executive authorities as well as mutual keenness to tackle issues of citizens' concerns. HH Sheikh Sabah also said that he is fully confident in the ability of the ministers to bear the responsibility, urging

COMPLETE CABINET LINEUP ON PAGE 3

them to work on resolving problems affecting the citizens and facilitating tasks, according to laws and regulations.

HH the Prime Minister expressed deep gratitude to HH the Amir for tasking him, anew,

with forming the Cabinet "while we are at the threshold of a new phase in the march of development and prosperity, under your sagacious leadership and guidelines; this depicts the precious confidence you have accorded in me and the brothers, the ministers, who have accepted to cooperate for fulfilling the duties in the most satisfactory manner that may appease His Almighty, Your Highness and all citizens of Kuwait."

Sheikh Jaber, who took the oath in front of HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince, said he, along with the ministers, is honored to shoulder the responsibility under the critical circumstances in the history of precious Kuwait and in an atmosphere distinguished with popular participation and re-embracing democracy as a method and mode of action, in the face of various challenges."

der the responsibility under the critical circumstances in the history of precious Kuwait and in an atmosphere distinguished with popular participation and re-embracing democracy as a method and mode of action, in the face of various challenges."

Sheikh Jaber expressed hope he will succeed in realizing the Kuwaiti people's aspirations, outlook and constructive instructions of HH the Amir for pushing forward the process of construction, development, combating corruption and reforms for the sake of further progress and prominence." — KUNA

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ بَرِّكِ رَبِّكِ وَرِيقِ بَيْتِكَ الَّذِي بُنِيَ لِلْعِبَادِ
مَبْدَقُ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

In Memoriam

Anwar Mohammed Quttainah

1936 – 2016

A devoted husband and beloved father of

**Dr. Mona Quttainah, Dr. Majdi Quttainah
& Dr. Mohammed Quttainah**

His life journey from Jerusalem to Kuwait was filled with hope and love

A generous heart, caring grandfather and a most kind gentleman

A faithful Brother and fraternal friend

Thoughts are for today, memories are forever

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَرْجِعُكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud are seen during the official farewell ceremony of the Saudi King. — Amiri Diwan photo



(From left) His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

SAUDI KING CONCLUDES OFFICIAL VISIT TO KUWAIT



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah bids farewell to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

KUWAIT: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud left Kuwait yesterday, concluding an official two-day visit to the country where a meeting with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was held. He was seen off at the Kuwait international airport by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Faisal Al-Saud Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, head of the honorary delegation, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Al-Saleh, ministers, senior officials of the Army, the Police, Kuwait National Guard (KNG) and the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD). — KUNA



His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah bids farewell to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

News

in brief

Amir condolences with Egyptian President

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Egyptian President Abelfatah Al-Sisi on Friday following the deadly bomb attack on Al-Giza Security Directorate. His Highness the Amir expressed strong condemnation of such criminal acts that aim to destabilize sisterly Egypt. He also expressed sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wished those wounded a quick recovery. Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent cables of condolences to President Sisi. — KUNA

Security chief meets with Singapore's DM

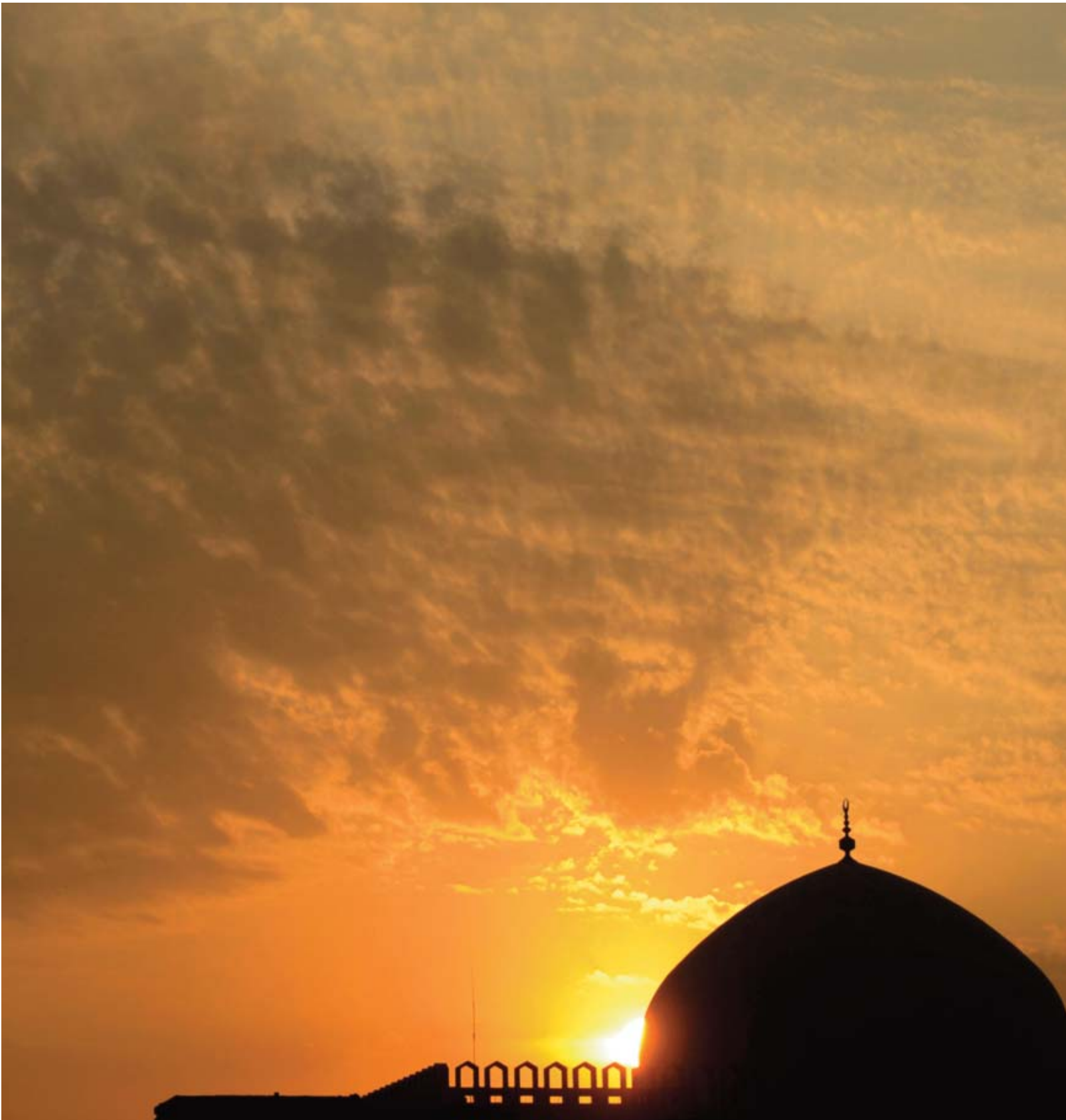
MANAMA: The Chief of Kuwait's National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah met yesterday with Dr NG Eng Hen, Singapore's Minister of Defense, in Manama, Bahrain yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed a number of regional and international issues with mutual concern, in addition of bilateral cooperation. Meanwhile, Sheikh Thamer stressed the importance of enhancing the bilateral relation in security and defense fields in order to fight terror and bring stability to the area, in addition of supporting the refugees and displaced peoples, affected by the ongoing wars in the region. The Singaporean minister said that stabilizing the region and enhancing security comes on top of his county's interest specially when it comes to fight the so-called Islamic State (IS), pointing out that Singapore is eager to enhance its relation with Kuwait. — KUNA

KUNA awarded in Lebanon

BEIRUT: Lebanese newspaper Al-Raasmal Al-Arabi (Arab Capital) honored Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) as the best Arab News Agency operating in Lebanon for 2016. Hisham Al-Yafawi, General Manager and Editor in Chief at Al-Raasmal Al-Arabi, said that the agency was contributing immensely to the bolstering of Kuwaiti-Lebanese relations. He commended the work ethic of KUNA, stressing that the agency was a strong news outlet that is professionally operated. Meanwhile, the Managing Editor and Public Relation Manager at Al-Raasmal Al-Arabi newspaper, Dr Mahmoud Zaataria said that KUNA has been categorized as a credible source for professional news coverage; therefore, the agency well deserved this accolade. KUNA office correspondent in Lebanon, Mubarak Al-Hajri has received the award on behalf of the agency. Al-Raasmal Al-Arabi (Arab Capital) is a monthly Lebanese economic newspaper founded by Mohammad Al-Yafawi in 1967. It covers local events in addition to Arab and International news. — KUNA

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A mosque's dome in Kuwait is silhouetted behind the sunset. — KUNA photo

FORMATION OF THE NEW KUWAITI CABINET



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah



Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs



Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense



Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior



Anas Nasser Al-Saleh, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance



Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs



Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs



Hind Barrak Al-Subaih, the Minister of Electricity and Labor as well as Minister of State for Economic Affairs



Yasser Abul, the Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Utilities



Jamal Mansour Al-Harbi, the Minister of Health



Khaled Nasser Abdullah Al-Roudhan, the Minister of Commerce and Industry



Abdulrahman Abdulkareem Al-Mutawa, the Minister of Public Works



Essam Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq, the Minister of Electricity and Water as well as the Minister of Oil



Dr Faleh Abdullah Al-Azeb, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs



Dr Mohammad Abdulatif Al-Fares, the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education



Mohammad Nasser Al-Jabri, the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs as well as Minister of State for the Municipality

MPs WHO HAVE SERVED IN KUWAITI CABINETS

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait, since forming the National Assembly (Parliament) in 1963, has witnessed inclusion of at least a single member of the assembly in governments. Following is a report listing names of lawmakers who doubled as cabinet members:

- Cabinet of January 1963: MP Abdullah Meshari Abdullah, minister of social affairs and labor. According to a cabinet reshuffle dating March 13th, 1964, MP Khaled Al-Feheid took the electricity and water portfolio, his fellow legislator Yousef Al-Rifae served as minister of telecommunications.
- Cabinet of December 1964: MP Humoud Al-Nisef, minister of health, Khaled Al-Feheid, minister of education, Abdullah Al-Roudan, minister of social affairs and labor and Yousef Al-Rifae, minister of telecommunication.
- Cabinet of January 1965: MP Khaled Al-Feheid, minister of education, Abdullah Al-Roudan, minister of awqaf and Yousef Al-Rifae, minister of state for cabinet affairs.
- Cabinet of February 1967: MP Abdulaziz Al-Saraawi, minister of health and Yousef Al-Rifae, minister of state for cabinet affairs.
- Cabinet of April 1967: MP Abdulaziz Al-Saraawi, minister of telecommunication.
- Cabinet of February 1971: MP Hamad Al-Ayyar, minister of social affairs and labor and Rashed Al-Farhan, minister of awqaf and Islamic affairs.
- Cabinet of February 1975: MP Abdulrahman Al-Awadhi, minister of public health and Abdulmutaleb Al-Kathmi, minister of oil.
- Cabinet of March 1981: MP Essa Al-Mazidi, minister of communications.
- Cabinet of March 1985: MP Jassem Al-Kharafi, minister of finance and economy.
- Cabinet of October 1992: Witnessed election of six members of the National Assembly to serve in the government-the first time. Ahmad Al-Rabee, minister of education, Jassem Al-Aoun, minister of social affairs and labor, Jumaan Al-Azmi, minister of awqaf and Islamic affairs, Abdullah Al-Hajeri, minister of commerce and industry, Ali Al-Baghli, minister of oil

and Meshari Al-Enjeri, minister of justice.

- Cabinet of October 1992: Five ministers resigned, including the MPs Al-Azmi, Al-Hajeri and Al-Baghli.
- Cabinet of October 1996: MP Ahmad Al-Klaib, minister of social affairs and labor, Jassem Al-Mudaf, minister of commerce and industry, Abdullah Al-Hajeri, minister of public works and Mohammad Daifullah Sharar, minister of awqaf and Islamic affairs.
- Cabinet of March 1998: MP Ahmad Al-Klaib, minister of justice, Humoud Al-Rgubaa, minister of electricity and water and Mohammad Daifullah Sharar, minister of state for National Assembly affairs.
- Cabinet of July 1999: MP Eid Al-Rashidi, minister of public works.
- Cabinet of July 2003: MP Ahmad Al-Abdullah, minister of justice.
- Cabinet of February 2006: MP Yousef Al-Zalzalah, minister of commerce and industry.
- Cabinet of July 2006: MP Falah Al-Hajeri, minister of commerce and industry.
- Cabinet of March 2007: Al-Hajeri retained his post.
- Cabinet of May 2008: MP Hussein Al-Hraiti, minister of justice and Islamic affairs.
- Cabinet of January 2009: Al-Hraiti retained his post.
- Cabinet of May 2009: MP Roudan Al-Roudan, minister of state for cabinet affairs.
- Cabinet of May 2011: MP Ali Al-Rashed, minister of state for cabinet affairs.
- Cabinet of February 2012: MP Shuaib Al-Mwaizri, minister of justice and Islamic affairs.
- Cabinet of December 2012: MP Ayed Al-Rashidi, minister of social affairs and labor.
- Cabinet of July 2013: MP Essa Al-Kandari, minister of communication. In a reshuffle in January 2014, Kandari was named minister of state for municipal affairs, minister of oil and minister of state for National Assembly affairs. In another reshuffle in October 2014, MP Yaqoub Al-Sane was named minister of justice and Islamic affairs. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Jaber Al-Sabah chairs the first meeting of the newly-formed cabinet yesterday. — KUNA

REFORMATION, PROGRESSIVENESS ESSENTIAL FOR BETTER FUTURE: PM SHEIKH JABER CHAIRS FIRST SESSION OF NEW CABINET

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Jaber Al-Sabah stressed that the next phase in the history of Kuwait should see real reformation and progressiveness based on serious decisions that will transfer the country to a better place, where citizens are secured for generations to come. His Highness the Prime Minister made this remark yesterday in a speech he delivered at the first meeting of the newly-formed cabinet.

His Highness the Prime Minister expressed appreciation for the trust bestowed upon him by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahamd Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on choosing him to be the head of the Council of the Ministers, promising to exert all efforts to overcome challenges, plan smartly and execute effectively in order to build a better future for this country.

His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak said that having a bright future will only be feasible when a work plan is set in place and is followed dedicatedly by everyone. He pointed out that the first features of this plan, which himself and his ministers will strive to achieve, is to follow the visions and directions of His Highness the Amir and work to materialize these visions into reality. He added that it is importance for everyone to exercise an absolute abiding of the constitution, a respect to the law, a promotion of national unity, combating divisions and eliminating terrorism.

Working together

He also emphasized that the government and the National Assembly should work together to find the right solutions for various pending issues where each authority exercises its full authority without any interference from another one.

His Highness the Premier stressed the importance of protecting public funding and combating corruption thorough the implementation of various "transparent" steps, asking each of his ministers, during this meeting, to take the necessary procedures to deal with any "questionable case" that has been mentioned recently in media outlets, social networks, or even the lately held election campaigns.

He pointed out that any suspicious matter should be referred to the Public Anti-Corruption Authority to take all legal actions against it. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak also touched on the economic file for its importance in the upcoming stage. He pointed out that national income should start exploring other resources and steering away from its complete dependency on oil.

Foreign investment should be attracted, national economy should be supported at all levels, and work markets should be improved, he said. Another mean of boosting the economy can be done through rationalization and privatization of many public services, he said.

He urged all not to "waste" spending under the current conditions of ongoing decline of oil prices; the government must take serious steps to stop this depletion of public funding yet to still provide means of good living for the citizens.

No favoritism

One of the top items of the cabinet's agenda for the next phase is to improve management in all governmental bodies by servicing the public swiftly without any "favoritism", His Highness the Prime Minister said, urging his ministers as heads of their ministries to lead by example and provide a role module to follow.

His Highness the Prime Minister emphasized necessity to take "real actions" to overcome any challenges that hinder the educational process and modernize the curriculum and the teaching methods without jeopardizing the identities of religion and tradition. As for youth, he urged to nurture them and encourage them to participate in all facets for their society for they will have an effective role in building a better future for their country.

Finally, His Highness the Prime minister urged to swiftly submit the cabinet's work plan to the National Assembly to be implemented within an appropriate timeframe. This work plan will prioritize the government's projects in order to ensure a timely completion of these projects. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, General Manager of Central Circle Company (second from left) is pictured with other Central Circle Company staff. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



A general view of the audience.

MINISTRY HOSTS 3RD KUWAIT NORTH AMERICAN NEUROLOGY CONFERENCE

DIAPHRAGM PACING SYSTEM SAVED MILLIONS OF LIVES

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The 3rd Kuwait North American Neurology Conference (KNANC) was held on Friday at the Sheraton Hotel in Kuwait City. This is the largest neurology conference in the Middle East and was held under the patronage of former minister of health Dr Ali Al-Obaidi.

"We have brought expert neurologists from Canada and the US to share their latest knowledge and information about neurological diagnoses and treatments," Chairman of the Neurology Department at Ibn Sina Hospital Dr Jassem Al-Hashel said. He noted that the KNANC program offered impressive lectures in different fields of neurology. The program is designed to cover the most common neurological problems faced in daily practice. It is an extensive course held over three days.

Hashel noted that over 1,000 doctors have

registered. "It is the biggest registration we have achieved so far. Because of the reputation of the conference, doctors are applying from all over the world. Kuwait is being noticed," Hashel added many doctors applied to be speakers at the conference, but they could not accept them because of visa issues. "The challenge that we face is getting visas for people. If we didn't have this problem, the attendance would be double. We cannot get people from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, etc that are known for their large number of neurologists. But the attendance is good - more than 400 people attended the conference on Friday morning."

Saving lives

Hashel pointed out that the Central Circle Company has saved millions by providing the diaphragm pacing system, one of the most

extraordinary medical devices available to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) patients. It is FDA-approved and available from Synapse Biomedical. "More than 24 devices have saved patients and saved the money that they would've paid outside Kuwait for treatment," he said.

About the diaphragm pacing system, Raymond Onders, Remen Chair in Surgical Innovation at University Hospitals, added: "The diaphragm pacing system helps people who have both ALS and breathing problems. A patient's diaphragm must show its ability to respond to stimulation. It will help ALS patients breathe longer without the aid of a ventilator."

The device is implanted using a device with a camera at the end of it (laparoscope) in an outpatient procedure. The system consists of four electrodes that are implanted in the

breathing muscle (diaphragm), a fifth electrode that is implanted under the skin, an electrode connector which groups the five electrodes exiting the skin into a socket, a holder to hold the electrode connector in place on the skin, and a battery-powered stimulator box (an external pulse generator - EPG).

The stimulator box sends electrical signals to the diaphragm replacing the signals normally sent by the brain along the nerves. The signals cause the diaphragm to contract, which helps to condition and exercise the muscle. The physician adjusts the EPG settings to match the patient's normal breathing pattern. The patient controls the EPG by turning it on and off by pressing two buttons in front of the EPG.

The KNANC event began in 2012, and is held every two years. The organizers have worked diligently to improve the event to bring it to an



Chairman of the Neurology Department at Ibn Sina Hospital Dr Jassem Al-Hashel speaks to Kuwait Times.

international standard. The three days of the conference will provide a great learning and networking experience with world-renowned experts in the field of neurology.



Chairman of the Neurology Department at Ibn Sina Hospital Dr Jassem Al-Hashel visits Central Circle Company's booth.



The diaphragm pacing system.



Raymond Onders, Remen Chair in Surgical Innovation at University Hospitals (left) shows off the diaphragm pacing system.

MINISTRY HOSTS 7TH ANESTHESIA AND CRITICAL CARE CONFERENCE

'WORLD NOW CARES MORE ABOUT EVENTS BEFORE, AFTER SURGERY'



KUWAIT: A group photo of officials and participants in the conference. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Kuwait council of anesthesia, critical care and pain management and the health ministry organized the 7th anesthesia and critical care conference at Courtyard Marriott. The annual meeting gathered delegates from all government and private health institutions in Kuwait and the region. "What is distinguished about the conference is that it is the first conference of its kind that focuses on heart patients, and the evolution of internal medicine for the heart and heart surgeries," said Dr Abdulraheem Al-Qattan, head of the council of anesthesia, critical care and pain management.

Qattan pointed out that current developments have made the world begin to pay attention to the role of the anesthesiologist and to care more about events before and after surgery. "There will be many workshops and a simulation system that allows doctors to practice several surgeries in a safe way and handle different situations," he said.

Dr Huda Al-Foudri, chairperson of the organizing committee and head of department of anesthesia, critical care and pain management, noted that many years ago there was a big risk for patients during cardiac anesthesia, but with changes and developments, it has become less risky. "We are facing more and more cardiac patients choosing elective surgery, whether in pediatrics, obstetrics or general surgery, a number of whom would have been refused surgery in the past due to the high risk they may be subjected to. Improved assessment and optimization of cardiac patients, intraoperative cardiac monitoring and post-operative care in the critical care unit are all factors that have led to the reduction of peri-operative risks of these patients and therefore improved patient care and safety," she said.

Live demonstration

Foudri added there would be a live surgical demonstration to show how doctors are dealing with medical conditions. "The patient doll used by the simulation system will show the audience how doctors treat patients, especially rare pathological cases. The use of the simulation system helps doctors develop their skills and update them on the latest technological and scientific developments," she explained.

She added that this conference is a great opportunity to share knowledge and experiences with experts from different parts of the world, in addition to acquiring a variety of skills through the hands-on workshops preceding the conference. It will also be a great opportunity to experience the latest, state-of-the-art medical technologies and pharmaceutical products at the conference's exhibition.

The theme of the conference this year is anesthetic and critical care management of the cardiac patient. The advancement in anesthesia and critical care management of cardiac patients due to increased experience and improved technologies has led to more cardiac patients being encountered in daily practice, with improved outcome being the ultimate target.



Health ministry officials visit the Central Circle Company's booth at the conference.



Officials and participants pose for a group photo in front of the Central Circle Company's booth.



Health ministry officials listen to a demonstration at the Central Circle Company's booth.



A general view of the audience.



Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, General Manager of Central Circle Company (left) is pictured with officials at the conference.

Local Spotlight

THE GULF UNION



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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News of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in Bahrain last week made headlines in all Arab media. Prior to this meeting, Arab media raised speculations and debated about the possibility of an announcement of the establishment of a Gulf federation during this summit. While some were urging Gulf leaders to proclaim the Gulf union, others stressed that regional and international circumstances won't make this possible. In all cases, the GCC summit achieved its proposed goals.

The Gulf union is an old dream of the people of this region and its inhabitants, especially the founders, because it speaks about good and strong relations, given the links between the peoples of the GCC countries. But all this wasn't enough to officially announce a union, despite the emphasis on the importance of relations between these countries, which is also very important. The Gulf union has not been announced officially, but the visit of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz to Kuwait as part of his Gulf tour was very successful and achieved its desired objectives.

We all know that Saudi Arabia's relations with Gulf countries, especially Kuwait, are steady and strong and cannot be shaken, because we face the same threats, common destiny and conflicts. So even if the Gulf union wasn't officially announced, it is clear that we are wholeheartedly with Saudi Arabia. Being a Kuwaiti citizen, I am very supportive of such a transformation, which is an important step in the right direction.

The GCC summit succeeded in highlighting the unity of the Gulf at a time when many countries in the Arab world are hostage to serious economic conditions such as poverty, internal conflicts, loss of security and displacement of populations. I also believe that the presence of British Prime Minister Theresa May at the Bahrain summit was an indicator conveying an international message about the importance of the Gulf summit and European ties.

The final statement of the summit pointed out the importance of member states' commitment to the implementation of the GCC railway project, along with the rejection of the Iranian occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates. Obsession with security is a key factor here and is justified by many elements, and it is the right of almost 50 million people (the population of the Arab Gulf states) to maintain prosperity in their countries when most Arab countries are falling apart due to religious conflicts and persistent violations of human rights, particularly as the Gulf states are one of the largest and most important economies in the world (worth around \$1.60 trillion).

It is natural to have security as a popular demand that can lead to strategies to increase the strength of these countries to promote their regional and global role and policies. We need economic integration before a political union, as we cannot ignore that the fall in oil prices changed many priorities, and therefore it is natural for every state to consider its internal circumstances and arrange its positions accordingly. The GCC summit highlighted this integration and the need for it, which means that everyone has agreed to work together. The GCC summit achieved its goals considering the disturbing political and security situations faced by all Gulf states, but also sent a message to all hostile forces that the Gulf is sound, strong and secure.

FORMER MINISTER CRITICIZES ALLOWING EXPATS TO RUN MORE THAN ONE COMPANY

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Former MP and minister Ahmed Bager strongly slammed the government's decision to allow expats to be hired as managers in more than one private sector company, noting that the decision was against all development plans that call for increasing the number of citizens working for the private sector. "We expected the government to restrict some jobs like public relations and legal staff to Kuwaitis, as we have enough citizens in these fields," he said, calling for following in Saudi Arabia's footsteps in this regard.

New ministers express appreciation

Newly-appointed Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah for their trust and for choosing him in this critical period. He promised to work hard with ministry officials and staff to develop healthcare services with a general motto of 'excellence in healthcare, enhancing trust in the health system and full cooperation with various ministries'.

Meanwhile, Minister of Social Affairs and

Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Subaih also expressed appreciation for the trust bestowed in her and stressed that the coming period will be highly significant. Speaking to reporters after announcing the new Cabinet formation, Subaih stressed that she will carry on with what she had already begun concerning economic issues, diversifying national income resources, developing manpower, going ahead with development plan projects and finishing automation projects. Subaih confirmed her keenness on equal law-enforcement on everybody and protecting citizens' rights.

In the meantime, Deputy Prime Minister

and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah affirmed determination to spare no effort for preserving the State of Kuwait security and stability. Speaking in aftermath of declaring the cabinet, minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) he would fully cooperate with "all parties to ensure continuity of the process of progress and development in the country." Hoping that aspirations of the political leadership would be attained, the minister re-emphasized that he would do his best to safeguard the country's security and stability, assuring citizens that the ministry's services would be improved.

IMF-CEF HOLDS SYMPOSIUM ON 'RAISING ECONOMIC GROWTH'

KUWAIT: The IMF Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF), jointly with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), held a symposium on 'Raising Inclusive Economic Growth in Kuwait and other Arab Countries' last Wednesday. The event was hosted at the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development's headquarters. The panel discussion was moderated by the CEF's Director Dr Oussama Kanaan, and included Professor James Robinson of the University of Chicago, whose seminal work on the role of institutions in economic development includes the award-winning book Why Nations Fail, and Professor Adeel Malik of Oxford University, author of highly influential publications on political economy of the Arab world. The symposium discussed ways for successful economic growth strategies for Kuwait and other Arab countries that benefit all segments of society and take on board future generations' needs.

Economic slowdown

CEF Director Kanaan provided an overview of the roots of the current economic slowdown, and discussed the special features of inequality in Arab countries along several dimensions beyond simple measures of income distribution. "First, a wide geographical disparity has emerged over time within most countries, in income, wealth, and access to public services and infrastructure," he said. "Indeed, in many Arab countries, widespread protests and demands for inclusiveness have been fanned by discontent in economically neglected, atrophying locations. Second, in most countries the younger groups have been increasingly alienated economically and socially, suffering from much higher rates of unemployment, with skills and overall human capital generally ill-matched to the demands of globalized markets. Finally, income and wealth inequality has increasingly been rooted in differences across social groups in their ability to exercise their civil rights, often emanating from institutionalized discrimination by gender, religion or national origin. Drawing on international country experiences, the panel discussion has aimed at identifying the core ingredients of successful inclusive economic growth strategies, with a view to addressing these different sources and dimensions of inequality."

Sustained growth

Professor Robinson argued that economists know very well what leads to sustained economic growth and diversification: the accumulation of human and physical capital, the innovation, creation and adoption of new technology. To prosper, a society has to unlock all of its latent talent. To do this it has to create broad based incentives and opportunities. It is the institutions of society the rules, which do this. In his lecture, he emphasized that countries which have grown successfully have done so because they moved their institutions (construed broadly) in a more inclusive direction. This is just as true of China after 1978, or of Ethiopia after the fall of the Derg in 1991, as it is about the contemporary countries of Western Europe or North America. He pointed out however that the difficulty is that moving institutions in a more inclusive direction is not just a technocratic problem; it is a political and social one. Promoting economic change and diversifica-

tion challenges many ways of organizing politics and societies in developing countries and thus creates difficult trade-offs for rulers and politicians. It also risks political instability and unleashing forces that are difficult to contain or manage.

Professor Robinson added that institutional transitions therefore take place when a political and social project emerges which can find a way of balancing these tensions. These projects often emerge for quite idiosyncratic reasons, as that of Deng Xiaoping did after 1978, or with President Park in South Korea in the 1960s, or the United Arab Emirates in the 1970s. Importantly, projects that can stimulate growth may not be consistent with the sustainability of that growth and therefore must necessarily adapt and change. In many parts of the world, however, they have never emerged in the first place. Despite these idiosyncrasies Professor Robinson argued that we do know quite a bit about what can promote inclusive institutional change on average and what can be done to foment it in particular contexts. He discussed some of the relevant empirical evidence and the type of lessons that Middle Eastern countries could learn from to help their economies prosper and diversify.

Trade liberalization

In the following part of the symposium, Professor Malik started by discussing the importance of an inclusive growth strategy in the Arab world by examining the domestic and regional dimensions of trade liberalization. He presented a general account of the politics of trade protection in several Arab countries, with a focus on Egypt and Tunisia. Drawing on his recent research on the Egyptian experience, Professor Malik argued that trade liberalization, when it became a policy imperative, was only selectively pursued to suit the interests of politically connected insiders. Such partial liberalization created rents for insiders that were used to sustain the ruling coalition. However, these rents were created at the expense of continued exclusion of unconnected firms facing substantial barriers to entry and growth. The resulting economic repression of firms has huge implications for job creation and prospects for inclusive growth in Egypt.

Professor Malik then argued that regional economic integration is the single most important collective action dilemma

facing the Arab world since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. It is the most desirable component of any strategy for diversification and inclusive growth. Yet, it is also the most politically challenging aspect of economic reform, as both domestic political elites as well as geo-political stakeholders might stand to lose, at least in the short-term from a more economically integrated region. He concluded by emphasizing that the emergence of a new economic and political order in the Middle East is inherently connected with solving this collective action dilemma.

DUO ESCAPED KUWAIT THROUGH FORGERY

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Residency detectives said two Egyptians managed to forge their way out of the country through Kuwait International Airport despite a travel ban issued against them. Security sources said Interpol had been contacted and the passport clerk who stamped their boarding passes was arrested. Separately, a company representative was arrested for forging five residency visas sponsored by the company he works for without the owner's knowledge.

Liquor brewery

Eight Asians (five men and three women) were arrested for running a liquor brewery in Yarmouk, said security sources, noting that detectives found 1,500 ready-for-sale bottles and tubes and barrels used in the process at the scene. In other news, a medical salesman was arrested with 60 illicit pills, 20 gm of heroin and 10 gm of ice (crystal myth).

Ads removed

Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations Department announced that Mubarak Al-Kabeer emergency teams removed 7,380 election ads from the streets in November.

Physiotherapy Job vacancy

Rehafit rehabilitation center Kuwait owned by Fawzia Mubarak Al Hassawi, is hiring 2 female physiotherapist, nurse and one doctor (GP or Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Specialist).

- Minimum of 3 years post qualification
- Skills in team working
- Experience in neuro rehabilitation
- Additional qualifications in a sub-specialism would be beneficial
- Understanding and speaking English language
- All candidates must have MOH license and residency in Kuwait

Offer:

- Attractive tax free salaries
- 12-24 month contracts.
- 30 Days leave with
- Accommodation and transportation included

If you qualify and you are interested in this opportunity, kindly send us your updated resume.

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tarik@rehafit-mhmc.com

مركز للعلاج الطبيعي بالسالمية يطلب موظفين:

- عدد 2 اناث للعمل كاختصاصيات علاج طبيعي
- عدد 1 ممرضة
- عدد 1 طبيب (تخصص علاج طبيعي وإعادة التأهيل).

- خبره لا تقل عن 3 سنوات
- مهارات في العمل الجماعي
- خبرة في neuro rehabilitation
- مؤهلات إضافية في التخصص الفرعي سيكون مفيدا
- اجادة اللغة الانجليزية
- على كل من يتقدم للوظيفة وجوب توافر ترخيص وزارة الصحة.

- رواتب مغرية
- عقود سنوية قابلة للتجديد.
- يوم إجازة

إذا كنت مؤهلا وكنت مهتما في هذه الفرصة، يرجى ارسال لنا سيرتك الذاتية المحدثة.

ترسل السيرة الذاتية على البريد الإلكتروني:

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Colours of Australia

STUDENT ART COMPETITION

12 December 2016 to 26 January 2017

Supported by Australian Embassy In cooperation with kuwait Times

Colours of Australia 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 (14years 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 sponsor by Viva, Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) and hosted by Crown Plaza Hotel "Al-Thuraya City".

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الجريدة

Al-Jarida

THE DARK GLASSES

By Hassan Al-Essa

The dark glasses mentioned in the documentary by philosopher Slavoj Zizek have nothing to do with the plot of an Egyptian movie written by Ihsan Abdul Qoddous under the same name. In the Arabic movie, Maggie (the leading star played by Nadia Lotfi) used to wear dark glasses all the time to hide her eyes, which told much about how lost she was and torn between moderate liberalism portrayed by Abdul Qoddous as the mainstream minds of Egyptian and Arab middle classes in the 1960s, and conservative powers.

Reasonable liberalism seems to act as a compromise between old conservative values and modernity. Thus, Maggie gets lost in a conflict between her liberty and traditional values of her community, until a compromise is made when she gives up her right to absolute freedom towards the end and accepts social restrictions.

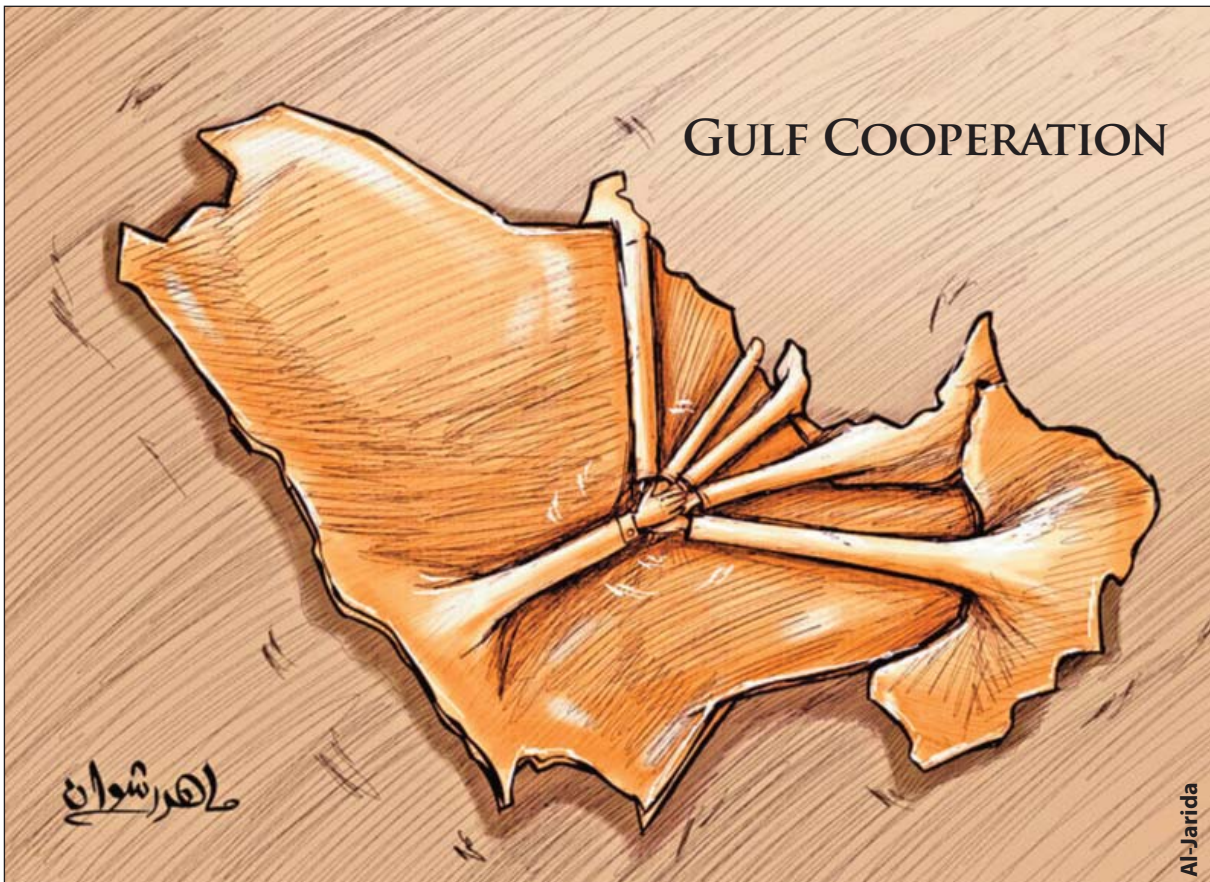
Zizek's dark glasses do not hide the owner's eyes. On the contrary, they reveal the whole truth and discover deceit and forged ideologies impose on some people in the form of beliefs and nominal appearances that deprive a person of his/her liberty. For instance, a colored banner ad on a New York street about the Bahamas shows a beautiful woman in a swimming suit inviting people to visit the island and enjoy the sun and sea. But when the actor puts on the glasses, the real image appears to be an invitation for sex that would boost the island's fortunes.

There are more similar examples around us through which we can realize that forgery and deceit are used as tools to promote dominating powers' ideologies. Former US defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld used to surely and arrogantly talk about WMDs in Iraq under Saddam, and that Iraq had to be invaded to destroy those weapons. I believe that if we had put on Zizek's glasses, we would have seen Rumsfeld talking about the importance of dividing Iraq and controlling its oil resources instead of hearing lies about WMDs.

Just imagine if one puts on those glasses and reads officials' statements. How would we read a statement about a deal or a contract between the state and a certain company? Without the glasses, the story would be official talk about the necessity to sign the contract to protect national security, for instance, and to facilitate citizens' lives. But once we put on the glasses, we would see the whole truth about huge commissions and easy money made through public funds and the state treasury.

How can we read the statements of MPs or former MPs talking about the DNA law, withdrawing citizenships or the state council bill proposed by the former justice minister? Well, with Zizek's glasses on, we will see this nation barefoot. And we better not use these black glasses so as not to see our nation turn into a barren desert! Let us better keep living the illusions and falsities without Zizek's revealing glasses!

— Translated by Kuwait Times



الجريدة

Al-Jarida

YOUNG MPs

By Dr Hassan Jouhar

In a previous article, I spoke about young candidates for the 2016 parliamentary election and their chances to win parliamentary seats with the enthusiasm and political courage they showed during their campaigns. I also mentioned how their ideas matched public aspirations and will. In another article, I wrote about the youth tsunami that was reflected at the polls, knocking out the previous parliament's MPs and substituting them with new faces.

Today, I address these young people who are now the nation's representatives and thus have great responsibilities to legislate and monitor. What makes their responsibilities even greater is that they are not only about future legislations, but also about fixing, adjusting or annulling the bad and suspicious laws passed by the 2013 parliament, such as those on deprivation of political rights, e-media, precautionary detention in expression of opinion cases, the constitutional court, the anti-corruption authority and the financial statement disclosure laws, which have all been criticized by these young MPs during their electoral campaigns.

The second part of their responsibility lies in the general state of depression because of the prevailing corruption and lack of reform will of many people, namely the youth. However, the election results revived hopes again and everybody is now counting on young MPs as possible successful substitutes in this regard.

We do not expect these young MPs to have magic wands or super powers in view of their limited experience. Therefore, I would like to remind them and myself with a few pieces of advice. They must hold tight to the beautiful slogans and principles they spoke about during the campaigns over national solidarity and forget all about sectarianism. Their attitudes will be historically recorded the moment they step into the parliament and they will be politically and nationally classified as supporters of the people and the constitution or of limited personal gains and interests. Their tenures in parliament will someday come to an end, leaving with only the reputation and memories about them in people's hearts and minds.

Political life is not only full of obstacles and ups and downs - it is also full of all kinds of temptations that can only be rejected by god-fearing people who are keener on protecting their country, family and reputation. Major sins usually start with simple mistakes, and a single unacceptable action may do much damage to their reputation.

Finally, and without undermining veteran MPs with patriotic CVs, I hope young MPs will form the nucleus of a new parliamentary bloc based on common national and public principles to always take initiatives and make use of colleagues' skills and experiences regardless of possible disagreements with them.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

MAN KILLED IN THREE-WAY CRASH

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti motorist was killed while two others were injured in a three-car collision reported along Mutlaa highway, said security sources. Paramedics, firefighters and police rushed to the scene as soon as the accident was reported, but discovered that one victim had already succumbed to his fatal wounds. His body was left for criminal detectives while the other two were rushed to the hospital. A case was filed to investigate the causes of the crash.

Fight

A young citizen was badly injured when six others with whom he had a fight earlier inside a Farwaniya shopping mall resumed the fight outside and stabbed him, said security sources. The man was rushed to Farwaniya hospital and admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU). A case was filed for investigations.

Drunk couple caught

A citizen and his Kuwaiti girlfriend were arrested outside a building where they had been drinking in Fintas, said security sources. The couple were shouting at each other, after which one of the tenants called the police. On checking the suspects, the man was found wanted for break and entry while the woman was found wanted for a KD 6,000 financial claim.

Harboring a fugitive

A citizen was arrested in Salmiya for possessing illicit pills and harboring a fugitive; a female citizen who had been reported missing by her family, said security sources. The two were taken to the proper authorities for further action.

Suspected theft

Two people, Asian and Arab, were recently arrested possessing copper cables that they claimed to have obtained from the desert. A case was filed and further investigation is in progress. They were held on suspicion of theft.

Bootlegger caught

An Asian taxi driver was recently arrested in Mahboula with 85 homebrewed liquor bottles ready for sale, said security sources. The man was sent to the proper authorities to face several charges including alcohol making, possession and trafficking.

Car thief detained

A bedoon man in his forties was recently arrested in Hasawi area with illicit pills and some tools he had been using for breaking vehicles open and stealing their parts. He was taken to the proper authorities for further interrogation.

Deportation

An African woman working for a cosmetics company was recently arrested in Riga'ie when detectives found out that her residency visa had expired 18 months earlier. Patrol officers had stopped the woman during a routine check, and apprehended her when they discovered that she had an expired visa. The woman was sent to the proper authorities for deportation. — Al-Rai, Al-Anbaa



KUWAIT: Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Kuwait Jusupbek Sharipov hosted a reception recently on the occasion of his country's national day. Senior officials, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



ZAIN ANNOUNCES FIRST WINNER OF 4 PRIZES IN 'PAY ONLINE AND WIN'

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the winner of the first week in its 'Pay Online and Win' draw that will see a weekly postpaid winner of four valuable prizes when paying their bills using Zain's website or app as well as a grand prize at the final draw at the end of January.

Zain announced Sulaiman Mohammed Eid Al-Hashan winner of 4 valuable prizes in the first week of the draw, including iPhone 7, Touch Hotspot LTE-A with free 1.5 TB Prepaid Internet line valid for 3 months, and a PlayStation 4 (1 TB).

The draw, held weekly until the 22nd of January 2017, will see one weekly winner of four valuable prizes, including iPhone 7, Touch Hotspot LTE-A with free 1.5 TB Prepaid Internet line valid for 3 months, and an entertainment device. The grand prize winner, announced at the end of the campaign, will receive iPhone 7, iPhone 7 Plus, Touch Hotspot LTE-A with free 1.5 TB Prepaid Internet line valid for 3 months, and a PlayStation 4 (1 TB).

Postpaid customers will get one chance to enter the weekly draws as well as the final draw for every KD1 paid through Zain's digital channels, including

the company's website (pay.kw.zain.com) and Zain's app available for iOS and Android.

Zain launched this exciting promotional campaign to reinforce its leadership position and its pledge in offering the best products and services to meet its customers' personal and professional telecommunications needs, who are considered Kuwait's biggest family of subscribers.



KFH LAUNCHES SEASONAL FLU VACCINATION CAMPAIGN FOR STAFF

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched seasonal flu vaccination campaign for its employees and the employees of the bank's subsidiaries in Kuwait. The campaign was launched in collaboration with the Ministry of Health as part of the bank's social responsibility and interest in the health of its human resources.

The event took place at Baitak Tower amid huge employees' turnout. A specialized team from the Ministry of Health briefed the employees on the importance of taking the seasonal flu vaccination that prevents a number of diseases including pneumonia and respiratory disease. KFH is a key player

in the medical and health field and it has a plethora of contributions in this regard. KFH assumes important role in shouldering the social responsibility while strengthening ties with health and government institutions in the country, especially that the health of the society is an integral part of the social and comprehensive development.

It is worth noting that KFH had launched diabetes awareness campaign in collaboration with Al Salam Hospital in an attempt to increase the awareness about diabetes and its complications in the individuals and the society to improve the lives of people with diabetes and promote healthy lifestyles.





It'll be Trump's war soon: Afghan's future is cloudy

S KOREANS CELEBRATE PARK IMPEACHMENT



GRAND RAPIDS: President-elect Donald Trump waves to the crowd as he arrives onstage at the DeltaPlex Arena. — AFP

RUSSIA INTERFERED IN US ELECTION: REPORT

DOCUMENT FINDS EVIDENCE THAT RUSSIA TIPPED VOTES IN TRUMP’S FAVOR

WASHINGTON: A secret CIA assessment has found that Russia sought to tip last month’s US presidential election in Donald Trump’s favor, The Washington Post reported Friday, a conclusion that drew an extraordinary rebuke from the president-elect’s camp. “These are the same people that said Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction,” Trump’s transition team said, launching a broadside against the spy agency. “The election ended a long time ago in one of the biggest Electoral College victories in history. It’s now time to move on and ‘Make America Great Again.’”

The Washington Post report comes after President Barack Obama ordered a review of all cyberattacks that took place during the 2016 election cycle, amid growing calls from Congress for more information on the extent of Russian interference in the campaign. The newspaper cited officials briefed on the matter as saying that individuals with connections to Moscow provided anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks with emails hacked from the Democratic National Committee, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton’s campaign chief and others.

Russia’s goal

Those emails were steadily leaked out via WikiLeaks in the months before the election, damaging Clinton’s White House run. The Russians’ aim was to help Donald Trump win and not just undermine the US electoral process, the paper reported. “It is the assessment of the intelligence community that Russia’s goal here was to favor one candidate over the other, to help Trump get elected,” the newspaper quoted a senior US official briefed on an intelligence presentation last week to key senators as saying. “That’s the consensus view.”

CIA agents told the lawmakers it was “quite clear” that electing Trump was Russia’s goal, according to officials who spoke to the Post, citing growing evidence from multiple sources. Russian hackers did not limit their hits to the Democrats, according to The New York Times. “We now have high confidence that they hacked the DNC and the RNC, and conspicuously released no documents” from the Republican organization, the Times cited one senior administration official as saying, referring to the Russians.

The Times also questioned when Russia started supporting Trump. “It is ...far from clear that Russia’s original intent was to support Mr Trump, and many intelligence officials - and former officials in Mrs. Clinton’s campaign - believe that the primary motive of the Russians was to simply disrupt the campaign and undercut confidence in the integrity of the vote,” the Times report added.

Question marks

However, some questions remain unanswered and the CIA’s assessment fell short of a formal US assessment produced by all 17 intelligence agencies, the newspaper said. For example, intelligence agents don’t have proof that Russian officials directed the identified individuals to supply WikiLeaks with the hacked Democratic emails. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has denied links with Russia’s government.

Those individuals were “one step” removed from the Russian government, which is consistent with past practices by Moscow to use “middlemen” in sensitive intelligence operations to preserve plausible deniability, the report said. “I’ll be the first one to come out and point at Russia if there’s clear evidence, but there is no clear evi-

dence - even now,” said California Republican congressman Devin Nunes, the chair of the House Intelligence Committee and a member of the Trump transition team. “There’s a lot of innuendo, lots of circumstantial evidence, that’s it.”

At the White House, Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz said Obama called for the cyberattacks review earlier this week to ensure “the integrity of our elections.” “This report will dig into this pattern of malicious cyberactivity timed to our elections, take stock of our defensive capabilities and capture lessons learned to make sure that we brief members

of Congress and stakeholders as appropriate,” Schultz said.

Obama wants the report completed before his term ends on January 20. “We are going to make public as much as we can,” the spokesman added. “This is a major priority for the president.” The move comes after Democrats in Congress pressed the White House to reveal details, to Congress or to the public, of Russian hacking and disinformation in the election.

On October 7, one month before the election, the Department of Homeland Security and the Director of National Intelligence announced that “the Russian

Government directed the recent compromises of emails from US persons and institutions, including from US political organizations.” “These thefts and disclosures are intended to interfere with the US election process,” they said.

Trump dismissed those findings in an interview published Wednesday by Time magazine for its “Person of the Year” award. Asked if the intelligence was politicized, Trump answered: “I think so.” “I don’t believe they interfered,” he said. “It could be Russia. And it could be China. And it could be some guy in his home in New Jersey.” — AFP

SANTOS RECEIVES NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

OSLO: Colombia’s peace deal between the government and the Marxist FARC rebels is a model for war-torn countries like Syria, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said yesterday as he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize. The peace accord, signed on November 24 to end five decades of conflict, is a “model for the resolution of armed conflicts that have yet to be resolved around the world.”

“It proves that what, at first, seems impossible, through perseverance may become possible even in Syria or Yemen or South Sudan,” Santos said during a lavish ceremony at Oslo’s City Hall, decked out in red, orange and white roses and carnations imported from Colombia for the occasion.

After a first peace deal was rejected in a popular vote on October 2, the rebels and government negotiated a new accord to end the conflict, which has killed more than 260,000 people, left 45,000 missing and forced nearly seven million to flee their homes. “The Colombian peace agreement is a ray of hope in a world troubled by so many conflicts and so much intolerance,” he said.

Yet in an interview with AFP just hours before Saturday’s prize ceremony, Santos acknowledged that the hardest part of the country’s peace process was yet to come. The period ahead “is a more difficult phase than the (negotiation) process itself, and will require a lot of effort, perseverance and humility,” he said.

“A lot of coordination efforts will also be needed... to bring the benefits of peace to the regions that have suffered the most in the conflict,” he added. He also said he could offer no guarantees there would be a peace deal in place with Colombia’s second-largest rebel group, the National Liberation Army (ELN), before the end of his mandate in 2018. “I will do my best but to establish a time frame is always counter-productive in negotiations of this sort,” he said.

In a speech at the ceremony, Berit Reiss-Andersen, deputy chairwoman of the Nobel committee, urged “all sides in Colombia to carry on the national dialogue and continue on the road to reconciliation.” “Hopefully, a similar negotiated disarmament agreement with the ELN guerrilla will soon be in place as well.” The Nobel prize consists of a gold medal, a diploma and a cheque for eight million Swedish kronor (824,000 euros, \$871,000), a sum Santos promised to donate to the victims of the war.

Dylan’s snub

Later, another ceremony will be held in Stockholm where the Nobel laureates in the sciences, economics and literature will be honored-a ceremony marked by the notable absence of this year’s literature laureate, Bob Dylan. The first songwriter to win the prestigious award, he has declined to attend the glittering ceremony due to “pre-existing commitments”. The no-show has created a stir in Sweden, where it has been perceived as a slight towards the Swedish Academy that awards the literature prize and the Nobel Foundation. Announced as the winner on October 14, Dylan waited almost two weeks to publicly acknowledge the accolade, a silence one Academy member termed “impolite and arrogant”.

Dylan did ultimately say he was honored to win, but then informed the Academy in mid-November that he would not be travelling to Stockholm to accept his prize. “A slap in the face,” remarked editorialist Lena Mellin at one of Sweden’s biggest dailies, Aftonbladet. “Anyone who has ever received a prize, even if it’s just for being the best neighbor in the apartment building, knows that the least one can do is go and accept it,” she wrote. On social media, opinions were mixed. “If it were me, I would probably... collect a Nobel Prize and \$900,000. But it’s Bob, and that’s part of what makes him Bob,” wrote fan Evan Sarzin on the singer’s Facebook page. “He is 75, give him a break,” argued another, Karen Lunebach. — AFP



OSLO: Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos poses with the medal and diploma during the Peace Prize awarding ceremony at the City Hall. — AP

ISRAEL TO RECEIVE ITS FIRST F-35 'SUPER-TECH' STEALTH FIGHTERS

JERUSALEM: Israel will tomorrow receive its first F-35 stealth fighter jets, hailed as technological marvels whose helmets alone cost more than most people's homes but criticized for their price and initial flaws. Built by US aerospace giant Lockheed Martin, the first two planes' arrival in Israel is being welcomed as a major event for the country's military as it seeks to maintain dominance in the turbulent Middle East.

US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter is to attend the arrival along with his Israeli counterpart Avigdor Lieberman at the Nevatim air base in the country's south. The delivery of the first two of 50 F-35s to be purchased by Israel comes as the years-long development of the most expensive plane in history reaches a critical stage. While a list of countries have ordered the planes, Israel, which receives more than \$3 billion a year in US defense aid, will be the first with an operational F-35 squadron outside the United States.

"I think we don't fully understand the big advantage of the F-35," an Israeli air force official said. "I think it's going to be learned in the next few

months, maybe years. I think it's a very super-tech airplane." Israel has given it the name "Adir"—which means "mighty" in Hebrew. Its first planes are expected to be operational within a year after delivery. It will be receiving the F-35A model for standard takeoff and landings. The B and C models are for short takeoffs and aircraft carriers.

Among their main features are advanced stealth capabilities to help pilots evade sophisticated missile systems. The single-pilot jets can carry an array of weapons and travel at a supersonic speed of Mach 1.6, or around 1,200 miles per hour. It is unclear if Israel's planes will be able to deliver nuclear bombs. Israel is believed to be the Middle East's sole nuclear-armed power, though it has never acknowledged it.

High-tech helmet

The ultra-high-tech helmet, at a cost of some \$400,000 each, sounds like something out of a science-fiction film. It includes its own operating system, with data that appears on the helmet visor and is also shared elsewhere. Thermal and night

vision as well as 360-degree views are possible with cameras mounted on the plane.

Israeli firm Elbit Systems has been involved in the helmet's production. In Israel, the planes, designed for multiple combat situations, will initially replace a group of ageing F-16s. They are seen as helping the country maintain its edge in the Middle East, particularly as its main enemy Iran seeks further influence in the region. "The F-35 has been designed to deal with the most advanced threat systems now being fielded in the Middle East," Lockheed Martin's Steve Over told AFP by email.

Israel is especially concerned over whether Iran will seek to develop nuclear weapons by violating the international accord it has signed with world powers aimed at preventing it. The country is also keeping an eye on Lebanon's powerful Shiite militant group Hezbollah, with which Israel fought a devastating war in 2006. Beyond that, in neighboring Syria, Russia has deployed the sophisticated S-300 and S-400 anti-aircraft systems as it conducts an air campaign in support of President Bashar Al-Assad.

'Only game in town'

Israel is buying its first 33 jets at an average price of about \$110 million. The government last month approved the purchase of the remaining 17. As a comparison, in 2001, Israel agreed to buy 52 additional F-16s from Lockheed Martin at a total cost of \$1.3 billion. While the technology can seem dazzling, there have been questions over whether the plane will be worth the cost.

A list of flaws have been uncovered, including one where pilots who weighed less than 136 pounds risked being killed by its eject system. There have also been software bugs and technical glitches, though Lockheed Martin assures such issues have been overcome. Some in Israel have also said the price of the planes will limit the number that can ultimately be purchased, while losing any in combat will be particularly costly. There have also been questions over whether upgrades to the air force's existing fleet could have sufficed. But the F-35 was "the only game in town" since Israel relies so heavily on US defense aid, said Yiftah Shapir of Israel's Institute for National Security Studies. — AFP



PARIS: US Secretary of State John Kerry (L) and France's Foreign Minister Jean Marc Ayrault (R) give a press conference after a meeting. — AFP

RAIDS POUND ALEPPO AS US DECRIES 'WAR CRIMES'

PARIS MEET CALLS FOR RESUMPTION OF PEACE TALKS

ALEPPO: Air strikes pummeled the shrinking rebel enclave in Aleppo yesterday as US Secretary of State John Kerry said the Syrian regime's "indiscriminate bombing" amounted to crimes against humanity. Western powers meeting in Paris called for the resumption of peace talks and for civilians to be allowed to leave Aleppo, where tens of thousands have already fled a fierce regime offensive.

The diplomatic flurry came as a US-backed alliance announced it would launch the second phase of its battle for the Islamic State group's de facto Syrian capital Raqqa further east. The regime's more than three-week-old assault aimed at retaking all of Aleppo has triggered mounting international outrage.

"The indiscriminate bombing by the regime violates rules of law, or in many cases, crimes against humanity, and war crimes," Kerry said after the talks in Paris, urging Russia to do its "utmost to bring it to a close." US and Russian officials meanwhile were to gather in Geneva for what Kerry described as a bid to stop the city from "being absolutely, completely, destroyed".

Once the beating heart of Syria's industrial and commercial industries, Aleppo has witnessed some of the most brutal violence of the country's nearly six-year war. In less than a month, forces loyal to President Bashar Al-Assad have overrun around 85 percent of east Aleppo, a rebel stronghold since 2012.

The UN's Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura said the world is watching "the last steps" in the Aleppo battle and evacuating civilians must be a priority. Air strikes and regime rocket fire battered the last remaining rebel districts yesterday, according to the Syrian Observatory for

Human Rights. An AFP correspondent in west Aleppo could hear the hum of airplanes circling above, coupled with bombardment and machine gunfire on the city's east. The strikes were so intense that windows in the west riddled and plumes of smoke could be seen rising from several points across the city's skyline.

'Bombing is unreal'

"The bombing is unreal," said Ibrahim Abu Al-Leith, spokesman for the White Helmets rescue force inside Aleppo. Abu Al-Leith spoke to AFP from one of the last rebel-controlled zones in Aleppo's southeast, saying he had been forced to move homes because of the intensity of the raids. "The streets are full of people under the rubble. They are dying because we can't get them out," he added.

According to the Observatory, nine civilians were killed yesterday in a barrage of rebel rocket fire on government-controlled neighborhoods. The fresh attacks brought to 129 people, including 39 children, the number of people killed by rebel fire on regime-held west Aleppo since November 15.

Another 413 civilians, among them 45 children, have been killed in east Aleppo in the same period. With the fighting intensifying after a brief respite, the UN General Assembly demanded an immediate ceasefire and urgent aid deliveries, in a resolution adopted by a strong majority. But both Moscow and Damascus have rejected talk of a ceasefire without a rebel withdrawal from the city—a demand that opposition groups have refused.

After meeting with opposition representatives yesterday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault said the opposition was willing to

resume peace talks "without pre-conditions." Kerry was not upbeat about the chances of success ahead of the meetings in Paris and Geneva. "I know people are tired of these meetings, I'm tired of these meetings," he said. "But what am I supposed to do? Go home and have a nice weekend... while people are dying? Sit there in Washington and do nothing?"

2,000 more flee

Tens of thousands have fled east Aleppo in recent weeks, with another 2,000 civilians pouring out of the remaining rebel-held districts yesterday, according to the Observatory. State news agency SANA also reported the displacement, but gave a number of 3,000 people and said they had been taken to the temporary shelter in Jibrin, about 10 kilometers east of Aleppo.

The UN said Friday it had received reports of rebels blocking some from leaving and of reprisals against residents who asked armed groups to leave. It has also expressed concern about reports that hundreds of men had gone missing after fleeing to government-held territory. The fall of east Aleppo would be the biggest blow for the rebels since Syria's conflict broke out in 2011.

It began as a widespread protest movement against Assad's regime but has since evolved into an all-out war that has seen jihadists like the Islamic State group rise to prominence. Yesterday, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces announced "phase two" of the campaign for the Islamic State group's bastion of Raqqa. US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced Washington was sending an additional 200 troops to join the 300 it has already deployed in support of the offensive. — AFP

SUICIDE BOMB KILLS 35 YEMEN SOLDIERS

ADEN: A suicide bomber killed 35 soldiers and wounded around 50 more yesterday at a military camp in Yemen's southern city of Aden, where jihadists are active, a military source said. The attacker detonated his explosives belt as hundreds of troops gathered to receive their monthly pay at the barracks in Al-Sawlaban near the city's international airport, the source said.

Security sources said earlier that a bomb planted by unknown individuals had been behind the deadly explosion. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Yemeni authorities have for months pressed a campaign against jihadists who remain active in the south and east of the war-torn country. The Islamic State group and its jihadist rival Al-Qaeda have taken advantage of a conflict

between the government and the Houthi rebels, who control the capital Sanaa, to bolster their presence across much of the south.

IS and Al-Qaeda have carried out a spate of attacks in Aden, headquarters of Yemen's internationally recognized government since allied fighters retook the port city from the rebels last year. An IS militant rammed his explosives-laden car into an army recruiting centre in Aden in August, killing 71 people in the deadliest jihadist attack on the city in over a year. On Monday, Yemeni authorities arrested eight suspected IS jihadists implicated in a spate of attacks targeting security personnel in the city this year. A Saudi-led coalition has since March 2015 supported loyalist forces fighting the rebels. — AFP

TURKEY TO SUBMIT ERDOGAN POWERS BILL TO PARLIAMENT

ISTANBUL: Turkey's ruling party is to submit a bill to parliament yesterday expanding the powers of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a move supporters believe will streamline the political system but opponents fear will lead to one-man rule. The constitutional change, which has been sought by Erdogan since he became president in 2014, would see Turkey switch to an executive presidency along the lines of the United States or France.

But it has become the latest polarizing issue surrounding the Turkish strongman, who has been accused by opponents of increasingly authoritarian rule especially after the attempted coup in July. The drive for the change comes at a critical time for Erdogan, with the relentless crackdown after the coup straining ties with the West and the Turkish lira under severe pressure.

"Our proposal to change the constitution will be submitted to the Turkish parliament tomorrow," Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said on Friday. The announcement followed months of talks between the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) led by Yildirim and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). The MHP is the fourth largest party in parliament but the AKP needs its support for the 330 votes required to call a referendum on the issue.

'Instability removed'

Yildirim said the bill would "save our country" from coups after Erdogan saw off a putsch aimed at ousting him from power on July 15. Turkey had on three previous occasions since 1960 seen governments directly ousted by the military, which considers itself the guardian of secular Turkey. "We continue to work on changing the system to ensure instability is removed from Turkey's political history absolutely," Yildirim said.

The AKP has only 316 seats (excluding the speaker of the parliament) and needs at least 14 votes from the MHP to secure a three-fifths majority required to call the referendum. Deputy Prime Minister Nurettin Canikli told broadcaster A Haber that "consensus had been secured" between the MHP and AKP and a referendum could take place in March, April or May. The main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) vehemently oppose changing the parliamentary system. HDP co-leader Selahattin Demirtas, who made it a political crusade to oppose the new system, is currently under arrest on charges of terror group links along with nine fellow HDP MPs. — AFP



ANKARA: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses local administrators. — AP



ALEPPO: Syrian civilians arrive at a checkpoint, manned by pro-government forces, at the Al-Hawoz street roundabout, after leaving Aleppo's eastern neighborhoods. — AFP

FOCUS TURNS TO US FORCES' ROLE AS IS FIGHT CONTINUES

WASHINGTON: As President Barack Obama prepares to leave office and step down as commander-in-chief of America's military, a flap has erupted over the secretive commandos who have become his go-to counterterrorist force across the globe. Obama's foreign military policy has centered on the targeted killings of terror suspects—usually by drone strikes—and he has ordered such actions in countries including Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Yemen and Libya.

But when it comes to ground action, the president has steered away from large-scale troop deployments and favored the light footprint offered by America's hush-hush Special Operations Command (SOCOM). The current kerfuffle stems from a Washington Post story that said SOCOM, specifically its super-secret wing called the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), is being granted new powers to track and potentially attack terror cells around the world.

The Post said JSOC could in some cases even operate unilaterally, without having to go through the regular US military command structure responsible for operations across particular parts of the world. The reported move ruffled feathers in other military units and among government agencies such as the CIA that also track foreign jihadists. They worried JSOC was being granted too much authority.

It "has caused for some friction in the government," a senior military official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. So this week, senior Pentagon officials moved to tamp down the story, saying SOCOM was not getting new powers, and that it would continue to operate within the long-established command structures.

Though secretive by trade, SOCOM has gained wide celebrity in America thanks to the countless books and movies depicting raids by its various teams. This has long been a source of

resentment for other military units, which sometimes feel overlooked when it comes to getting credit for America's counterterrorism efforts. Perhaps the most famous raid involving SOCOM fighters was the May 2011 assault by Navy SEALs that killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

New intel-sharing center

Though the Pentagon disputed parts of the Post story, the brouhaha did highlight the increased reliance America has placed on commandos fighting IS. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter in October said he had put JSOC "in the lead" of countering IS efforts to carry out external attacks. "We have already achieved very significant results both in reducing the flow of foreign fighters and removing ISIL leaders from the battlefield," he told reporters, using an IS acronym. — AFP

OAKLAND FIRE EXPOSES RIFT OVER NAMING TRANSGENDER VICTIMS

SAN FRANCISCO: Feral Pines proved to be as complex in death as she was in life as friends and family struggled this week to settle on the correct name to remember the victim of the Oakland warehouse party fire killed along with 35 others. Pines, a 29-year-old transgender woman who recently moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, was born in Connecticut in 1987. Relatives largely knew her as Riley, which she asked them to call her after she graduated from college.

But her death set off a storm of grief combined with anger, as friends called news media outlets and government officials to insist she should be named and mourned in death as Feral Pines, the name she used with them, illustrating the difficulty of identifying victims who have not officially changed their names. They especially objected to the use of the first name she was given at birth. Two other transgender women died in the fire, and only one had legally changed her name.

"It takes an immense amount of labor on the part of an individual trans person to get people to recognize who you are and to respect who you are," said Scout Wolfcave, executive director of the Trans

Assistance Project and a friend of Pines. For transgender people, names given at birth may be "something you try to leave behind, and to have people drag that up in a moment you can't defend yourself it's painful. It's painful for friends."

In the wake of the fire, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender organizations have called on media outlets to refer to transgender people by the name and gender with which they identify or identified. Proper naming is critical because it validates the way people who have died lived and saw themselves, said Alex Schmider, senior strategist for transgender media with GLAAD, a group that monitors media and advocates for gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Complicated issue

Yet that may not always be easy when friends disagree on acceptable names, or parents insist on another name even if they accept their child is transgender, he said. "It is a complicated issue," Schmider said. "It's a case-by-case basis, and we don't always have as much information as we would like." A legal name and gender change would

decide the issue, but people frequently do not have the money or time to embark on the effort, said Sasha Buchert, staff attorney at the Transgender Law Center in Oakland. It can take up to nearly a dozen forms and at least \$450 for a court order to start the lengthy and complicated process, she said.

"The fees around paying for this process are often out of reach for folks who are experiencing high rates of employment discrimination," she said. "It's very complicated." In California, next of kin decides the name that goes on official reports absent other documentation, said Tiffany Woods, a transgender services consultant who worked with Alameda County Sheriff's Office on the best way to identify those who died in the fire.

"Everyone's been proactive and having these intense conversations about doing the right thing," she said. Of the three transgender victims, Cash Askew, 22, was the only one who had changed her name legally. Her family released a statement Friday praising the Oakland guitarist and artist as a "tender, luminous spirit."

Em B, also known as Em Bohlka, was remembered as a caring person and poet who traded Kurt

Vonnegut quotes with her father. "Em was transitioning into a beautiful, wonderful, happy woman," Jack Bohlka, her dad, wrote in a text message to The Associated Press. "I only wish she had more time to complete her transition. It was so wonderful to see her becoming who she was meant to be."

Woods said she has not received complaints about the way Bohlka has been identified. But she said members of the Fritz family objected after learning that Riley Fritz was initially identified solely as Feral Pines, 29, in a city list of names confirmed as those who died in the fire. The official city list of the dead now lists her legal birth name, which friends say she abhorred.

It also says she lived her life as Riley Fritz. The name Feral Pines has been removed. Brother Ben Fritz said Riley was the name she asked him and other relatives to call her, but described her as a complex person and said he also knew her by other names, including Feral Pines and Fyrah. He remembered his sister on Friday as someone who could turn a discussion about what to eat into a talk about the politics of veganism. "She saw everything in more sophisticated ways than most people," he wrote in an email. —AP

GIULIANI OUT AS TRUMP NARROWS DIPLOMAT PICK

GRAND RAPIDS: Donald Trump plunged his quest for America's next top diplomat back into the spotlight Friday by confirming that one frontrunner, outspoken former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani, will not join his cabinet. Giuliani had made no secret of his desire for the job, but came under media scrutiny over business dealings that could pose conflicts of interest.

He was one of Trump's most ardent supporters in the bitterly divisive election but others were alarmed about the prospect of 72-year-old known for abrasive rhetoric heading up the largest diplomatic mission in the world. Observers in the United States and around the world have been on tenterhooks over who the incoming Republican will pick as they wait to see whether Trump will make good on threats to rip up treaties and free trade agreements. With the decision expected next week, the president-elect announced Friday that Giuliani had removed his name from contention as far back as November 29.

"Rudy would have been an outstanding member of the cabinet in several roles, but I fully respect and understand his reasons for remaining in the private sector," Trump said in a statement. Giuliani, a former federal prosecutor, earned the moniker "America's Mayor" for his leadership of New York in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

"This is not about me; it is about what is best for the country and the new administration," he said in a statement released by Trump's team, confirming that he would continue to work in his law and consulting firms. The New York Times reported that Rex Tillerson, chief executive of Exxon Mobil, was now the leading candidate to become secretary of state. Tillerson met Trump in New York on Tuesday.

New picks next week

Former Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney, a fierce critic of Trump during the campaign, is thought to remain in the running. But the Times said Trump had "indicated to several people" that the former Massachusetts governor was now unlikely to be named. In an interview with Fox News, Giuliani followed other ardent Trump loyalists in counseling against Romney, complaining that he "went just a little too far" in savaging Trump during the campaign season.

"You can make friends and make up, but I would not see him as a candidate for the cabinet," Giuliani told Fox. Trump's appoint-

ments so far include four billionaires and three generals in a super-rich, conservative and largely white inner circle set to run the United States from January 20. Many incoming cabinet members have railed against the worker protections and environmental and corporate regulations enacted by President Barack Obama.

Trump told a victory rally in Michigan that "phenomenal" new names would be announced next week, but declined to give specifics. The stop in Grand Rapids was the fifth campaign-style event since the November 8 election as he soaks up adulation from supporters in key states that helped secure his electoral win over Democrat Hillary Clinton.

The president-elect defends his picks as "some of the most successful people in the world" but when his choice for education secretary, billionaire Betsy DeVos, took the stage in Michigan, she was heckled by some protesters. A number of protesters were forcibly removed from the floor at different points during the evening. "Where do these people come from? Unbelievable," said Trump as the crowd responded with chants of "U-S-A! U-S-A!"

Oil refineries

He used the rally to name Michigan resident and Australian-born Dow Chemical executive Andrew Liveris as head of a national manufacturing council. Liveris said his company was going to invest in a new research and development center in Michigan that would create hundreds of jobs-with job creation one of Trump's key promises. The president-elect also rehashed his complaints about a Boeing contract to build two new Air Force One jets, which he claims has escalated to \$4 billion. "I'm not paying \$4 billion for an airplane," he told the crowd.

At a rally in Louisiana earlier on Friday, the president-elect said he wanted to see more oil refineries built in the United States, and pledged to do away with "job-killing restrictions" suppressing the energy sector. He also delivered a veiled warning to America's rivals around the world, stating he would be prepared to boost US military production to keep pace with countries like China, which is rapidly modernizing its armed forces. "We're going to have the strongest military in the world, the most updated military in the world. And there has rarely been a time where we have needed it like this," he told the crowd in Michigan. — AFP



GRAND RAPIDS: President-elect Donald Trump smiles as he listens to his pick for Education Secretary Betsy DeVos speak during a rally at DeltaPlex Arena. — AP

TRUMP TO ATTEND ARMY-NAVY GAME, PRESIDENTIAL PREPARATIONS GO ON

PRESIDENT-ELECT CAPS OFF WEEK OF 'THANK YOU' TOUR

NEW YORK: President-elect Donald Trump is partaking in one of the nation's most storied football rivalries, saluting US troops at the annual Army-Navy game as he prepares to enter the White House. The future commander-in-chief planned to attend the 117th game between the military academies at West Point and Annapolis, which is being held on relatively neutral ground, at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, Maryland.

Trump tweeted yesterday morning that he was going to the game "as a show of support for our Armed Forces." The appearance caps a week of rolling out Cabinet picks, holding "thank you" rallies in North Carolina, Iowa and Michigan, and trying to cement his incoming Senate majority with Saturday's runoff election in Louisiana. The incoming president appeared jovial and relaxed as he plunged back into electoral politics on Friday, a full month after he won the presidency. He held large-scale events in Louisiana and in Michigan, where he regaled supporters in Grand Rapids by reciting his victories in battleground states.

Trump is the first Republican to win Michigan since George HW Bush in 1988. He attributed his feat to failures by Democrats. "They forgot about you people," Trump said. "In four years they're not going to forget. But it's not going to

work because you're not going to forget." Several protesters were removed from his rally at DeltaPlex Arena, prompting the president-elect to declare at one point, "Get 'em out of here." Trump introduced Betsy DeVos, his choice for education secretary who hails from west Michigan, and announced that Andrew Liveris, the chief executive of Dow Chemical, would lead his American Manufacturing Council. Taking the stage, Liveris said the company would soon bring a new research-and-development center to Michigan.

GOP support

In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Trump campaigned for Republican John Kennedy, the state treasurer who faces off against Public Service Commissioner Foster Campbell, a Democrat, for the seat of retiring Republican Sen David Vitter. Neither won a majority in the November primary. Polls found Kennedy with a comfortable lead in the runoff.

While candidate Trump was often at odds with the establishment wing of his party, GOP leaders have broadly supported him as president-elect, and he's trying to consolidate any lingering factions, most immediately in Louisiana, where a Kennedy win would cement the party's four-vote advantage in the new Senate. In private, people

close to Trump said he was expected to name yet another Goldman Sachs executive to his White House team. The president-elect's National Economic Council is to be led by Gary Cohn, president and chief operating officer of the Wall Street bank, which Trump repeatedly complained during the election campaign would control Hillary Clinton if she won. Major decisions remain - most importantly Trump's choice for secretary of state. The deliberations have become a source of tension within his transition team, with chief of staff Reince Priebus said to be backing Mitt Romney while other advisers oppose the idea of selecting the 2012 GOP nominee, given his fierce criticism of Trump during the campaign.

Trump announced that Rudy Giuliani, the former New York mayor who was an early favorite, was no longer under consideration. On a busy Friday, Trump also spoke by telephone with Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, who broke with protocol during the campaign to endorse Hillary Clinton and said afterward she would not maintain "a diplomatic silence in the face of attitudes of racism, sexism, misogyny or intolerance of any kind." Sturgeon's office said she used Friday's call to emphasize the "values Scotland and the United States share." Trump's transition team described the conversation as a "short congratulatory call." — AP

MEXICO QUIETLY MARKS 10 YEARS OF DRUG WAR

MEXICO CITY: Ten years after Mexican troops were unleashed against drug cartels, the country will mark the anniversary without fanfare today, with murders rising again and the military eager to return to barracks. President Enrique Pena Nieto, who inherited the drug war when he took office in December 2012, has promised his countrymen and women a "Mexico in peace."

His government has created a new federal police force and imprisoned or killed several drug kingpins, but Pena Nieto has kept troops on the ground despite allegations of abuses and criticism from human rights groups. The administration has no events planned to commemorate the controversial deployment that was launched by his predecessor, Felipe Calderon, on December 11, 2006.

Ten days after taking office, Calderon deployed some 5,000

troops to his western home state of Michoacan-the start of a militarized campaign against drug trafficking. Calderon's six-year term was marked by a surge in murders, rising from 10,253 in 2007 to a peak of 22,852 in 2011. The figure dropped in the first two years of Pena Nieto's presidency, only to rise again in 2015. Although murders remain well under the worst years of Calderon's presidency, there were 17,063 homicides in the first 10 months of 2016, already surpassing last year's 12-month total of 17,034.

Smaller gangs, bigger problems Much of the bloodshed is blamed on ultra-violent turf wars between drug gangs. The government has captured major fugitives, such as the Sinaloa drug cartel's powerful leader, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman. But the weakening of major drug cartels such as the Beltran Leyva, Zetas, Gulf

and Knights Templar has led to the emergence of smaller gangs that seek to diversify their business through kidnappings and extortion.

"The war has become much more complex. The level of death has escalated," Raul Benitez Manaut, a security expert at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, told AFP. The drug cartels have terrorized the population by leaving the decapitated bodies of their rivals on roadsides or hanging them on bridges, while mass graves are regularly found in the countryside.

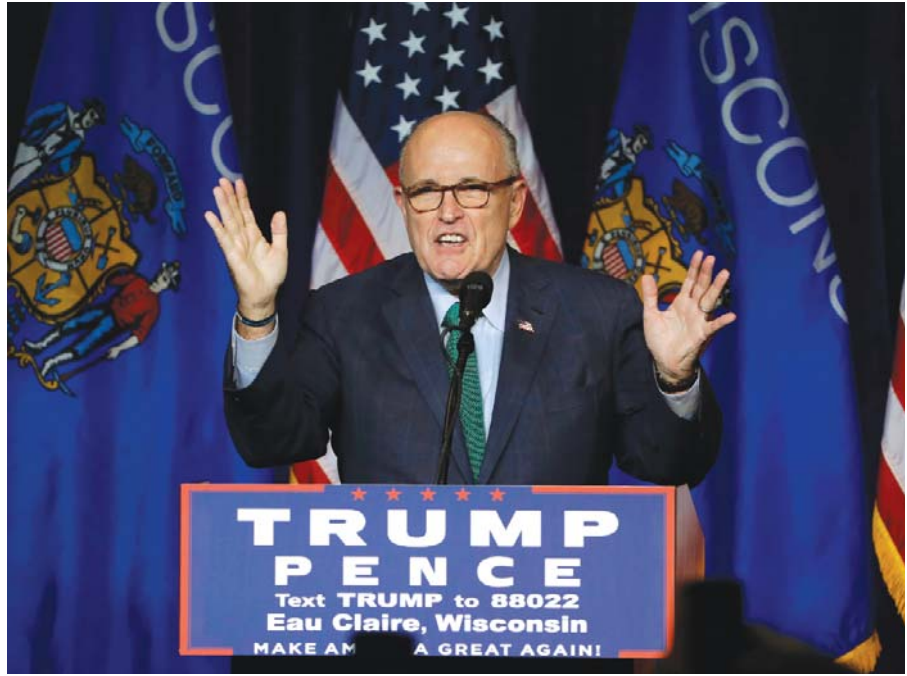
Police have been accused of colluding with criminals while soldiers and marines have faced allegations of committing torture, extrajudicial killings and sexual abuse. Even Defense Minister Salvador Cienfuegos agrees that troops do not belong in a law enforcement role. "We didn't ask to be here. We don't like it. We didn't study how to chase criminals," Cienfuegos said on Thursday. He said he would be the first to raise "not one, but two hands" in favor of returning troops to barracks. "Our function is some-

thing else and it's been made into something unnatural. We are doing things that don't correspond to our training because there's no one else to do them," the minister said.

Though Pena Nieto acknowledged on Friday that the armed forces were doing tasks that "don't correspond to them in the strictest sense," he insisted that they are "determined to continue" policing the streets. And federal police in Jalisco state Friday arrested Jesus Beltran Guzman-a son of one of the Beltran Leyva cartel's founders and a nephew of "El Chapo" — in a drug bust, authorities said.

Grim cases

But Javier Oliva, a Mexican security expert at the London School of Economics, said "there is no strategy" and the troops are always one step behind. Drug consumption in the United States, meanwhile, has not ceased and the legalization of marijuana in several US states has prompted drug cartels to step up production of heroin while synthetic drugs proliferate. — AFP



EAU CLAIRE: In this Nov 1, 2016 file photo, former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani campaigns for Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire. — AP

PATRONS BACK PIZZA PLACE TARGETED BY FAKE STORIES

WASHINGTON: There's at least a slice of good news for a pizza restaurant in the nation's capital caught up in fake news stories about a child sex trafficking ring run by prominent Democrats. In the days since a conspiracy theorist showed up and fired an assault weapon inside Comet Ping Pong, supporters of the restaurant have turned out in droves to buy pizzas and leave homemade signs and flowers.

More than 2,000 people said on Facebook that they're going to this weekend's "Stand With Comet" event to support the pizza place and other neighborhood restaurants targeted by fake news fanatics. John McKeel walked out of Comet Ping Pong Friday carrying "The Smoky," with mushrooms and bacon; and "The Jimmy," topped with meatballs. But McKeel wasn't just coming for the food. "I had to come today," said McKeel, 39, of Alexandria, Virginia.

The Facebook page urged people to support not only Comet Ping Pong but other nearby stores that have been subjected to harassing and threatening online comments and phone calls since the fake news stories began spreading. "If they run out of dough today, that'd be a good thing," said Erick Sanchez, the event's organizer.

So many came out Friday that people waited an hour and a half for a table and carry-out took 45 minutes. Other local restaurants spontaneously sent over wait staff to help. Others sent food for employees. The restaurant also is getting support online, where a GoFundMe page set up to help it pay for legal expenses and extra security had passed \$15,000, with a goal of \$28,000. Interim District of Columbia Police Chief Peter Newsham visited Friday, with a message for fake news peddlers.

"It's not funny. It's serious. It can have very, very serious consequences," he said, adding that police are following up on the harassment and threats local businesses have received. The man police arrested Sunday at Comet Ping Pong, Edgar Maddison Welch, has a court hearing next week. Police have said the 28-year-old from Salisbury, NC, fired shots from an AR-15 assault weapon after coming to "self-investigate" the conspiracy theory known as "pizzagate."

He surrendered peacefully "when he found no evidence that underage children were being harbored in the restaurant," police said. Joey Allen, the marketing and events manager for the District Restaurant Group, which owns the nearby Jake's American Grille, says its restaurant also was harassed with calls related to the conspiracy. At one point the calls were daily, Allen said. — AP



ACAPULCO: A forensic medic investigates the crime scene where two people were shot dead by unidentified attacker. — AP



ACCRA: Supporters of Ghana's President elect Nana Akufo-Addo, of the New Patriotic Party, celebrates presidential election victory. — AP

AKUFO WINS GHANA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

ACCRA: Challenger Nana Akufo-Addo won Ghana's national election on Friday, tapping into an electorate fed up with a sputtering economy and ready for change. The erudite 72-year-old human rights lawyer cruised to victory winning 53.8 percent of the votes, according to the country's election agency.

"I will not let you down. I will do all in my power to live up to your hopes and expectations," Akufo-Addo said to an ecstatic crowd at his house in the country's capital of Accra. "I will do my best to serve your interests and put our country back on the path of progress and prosperity." Incumbent John Mahama conceded defeat in the evening two days after a hotly contested race that was seen as a test of the country's democracy in a region plagued by dictators and coups.

Mahama called to congratulate opposition leader Akufo-Addo, whose New Patriotic Party (NPP) supporters had been gathering for hours outside his house after local media gave him a clear lead following the Wednesday vote. "Yes he has conceded defeat," George Lawson of Mahama's New Democratic Congress (NDC) party told AFP.

Akufo-Addo had campaigned on a platform promising to boost growth and deliver jobs. "The president of Ghana is president for every single Ghanaian," Akufo-Addo said, as fireworks popped overhead and thousands of people cheered in the streets outside his house.

'Gold standard'

Akufo-Addo's supporters - almost all in head-to-toe white, a symbol of victory - had been dancing on his lawn for hours in anticipation of his victory speech. At one point, they broke out in an enthusiastic cappella rendition of Ghana's national anthem. "We have won," said Hajia Mustafa, a 44-year-old trader, flashing a wide smile. "I have my president, I have my choice." The high-stakes race between Akufo-Addo and Mahama has been seen as a litmus test of the stability for one of

Africa's most secure democracies. But fears of widespread violence erupting during the election never materialized, with a generally peaceful voting day followed by calm as the official results trickled in. "I think Ghanaians should be extraordinarily proud of themselves," said Ambassador Johnnie Carson of the National Democratic Institute, an election observer. "Ghana has distinguished itself in the last two and a half decades with integrity and transparency," Carson said. "It is a gold standard for democracy in Africa."

'Escaped violence'

Yet while the European Union Election Observation Mission said that Ghana "largely escaped the violence many had feared" it pointed to other areas of concern. "The misuse of incumbency, including unequal access to state media, and unaccountable campaign financing were areas Ghana could address in the future," said the mission in a statement.

Akufo-Addo will serve a four-year term in the former British colony, a once booming country that has seen its economy slow, currency deteriorate and inflation soar. Mahama, who came to power in 2012 after beating Akufo-Addo, had urged voters to "stay the course," promising to deliver more infrastructure projects. In his third bid for the top job, Akufo-Addo blasted Ghana's poor economic growth rate-estimated at 3.3 percent in 2016, the lowest rate for two decades-and laid out a radical vision to transform the country's economy.

Akufo-Addo had also warned his supporters that "vigilance is key" at the polls in an attempt to avoid a repeat of the 2012 vote-narrowly won by Mahama with 50.7 percent-that he contested unsuccessfully in the country's Supreme Court. Ghana is the world's second biggest producer of cocoa after Ivory Coast and Africa's second biggest gold producer after South Africa. But it was forced to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2015 for a bailout as global commodity prices tanked. — AFP

FRANCE AIMING TO EXTEND THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

PARIS: The French government announced plans yesterday to extend a national state of emergency until after elections next year, citing a heightened risk of jihadist attacks coinciding with polls. The security measures-in force since attacks in Paris that killed 130 people in November 2015 — will be debated in parliament Tuesday before their expected approval by the Senate on Thursday.

"This electoral campaign period, which naturally includes numerous public meetings and rallies, will also unfortunately incur an increased risk of attacks," said newly-appointed French Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve. The state of emergency-which gives police extended powers of search and arrest-has already been renewed four times.

France was also left in mourning in July this year after a Tunisian jihadist rammed a truck through a crowd of Bastille Day revellers in the city of Nice, killing 86 people. France will hold presi-

dential elections in April-May 2017 and legislative polls in June. The state of emergency must "encompass all electoral operations" Cazeneuve said at a meeting of the French cabinet, warning of the danger of those "who want to strike at the heart of our democratic values and republican principles."

The extension until July 15 would also allow a new president-incumbent Francois Hollande is not seeking re-election-to assess security and prolong the state of emergency if necessary, Cazeneuve added. Hollande's tenure has been marred by the three major Islamist-inspired terror attacks-against Charlie Hebdo magazine in January 2015, then in Paris the following November and in Nice. Cazeneuve, the former interior minister who coordinated the introduction of the state of emergency, took over as prime minister on Tuesday after Manuel Valls stepped down to seek the Socialist nomination for the presidency. — AFP

GAMBIA'S LONGTIME RULER REFUSES TO BOW OUT, DEMANDS FRESH POLLS

INVESTIGATIONS REVEAL STRING OF 'UNACCEPTABLE ERRORS'

BANJUL: Gambia's leader of some 22 years Yahya Jammeh announced late Friday he would no longer accept defeat in recent elections, plunging the West African country into turmoil with a demand for fresh polls. Investigations into the December 1 vote have revealed a string of "unacceptable errors" on the part of electoral authorities, Jammeh said in a speech broadcast on state television, adding that he would no longer concede to opponent Adama Barrow.

"In the same way that I accepted the results faithfully believing that the Independent Electoral Commission was independent and honest and reliable, I hereby reject the results in totality," he said. "Let me repeat: I will not accept the results based on what has happened," he added, warning Gambians not to take to the streets to protest his decision. Soldiers were seen placing sandbags in strategic locations across the capital Banjul Friday, a development which triggered widespread unease among the already-spooked population, who had been panic-buying food before the vote due to fear of unrest.

As the military deployed onto the streets of the tiny nation, the US Embassy in Banjul urged the army to continue to show "respect for the rule of law and the outcome of the presidential election." "The Gambian people have made a clear choice for change and a new start," the embassy added. Latest official figures gave Barrow 43.29 percent of the votes in the presidential election, while Jammeh took 39.64 percent. The turnout was at 59 percent. Opposition spokeswoman Isatou Touray criticised on social media a "violation of democracy" and called for people to "remain calm, lucid, vigilant and not retreat."

On December 2, Jammeh made a magnanimous concession speech on television and promised to general surprise-a peaceful and swift handover of power to President-elect Barrow, sparking celebrations in the country. But on Friday he pointed to errors which awarded victory to his opponent Adama Barrow with a slimmer margin than initially announced, claiming that numerous voters had not been able to cast their ballots. "This is the most dubious election we ever had in the history of this country," he said. "We will go back to the polls because I want to make sure every Gambian votes under an electoral commission that is impartial, independent,



BANJUL: In a Thursday, Dec 1, 2016 file photo, Gambia's president Yahya Jammeh shows his inked finger before voting. — AP

neutral and free from foreign influence," he said.

Shock victory

Neighbouring Senegal immediately condemned the development, calling for a UN Security Council meeting on Gambia and urging Jammeh to accept the "democratic choice, freely expressed by the Gambian people" and continue a peaceful transition of power to President-elect Barrow. The US State department called the move "reprehensible and unacceptable breach of faith with the people of The Gambia and an egregious attempt to undermine a credible election process and remain in power illegitimately."

"We call upon President Jammeh, who accepted the election results on December 2, to carry out an orderly transition of power to President-Elect Barrow in accordance with the Gambian constitution," spokesman Mark Toner said. Jammeh's move upends the situation in Gambia, where the population had been hoping for a peaceful democratic transition after Barrow's shock victory this month ended

Jammeh's more than two decades in power. But pressure to prosecute Jammeh and top figures in his administration, who have been accused of widespread human rights violations, is one of the key challenges facing the new government. Many Gambians had tired of their leader's unpredictable behavior, including the declaration of an Islamic republic in a country with a history of religious tolerance, and its withdrawal from the Commonwealth and the International Criminal Court.

The perception that Jammeh simply took over businesses and properties for his personal gain also angered many, while police harassment and impunity by the security services, especially the National Intelligence Agency that reported directly to Jammeh, fed growing resentment. Barrow had vowed to set up a South Africa-style truth commission but ruled out a political "witch hunt" and promised that his predecessor would be able to "live in Gambia like any ordinary citizen". Dozens of opposition activists, including the leader of the United Democratic Party (UDP) had already been freed from prison on bail this week. — AFP

GAS TRAIN BLAST IN BULGARIA KILLS FIVE

SOFIA: At least five people were killed yesterday and 27 were injured when a freight train transporting gas derailed and exploded in the northeastern Bulgarian village of Hitrino, officials said. "Five victims have been confirmed dead so far and 27 injured," the interior ministry said in a statement. The train was carrying more than 20 tankers of propylene gas and propane butane when it derailed while entering the village's rail station.

The last two tankers hit a power line and exploded and seven tankers full of propylene went off the tracks, local police spokeswoman Assia Yordannova said. The

blast occurred at 5:37am (0337 GMT) at the village, located about 100 kilometers from Varna, Bulgaria's main port on the Black Sea. The interior ministry said there were 200 firefighters and rescuers at the scene. More than 50 houses were damaged and 40 families evacuated. "Four victims have been identified but we fear there will be more."

Twenty-five people were injured," civil defence chief Nikolay Nikolov said. A hospital in the nearby town of Shumen said an 18-year-old man had died from his injuries, while three people with life-threatening burns have been transported to a hospital in the city

of Varna, Bulgaria's largest port on the Black Sea.

Aerial footage showed a massive plume of black smoke rising over the small village, which is home to some 800 people. Charred tankers lay scattered around the tracks of the nearly ruined railway station. There was debris everywhere. "There is devastation in the area around the blast site. Twelve people have been rescued from under the ruins alive so far and firefighters are checking for more," Nikolov added.

Hitrino's station, the police headquarters and several homes along the railway tracks were razed. Fires raging in the area were

put out around noon, local authorities said. "There will be more than five victims."

There are several injured with 90 percent burns," Bulgaria's outgoing Prime Minister Boyko Borisov after arriving at the site. He appealed for blood donations for the hospitals treating the injuries. Residents said the firefighters had been "very slow" to arrive and many burst into tears while recounting how their houses collapsed. Cargo train accidents are relatively frequent in Bulgaria where railway tracks are obsolete and regularly pillaged by thieves. But victims are extremely rare. — AFP



HITRINO: Firefighters continue to work at the scene after a tanker train derailed and gas tank exploded. — AP

ITALY IN NEW GOVERNMENT ENDGAME, BANK FEARS RISE

ROME: Talks on creating a new Italian government entered a decisive phase yesterday as fears mounted that any new premier will have to handle a politically toxic banking crisis. President Sergio Mattarella is trying to broker a deal among political parties on the creation of a caretaker administration to guide the country to elections.

A nationwide vote is due by early 2018 but could take place up to a year earlier if there is no deal. Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni emerged as the pundits' favorite to succeed Matteo Renzi amid swirling speculation that the outgoing prime minister's re-appointment was also an option. Renzi resigned after a crushing defeat in last weekend's referendum on constitutional reform, plunging the country into a political crisis just as the long-anticipated banking crunch landed in the finance ministry's lap.

Mattarella has spent the last two days talking mainly to fringe parties without sufficient num-

bers in parliament to sway the decisions he has to make. The real work began yesterday with talks with junior coalition party the New Centre Right (NCD) to be followed by meetings with officials of the populist Five Star Movement, Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia and Renzi's Democratic Party. Interior Minister Angelino Alfano, the NCD's leader, emerged to say there was no need to rush to elections.

"The government... is not like a yoghurt. It does not have a 'best-before' date," he said sardonically. The need for a new government has become pressing following the European Central Bank's decision to reject Rome's request for more time to persuade investors to back a five-billion-euro private bailout for troubled bank Monte dei Paschi di Siena (BMPS). The bank, identified as being vulnerable to failure in stress tests last year, had asked for an extra five weeks to raise the funds it needs to avoid a government bailout under which, under EU rules,

debt holders will have to share some of the losses.

Renzi comeback opposed

BMPS shares slumped more than 10 percent on Friday, taking this year's slide in value to 85 percent. The bank's board was holding crisis talks over the weekend. Saving the world's oldest bank will be politically difficult for whoever oversees the operation. Most analysts see it and other Italian banks as needing radical restructuring involving inevitable redundancies. But there are many small investors who have BMPS bonds, and their savings will be hit in any rescue deal.

Imposing losses at smaller banks last year hit Renzi's standing hard and was linked to at least one suicide. The ECB appears to have judged that delaying a solution will only risk a wider crisis in the Italian banking sector that could have damaging implications for the rest of the eurozone. Italy's biggest bank, UniCredit, meanwhile is planning a

major capital-raising operation of its own which may have to be repriced, delayed or pulled as a result of the current uncertainty.

Among those who visited Mattarella yesterday morning was Arturo Scotto, a lawmaker with the Left Ecology party (SEL), who warned that any attempt to reinstate Renzi would be greeted with fury. "It would be a provocation to voters who not only rejected his reforms but also delivered a damning judgment on his social, political and environmental policies," Scotto said.

Veteran Finance Minister Pier Carlo Padoan, Renzi ally Graziano Delrio, and former anti-mafia prosecutor Pietro Grasso, are also being touted as possible new premiers. Renzi is reportedly lobbying hard to keep out Culture Dario Franceschini, who is seen as a potential rival to the outgoing PM for the leadership of the Democratic Party, which remains the country's most popular political force ahead of the fast-rising Five Star. — AFP

NIGERIA SUICIDE ATTACKS DEATH TOLL REACHES 45

KANO: Two female suicide bombers on Friday killed 45 people and wounded 33 others when they detonated their explosives in a crowded market in Nigeria's restive northeast, the emergency service said the army had earlier put the death toll at 30. "From our updated records we have 45 dead and 33 injured in the twin suicide bomb explosions in Madagali," said Sa'ad Bello of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Adamawa state.

While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, the blasts bore all the hallmarks of Boko Haram, which regularly uses women and young girls to carry out suicide attacks in its seven-year

insurgent campaign in the troubled region. Military spokesman Badare Akintoye had earlier said "at least 30 people have been killed in the suicide blasts carried out by two female suicide bombers in the market." A local government official and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) confirmed the attack.

"The two bombers who (were) disguised as customers, detonated their suicide belts at the section of the market selling grains and second-hand clothing," said Yusuf Muhammad, the chairman of Madagali local government. The attack on Madagali, which was recaptured by Nigerian forces from Boko Haram

jihadists in 2015, was the third time the town has been targeted since December last year when two female suicide bombers killed scores. Market trader Habu Ahmad said Friday's blasts happened around 9:30 am (0830 GMT). "It was dead bodies and wounded people in the midst of blood, spilt grain and abandoned personal effects," he said.

'Under control'

Ibrahim Abdulkadir, NEMA spokesman for the northeast, said rescue teams had been deployed to the scene. He said security agents had cordoned off the scene of the explosions. Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari con-

demned the attack in a statement on Friday, vowing to put "an end to this senseless loss of innocent lives."

"This latest attack is obviously an act of desperation, but the Nigerian military will neither be distracted nor relent," he said. He urged Nigerians to be more vigilant and immediately report any suspicious activity to the nearest security agents. "The battle against terrorism is a joint effort involving all citizens, both government and governed. "Together, Nigerians can and will defeat the evil that is Boko Haram," he added.

Buhari had told a security conference in Senegal on Wednesday that the situation in the region was "under control".

Boko Haram is seeking to impose a hardline Islamic legal system on Nigeria's mainly-Muslim north. Its campaign of violence has killed at least 20,000 people and displaced some 2.6 million since 2009.

Nigeria's military campaign against the jihadists is increasingly bogged down as it confronts suicide attacks, looting and indiscriminate slaughter. The United Nations has warned that the affected region faces the "largest crisis in Africa". The UN estimates that 14 million people will need outside help in 2017 because of the ongoing violence, particularly in Borno State, the epicentre of the rebellion. — AFP



HYDERABAD: In this photograph taken on December 9, 2016, Indian rescue workers dig through the rubble of a collapsed building. — AFP

BUILDING COLLAPSE IN INDIA KILLS NINE

NEW DELHI: Nine people died after an under-construction building collapsed in southern India but a four-year-old boy and his mother were pulled alive from the rubble, police said yesterday. The seven-storey building where laborers and their families lived in the basement came crashing down late Thursday in Hyderabad, the state capital of Telangana.

"We can confirm that the toll has gone up to nine. Rescue workers had managed to pull out a mother and her child alive yesterday (Friday)," a senior police officer told AFP. "The debris is still being removed," he said, requesting anonymity. Emergency workers were using mechanical diggers and other equipment to remove mangled

slabs of concrete and steel at the site, TV footage showed.

The mother and her child were undergoing emergency treatment at a hospital while three more people remained unaccounted for, the officer added. The state government has promised tough action against the building owner for alleged violation of construction rules as well as civic officials for dereliction of duty, the Press Trust of India news agency reported. Deadly accidents at building sites are relatively common in India and are often blamed on a lack of safety measures. In July, nine laborers fell to their death from an under-construction residential tower in Mumbai after a concrete slab collapsed. — AFP

TALEBAN FIGHTER CONTESTS ATTACK CONVICTION, SEEKING IMMUNITY

RICHMOND: The prosecution of a former Russian military officer accused of leading a Taliban attack on American forces is a radical departure from the US's long practice of treating fighters as enemy combatants instead of criminals, the man's attorney argued Friday. At issue in Irek Hamidullin's appeal is whether the man should have been brought to trial in a civilian court in the first place.

His attorneys argue that he qualifies as a lawful combatant and is therefore exempt from criminal prosecution. "The bottom line is that Mr. Hamidullin is a soldier, not a criminal," federal public defender Jeremy Kamens told a three-judge panel of the 4th US Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Russian military veteran who was a part of the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani Network was sentenced to life in prison last year on charges including material support to terrorism for the 2009 attack. Hamidullin, who was captured after being shot and wounded, was the lone survivor among about 30 insurgents. The coalition forces sustained no casualties.

His case is one of only two in the last 15 years in which a court considered whether a Taliban fighter enjoyed combatant immunity. The judge in the other case sided with the government. The extraordinary nature of the case was not lost on the judges on Friday. "There's a lot of stake here," Judge Robert B King remarked.

Under the Geneva Convention, fighters are granted prisoner of war status and shielded from criminal prosecution if they have a leadership hierarchy, a distinctive uniform or insignia, carry arms openly and adhere to the laws and customs of war. Judge King and appeared skeptical of prosecutors' argument that Hamidullin did not meet any of those requirements, noting that the man was the openly carrying an

AK-47 at the time of the attack and was considered to be commander of the group.

Exempt from prosecution

"That sounds like an organization," King said. The judges also questioned whether Hamidullin's prosecution would open the door to more fighters being prosecuted in US courts. "So Congress wants Taliban fighters brought to the US and tried in court?" Judge Andre M Davis asked.

Prosecutors contend that the Taliban and its affiliated groups aren't exempt from prosecution because, among other things, the war in Afghanistan was not an international conflict in 2009. Assistant US Attorney Richard Cooke told the panel that it doesn't matter whether Hamidullin was openly carrying arms or wearing a uniform during the attack because he's part of a group that regularly violates the laws and customs of war by intentionally targeting civilians and employing suicide bombers. "This is a pretty straightforward case at the end of the day," Cooke said.

Kamens told the court that treating Hamidullin as a prisoner of war would cost the government "almost nothing" because it would be entitled to keep him in custody for the duration of the conflict in Afghanistan. He said that ruling in Hamidullin's favor would ultimately benefit US soldiers. "Our own soldiers should not be subject to domestic criminal law like Hamidullin," Kamens said.

Hamidullin's attorneys want the appeals court to at least grant a new trial and allow the man to present a defense that he shouldn't be held criminally liable because he was acting under the direction of the Taliban. The district court judge barred him from presenting such a defense at trial. A decision is expected in the coming weeks. — AP



RICHMOND: This Nov 7, 2014, artist rendering shows, Irek Hamidullin, front center, his attorney Robert Wagner, front left, and interpreter Ihab Samra, front right, as Judge Henry Hudson, left, listens in Federal Court. — AP

IT'LL BE TRUMP'S WAR SOON: AFGHAN'S FUTURE IS CLOUDY

TWO PRESIDENTS LATER, REGION STILL MUDDLED IN STRIFE

KABUL: Afghanistan has fallen so far from Americans' consciousness that some may have forgotten it's called the forgotten war. It also is America's longest war. Now in its 16th year and showing little sign of ending, it will soon be the responsibility of Donald Trump, two presidents removed from the October 2001 invasion. During the presidential campaign, neither Trump nor Democrat Hillary Clinton offered new ideas for breaking the battlefield stalemate. They hardly mentioned the country, let alone a strategy.

And yet, the war President George W Bush began as America's response to 9/11 grinds on as nearly 10,000 US troops train and advise the Afghan army and police, hopeful that at some point the Afghans can stand on their own against the Taliban - or better, that peace talks will end the insurgency. A look at the war Trump is inheriting, what US troops are doing and why the outlook is so clouded:

The US mission

While President Barack Obama was a long-time critic of the Iraq war, he always cast the Afghanistan fight as vital. Shortly after taking office in 2009, Obama looked to fix what he saw as US failures in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He tripled troop levels in Afghanistan, but the surge did not force the Taliban to the negotiating table. Pakistan remains a sanctuary for the Taliban.

In December 2014, the US ended its combat role in Afghanistan, but there will be at least 8,400 troops there when Trump takes office. American troops and their coalition partners perform two tasks: Operation Resolute Support is to train and advise Afghan forces fighting the Taliban. Operation Freedom's Sentinel is to hunt down and kill Al-Qaeda militants, as well as those affiliated with the Islamic State and other groups using the country as a hideout and potential launching pad for

attacks. "The interests we are pursuing here are clear and enduring," Defense Secretary Ash Carter said during a visit Friday. He cited the goals of preventing another 9/11-type attack on America and helping Afghanistan attain enough stability to remain a long-term security partner.

The US performs its counterterrorism work in Afghanistan in two ways. First, it goes after Al-Qaeda and Islamic State operatives as a US-only mission. Gen. John Nicholson, the top US commander in the country, said last week that US special operations forces have conducted 350 such missions in 2016, about one per day on average, killing or capturing nearly 50 leaders and other members of Al-Qaeda.

Secondly, US forces join Afghan special forces in hunting Islamic State fighters; these operations have killed the top 12 IS leaders in Afghanistan, Nicholson said. He said that of the 98 militant groups designated by the US as terrorist organizations, 20 are in Afghanistan, the world's highest concentration. That alone says much about the inconclusive - some would say failed - outcome of Obama administration's efforts. Nicholson said Friday the remnants of Al-Qaeda, the group whose 9/11 attacks were the reason the US invaded, still intend to attack America.

The outlook

Nicholson and many US generals who preceded him see reason for hope, pointing to Afghanistan's modest progress against corruption and expanded opportunities for women. He said he is confident the Afghan army, which suffered heavy losses in 2016, will continue to improve. "It was a tough year," he said. "They were tested. They prevailed."

His predecessor, retired Gen. John Campbell, says the Afghans deserve continued support. "The Afghan government is now taking on the Taliban more so than ever before,"

he said Friday in an email exchange. Some analysts, however, worry that the Obama administration missed opportunities to improve security and strengthen the government.

Frederick W Kagan, a military historian and director of the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute, says security has deteriorated despite US efforts to build up the army and police. "If that's not good," he said of Afghan security, "nothing else matters. And it's not good." Kagan says Obama is leaving his successor a worrisome situation. "We're sliding toward the collapse of this government and potentially a renewal of the civil war," he said.

Trump's war

Trump will not have an easy time disentangling the US military from Afghanistan, short of an unlikely decision to simply walk away. He has said little about the country, but has called broadly for an end to "nation-building" efforts. Michael Flynn, the retired Army lieutenant general who will be Trump's national security adviser, sees Afghanistan as part of a broader war that the US must fight for generations.

"We defeated Al-Qaeda and the Iranians in Iraq, and the Taliban and their allies in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, they kept fighting and we went away," he wrote in his 2016 book, "Field of Fight."

"Let's face it: Right now we're losing, and I'm talking about a very big war, not just Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. We're in a world war against a messianic mass movement of evil people, most of them inspired by a totalitarian ideology: radical Islam."

Trump's choice to lead the Pentagon, retired Marine Gen James Mattis, is a veteran of combat in Afghanistan. He has written that the US devotes too few resources, guided by too little strategic clarity, to Afghanistan. How that translates into action by the next White House is unclear. — AP



KABUL: In this Monday, Dec 5, 2016 photo, Afghan women walk on a street. — AP

TIBETAN SELF-IMMOLATES IN CHINA: RIGHTS GROUP

BEIJING: A man has self-immolated in protest against China's presence in Tibet while calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, a rights group said yesterday, the first Tibetan to set themselves on fire since March. Horrifying video footage online showed the man, aged in his thirties and named by The International Campaign for Tibet as Tashi Rabten, walking down the road in northwest China's Maqu region with his entire body engulfed in flames while a passerby recited prayers.

According to the Tibetan government in exile based in India, Rabten is the 145th Tibetan to self-immolate since 2009. Local authorities, who collected his charred remains, could not be reached for comment. Rabten's wife, two of his

children and several other family members were placed in detention by local police after they went to claim the body, according to rights group Free Tibet.

"Having lost a father and a husband, Tashi Rabten's family now find themselves in detention. The cruelty of this system knows no bounds," Free Tibet said in a statement. "The only crime they have committed is to be the family of someone who has embarrassed China by once again reminding the world that their occupation and these human rights abuses cause Tibetans real pain. And sometimes this pain pushes Tibetans to make the ultimate sacrifice" it added.

Beijing says its troops "peacefully liberated"

Tibet in 1951, but many Tibetans accuse the central government of religious repression and eroding their culture.

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama fled into exile after a failed uprising in 1959. Tibetan monks within China have reported a campaign of government intimidation targeting the family and friends of those who set themselves on fire. According to The International Campaign for Tibet, Tashi Rabten, a former monk, had a cousin who self-immolated in the exact same street in 2012. In March this year two Tibetans, a monk in China and a teenager in India, set themselves on fire to protest Beijing's control of the Himalayan region. — AFP

45,000 LEFT HOMELESS AFTER INDONESIA QUAKE

JAKARTA: Tens of thousands of people have been displaced after a devastating earthquake in Indonesia killed more than 100 people, an official said yesterday, leaving communities in ruins as aid trickled into the disaster-stricken province. "We have 45,300 people evacuating in several places as of Saturday morning," national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told AFP, adding that the number of displaced had almost doubled since Friday due to an influx of new data.

The shallow 6.5-magnitude quake earlier this week leveled hundreds of homes, mosques and businesses across Aceh province, one of the areas worst

affected by the devastating 2004 tsunami. More than 700 people were injured in the quake, many seriously, according to the country's disaster agency. Most of the displaced spent the night outdoors in tents near their ruined homes as hundreds refused to move into shelters fearing aftershocks, Nugroho added.

The army has established kitchens, shelters and a field hospital in the hard-hit town of Meureudu to help the region's overwhelmed health facilities. Indonesian President Joko Widodo visited Meureudu Friday, pledging to rebuild the area's devastated communities as he called on Indonesians to pray

for their countrymen. The archipelago nation experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.

A huge undersea earthquake in 2004 triggered a tsunami that engulfed several countries around the Indian Ocean, killing more than 170,000 people in Indonesia alone, the vast majority in Aceh.

The province lies on the northern tip of Sumatra island, which is particularly prone to quakes. In June a 6.5-magnitude quake struck off the west of Sumatra, damaging scores of buildings and injuring eight people. — AFP



ACEH: Police officers help clear rubble at the ruin of a mosque collapsed in Wednesday's earthquake. — AP



SEOUL: Protesters hold candles during a rally against South Korea's President Park Geun-Hye in central Seoul yesterday. — AFP

SOUTH KOREANS CELEBRATE PARK IMPEACHMENT, BUT ANXIETY TOO

ACTIVISTS INTEND TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE

SEOUL: Tens of thousands celebrated the impeachment of South Korean President Park Geun-Hye at a rally in Seoul on Saturday, but amid the euphoria there was lingering anger, and anxiety at the prospect of an extended period of political uncertainty. For the seventh straight week, protesters gathered en masse in the streets of the capital, but the mood was generally festive, after lawmakers on Friday voted overwhelmingly to impeach the deeply unpopular Park over a corruption scandal.

Although the move stripped Park of her substantial executive powers, activists said they intended to keep up the pressure, with the impeachment still requiring final approval from the Constitutional Court—a process that could take months. And many were adamant that the president should resign immediately and face criminal prosecution. "We are still hungry" the crowd in Seoul's Gwanghwamun chanted, as they also sang along to the revised lyrics of a Christmas song that read: "Only after she is out, will it be a Merry Christmas."

Organisers put the turnout at around 600,000 — smaller than previous weeks when the crowds passed the million mark. Until the court rules, Park's authority is only suspended and she retains the title of president and the immunity from prosecution that goes with it. And she still has her supporters, many of them elderly voters who remain steadfast admirers of her father, the late military dictator Park Chung-Hee-credited as

the architect of the South's economic transformation but vilified as an authoritarian rights abuser.

Don't cry

A large portrait of a young Park with her father formed the centrepiece of a pro-Park rally in Seoul earlier on Saturday that drew around 15,000 people. Waving national flags, they carried banners that read: "President Park, Don't Cry" and "Nullify impeachment". Park was impeached on numerous counts of constitutional and criminal violations ranging from a failure to protect people's lives to bribery and abuse of power. Most of the charges stemmed from an investigation into a scandal involving the president's long-time friend, Choi Soon-Sil, who is currently awaiting trial for fraud and embezzlement. Prosecutors named Park a suspect in the case, saying she colluded in Choi's efforts to strong arm donations from large companies worth tens of millions of dollars.

The impeachment process was ignited and fuelled by public outrage at Park's behaviour, with the weekly mass demonstrations demanding that politicians take a pro-active role in removing her from the presidential Blue House. The National Assembly has played its part, but the country now faces a lengthy period of uncertainty at a time of slowing economic growth and elevated military tensions with nuclear-armed North Korea. "We have only overcome one challenge. The challenges that follow will be bigger,"

said Kim Young-Ho who attended Saturday's rally with members of the Korean Farmers' League.

Unelected leader

The man charged with steering the country through these dangerous waters is a former prosecutor who has never held elected office. As Park's prime minister, Hwang Kyo-Ahn became the temporary guardian of her sweeping executive powers the moment after she was impeached. A stern and not particularly popular figure, Hwang is seen as a Park loyalist and there were numerous chants at Saturday's rally for him to resign as well.

Flung into a role he had never sought, Hwang sought to strike a reassuring tone during an emergency cabinet meeting on Saturday. "The government is carrying out all measures necessary to prevent any government vacuum and ease the people's anxiety," Hwang said, adding that he had instructed the military to be extra vigilant to any move by North Korea to exploit the current situation.

North Korea has conducted two nuclear tests this year and multiple missile launches, prompting South Korea to agree to host a sophisticated US anti-missile system-despite protests from China. Contributing to the general anxiety is the presidential power transition in the United States, a key economic and military ally which has nearly 30,000 troops permanently stationed in South Korea. — AFP



GOLD COAST: This file photo taken on October 26, 2016 shows Dreamworld CEO Craig Davidson laying flowers at a makeshift floral tribute at the Dreamworld theme park on the Gold Coast, a day after four people were killed on a malfunctioning park ride. — AFP

AUSTRALIA BIGGEST THEME PARK RE-OPENS WITHOUT KILLER RIDE

SYDNEY: Australia's biggest theme park reopened quietly yesterday without the water ride that killed four people and faces demolition. Two women and two men died on the Thunder River Rapids attraction at the once hugely popular Dreamworld tourist resort on the Gold Coast on October 25. Owner Ardent Leisure, which came in for heavy criticism for the way it handled the tragedy after trying to re-open before the funerals, has decommissioned Thunder River.

But the park's nine big thrill spills remained closed Saturday as safety inspections continue, leaving only family rides operating. "Our hearts and thoughts remain firmly with the families who lost loved ones in the tragic accident," said chief executive Craig Davidson. "Every single attraction open today has been passed by an unprecedented multi-level safety review," he told reporters. "We would like to invite the community back through our doors," @Dreamworld_AU tweeted. — AFP

INDONESIAN POLICE EVACUATE CITIZENS AFTER BOMB FOUND

JAKARTA: Indonesian police said they evacuated a neighborhood on the outskirts of the capital yesterday after discovering a bomb in a raid on suspected Islamic militants who were planning to attack the presidential palace. National Police spokesman Boy Rafli Amar said people living within a 300-meter (yard) radius of the boarding house that was raided were evacuated. Police explosive experts were at the scene.

Amar said two men and one woman were arrested. The bomb was encased in a pressure cooker, a police photograph broadcast on TV showed. Umar Surya Fana, the police chief of Bekasi, a Jakarta satellite city where the evacuated neighborhood is located, said the two men were arrested shortly after leaving the boarding house. The woman was arrested in the boarding house.

Fana said that the militants were monitored by the counterterrorism squad, and that police believed they had been planning to bomb the presidential palace during a guard-changing ceremony that is a tourist attraction in Jakarta. A will of the woman seized during the investigation stated her desire to take part in "amaliyah," an Arabic term used by extremist groups for attacks or suicide bombings. Amar said the three who were arrested are suspected to be part of a militant network linked to a bomb-making lab raided last month in West Java province. Those arrested last month planned to bomb targets in Jakarta, including the parliament and the Myanmar Embassy. — AP

MALAYSIA POLICE KILL KEY ABU SAYYAF MILITANT IN SHOOTOUT

MANILA: Malaysian security forces have killed a key member of a Philippine Islamist militant group in a shootout in waters off Sabah in Borneo, the Philippine military said yesterday. Abu Sayyaf leader, Abraham Hamid, had led the kidnapping of several foreigners from a tourist resort in the volatile southern Philippines last year, two of whom were later beheaded.

"The death of Hamid is a big blow to the (Abu Sayyaf) as it neutralized one of the notorious bandits and will degrade their capability for spotting and kidnapping victims in the future," said regional military spokesman Major Filemon Tan. Two other militants were killed alongside Hamid in the shootout with Malaysian police in Lahad Datu in eastern Sabah, he said.

The Abu Sayyaf beheaded two Canadian hostages after demands for millions of dollars were not met, but released two others, a Norwegian and Filipina, after ransoms were believed to be paid. Tan said Hamid had also been involved in the kidnapping

of four Indonesian crewmen in April. There have been a spate of kidnappings of Malaysian and Indonesian sailors at sea in recent months that have been blamed on the Abu Sayyaf.

While Hamid and two militants were killed, Sabah security forces have arrested two others, Tan added. Sabah police chief Abdul Rashid Harun told AFP the incident was the Malaysian authorities' first direct confrontation with suspected kidnappers in the waters off eastern Sabah. On his blog, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak praised his security forces and said Kuala Lumpur and Manila would cooperate to fight the recurring kidnappings. The Abu Sayyaf, a loose network of militants based on remote islands in the southern Philippines, has defied more than a decade of military offensives. The group was formed in the 1990s with seed money from Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network, but has been on a lucrative kidnapping spree in recent years. — AFP

A LOOK AT SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

SEOUL: Fresh off impeachment, South Korean President Park Geun-hye's days in office may be numbered. Her potential successors include the outgoing secretary general of the United Nations, an ambitious mayor who has been compared to both Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, and the man who conceded the presidential race to Park four years ago.

Park was suspended as president following a parliamentary impeachment vote Friday. She will be formally removed from office if six of the Constitutional Court's nine justices support her impeachment in a review that could take up to six months. The chances of the court reinstating Park are considered low, and if she's unseated, the country must hold a presidential election within 60 days. A look at the contenders:

Ban ki-moon

A career diplomat, Ban has been seen as a future South Korean president ever since the U.N. made him secretary general in October 2006. He could be the best hope for conservatives to win back the Blue House - South Korea's presidential office - after Park's collapse complicated politics for her party. Ban will step down as UN chief at the end of the year after two five-year terms. Questioned on the matter countless times, Ban has never officially declared an ambition to run for South Korean president. But he has never denied interest either. In a visit to South Korea in May, Ban told reporters that he would "think hard about what to do as a citizen" after he returns home on Jan 1. Local media saw this as a clear hint at a presidential bid.

If he does make a run for the Blue House, Ban could represent Park's ailing Saenuri Party, which is likely to regroup soon around anti-Park reformists. Or he could be the face of a new party created by defectors from Saenuri and the liberal opposition. Ban's supporters point to his credibility as an internationally known and respected diplomat and say he would show more imagination and skill in dealing with nuclear-armed North Korea than the rigid Park. His detractors point to his lack of domestic experience and argue that he did an unremarkable job in a high-profile post.

Lee jae-myung

Lee, the outspoken mayor of Seongnam city and member of the main opposition Democratic Party, entered the year as a fringe presidential contender. But he has enjoyed a meteoric rise in popularity in recent months amid rage over the Park

scandal. Lee, a factory worker and human rights lawyer before entering politics, brands himself as an anti-establishment figure and has a habit of firing off diatribes on Facebook and Twitter. He doesn't mind comparisons to Trump, although he says he would prefer to be a "successful Bernie Sanders."

Lee calls for stronger policies to reduce the widening gap between rich and poor and help blue-collar families. He also endorses breaking up the "chaebol" - the large, family-owned conglomerates that dominate the country's economy. They have been long accused of hurting competition and breeding a culture of corruption through bribery of politicians for favors. The message has won him many fans in recent weeks. His supporters portray him as a passionate reformist; critics see a dangerous populist riding a tide of public anger. "We have been ruled by a small class of the privileged... let's make with our own hands a democratic republic where everybody is treated equally," Lee told a cheering crowd during one of the massive rallies calling for the removal of Park, who prosecutors accuse of colluding with a confidante to extort money and favors.

Moon jae-in

While Ban and Lee have been hogging headlines, opinion polls show it's actually Moon, the liberal runner-up to Park in the 2012 election, who's the favorite. A recent survey measured Moon's support at 23.5 percent, ahead of Ban's 18.2 percent. The Democratic Party's presidential primaries may become a showdown between Moon and Lee, who had 16.6 percent support.

Moon, a former human rights lawyer and aide to late liberal President Roh Moo-hyun, pledges to fight income inequality, strengthen social welfare systems and push business reforms to curb chaebol excesses and create a level playing field for smaller companies. While Moon would be a safe choice, there are questions about whether he can win; in the presidential election four years ago, his 48 percent of the vote fell short of Park's 51.6 percent. Conservatives over the years have attacked Moon over his links with the Roh government, which pursued rapprochement policies with North Korea that led to big trade and cultural exchanges between the rivals. Such policies were criticized after Pyongyang expanded its nuclear weapons and missiles programs; subsequent conservative governments scrapped the effort. Moon continues to argue that Seoul should put dialogue over sanctions in persuading Pyongyang to give up its nuclear ambitions. — AP



LES CAYES, Haiti: In this file photo, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon waves to people whose homes were destroyed by Hurricane Matthew, as he visits a school where they have sought shelter. — AP



An aerial view shows the wreckage of a train transporting gas after it derailed and exploded in the northeastern Bulgarian village of Hitrino yesterday. —AFP (See Page 10)

US COMEDIAN'S SHOW CANCELED IN SAUDI ARABIA

RIYADH: A performance in Saudi Arabia by US stand-up comedian and actor Mike Epps has been cancelled, its organizers said, after complaints from Islamic hardliners. The show, scheduled for next week, was one of numerous events lined up to begin introducing entertainment to the conservative Islamic kingdom, where alcohol, cinemas and theatres are banned. "Dear clients, we regret to inform you that the Mike Epps event has been cancelled", the organizing company, Master Events, said on Twitter, promising a full refund.

Epps was to appear at Princess Noura bint Abdulrahman University, a campus exclusively for women. "The show was cancelled by the university and not by us as organizers," Master Events said. Twitter users had started a hashtag, "Hollywood at Noura University", calling for the show's cancellation because it would not fit with local traditions. Epps has featured in films including "The Hangover", about the aftermath of a drunken bachelor party in Las Vegas.

The university has denied being behind the Epps show, saying a third party rented the conference hall and the event "was licensed by the concerned authorities". Entertainment programs began in October when New York theatrical group iLuminate performed at the Princess Noura University. Hundreds of men and women, side-by-side, hooted their appreciation and clapped to the hip hop beat. The show was followed by WWE wrestling, which took place before a male-only crowd at a separate venue. Many Saudis spend their entertainment dollars in neighboring Bahrain and Dubai. — AFP

TRUMP: AMERICA'S REALITY TV PRESIDENT IN WAITING

NEW YORK: If the 2016 presidential election was the planet's biggest circus then Donald Trump's transition from tabloid tycoon into leader of the Free World has become America's ultimate reality TV show. From cabinet appointments to his newly embraced flattery for President Barack Obama, from intimidating companies to heckling a union leader, Trump is spinning as only he knows how a news cycle obsessed with the most extraordinary political upset in modern US history.

Day after day, prospective appointees troop in and out of Trump Tower, ride up and down the golden elevators - the same props used in his long-running reality TV show "The Apprentice" - in full glare of television cameras. Trump uses some of the oldest reality tricks in the books: Cliffhangers, drama, parading contestants to be interviewed, allowing surrogates to leak information and then carefully timing his official announcements.

If he spends most of his time sequestered in his opulent penthouse, then with a single tweet he can reach an audience of millions at the flick of a wrist. "He's our first reality TV president, he's one of the first true celebrity presidents," says Richard Hanley, associate professor of journalism at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut. "I think it's a reflection that America has completely lost sight of the line between entertainment and reality," he told AFP. It's just business as usual for a real estate tycoon who fed tabloids for decades with affairs, divorces and escapades that made him, if not the richest billionaire in the country, then the most synonymous with wealth. Take for example his most prestigious appointment, secretary of state, yet to be announced. After weeks of fevered

speculation, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani was officially ruled out Friday.

Stay tuned

Hanging by a thread is Mitt Romney, the Republican grandee and former Trump critic invited to dine at a famous society restaurant in New York only to be photographed smiling awkwardly next to a grinning president-elect. Trump dialed into an NBC breakfast show to say that a final decision was likely next week, throwing Romney a lifeline but quickly talking up the talents of Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson. Trump is said to want telegenic staff and so former general David Petraeus, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher and ex-Beijing ambassador Jon Huntsman have gone before the cameras to present themselves as articulate alternatives.

After meetings, he tweets his verdicts. "Very impressed!" he wrote of former CIA director Petraeus, still under probation for giving classified material to his mistress. When decisions are made, many are timed for effect, such retired general James "Mad Dog" Mattis announced as defense secretary during a rally in Ohio. He drops teasers, telling Iowa that he will announce a homeland security chief - reportedly retired general John Kelly - next week. In other words, stay tuned.

Then there are the eclectic back stories. Nine years ago, he shaved the head of the billionaire husband of cabinet nominee Linda McMahon on live television. McMahon herself is perhaps the only appointee to face a Senate confirmation hearing having been thrown around by wrestlers on television.

Fasten seatbelts

Dom Caristi, professor at Ball State University, says "The Apprentice" showed Trump "in command, acting very businesslike, making smart business decisions, recognizing the mistakes of others, calling people out for those mistakes". So, too, has he sought to project the same image in his transition. He posed as the tough man fighting to save taxpayers' money by calling out Boeing for the "\$4 billion" cost of two new Air Force One jets, saying that the aerospace company had to bring the price down.

The tweet followed veiled criticism from Boeing about the incoming administration and the company's share price fell - but reports since claim the company is donating \$1 million to the inauguration. Trump also boasted of taking on air conditioning company Carrier to save jobs that would others have left Indiana for Mexico. But when a union leader took issue with Trump's claim that 1,100 jobs had been rescued - saying only 800 had been earmarked to move - he tweeted out at the leader, exposing him to a furious backlash.

Even his decision to stay on as executive producer of "The Celebrity Apprentice" - regardless of the potential conflict of interest - has blurred the lines between reality TV and the business of government. "We have yet to see what this presidency is going to look like. That's part of his goal to keep us off balance," said Jeff Morosoff, media studies and public relations professor at Hofstra University. "I think we need to fasten our seatbelts for one long rollercoaster ride." —AFP



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Focus

NO RESPITE FOR LIBYA AFTER IS DRIVEN FROM SIRTE

As Islamic State's last defenses crumbled this week in their Libyan bastion Sirte, dozens of women and children used as human shields stumbled dazed and dust-caked from the rubble. Fighters from the armed groups that defeated the jihadists feted the end of a punishing six-month battle by flying Libyan flags over the Mediterranean city, once known mainly as the home town of late dictator Muammar Gaddafi, more recently as the main stronghold outside Syria and Iraq of Islamic State's caliphate.

But the campaign has been far from the unifying event some had hoped for. Celebrations have been muted by the risk of jihadist counter attacks and the potential for renewed war among Libya's military factions. The past week's developments give a measure of the chaos still enveloping Libya, five years after the NATO-backed uprising that overthrew Gaddafi. Just hours after the last district in Sirte was cleared, fighters in a newly formed force swept up from the desert south of the city towards Libya's Oil Crescent, looking to recapture ports that had changed hands three months before.

Tripoli has seen its worst clashes for more than a year as the capital's militias rolled tanks onto the streets in a feud infused with ideological and political disputes. And in the main city in the east, the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA) continued to suffer heavy casualties as it struggles to secure parts of Benghazi against Islamist-led rivals after more than two years of warfare. A half-formed, UN-backed government based in the capital looks increasingly helpless to stop the turmoil - though Western powers insist that it represents the only path towards peace.

UN Libya envoy Martin Kobler told the Security Council this week that while a peace plan signed a year ago had stalled, weapons were still being delivered into Libya, the economy was facing "meltdown", and the country remained a "human marketplace" for migrants trying to reach Europe. Gains against militants in Sirte and Benghazi were "not irreversible", he added. The campaign in Sirte was led by brigades from Misrata, an influential port east of Tripoli. They launched their offensive in May when militants advanced up the coast towards their city.

The UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) scrambled to take command, but only ever had nominal control over fighters on the ground, some of them with different agendas beyond the campaign in Sirte. The brigades hoped the battle would be finished in weeks, but their progress was halted by Islamic State snipers, suicide bombers and mines. By mid-summer, with casualties mounting and an official request from the GNA, they called in the help of US air support. Nearly 500 strikes were carried out over Sirte between Aug 1 and early December.

After the last buildings in Sirte's Ghiza Bahriya neighborhood were secured on Tuesday, jubilant fighters paraded through the streets, chanting that the deaths of more than 700 men from within their ranks had not been in vain. But there have been no such scenes in Misrata, a city whose fighting force was forged in the 2011 uprising and string of military campaigns in the years that followed.

Comeback?

"Every time after we win a war we celebrate," said Ahmed Algennabi, a 28-year-old salesman in a Misrata perfume shop. "But now I don't think that it's the end of this war, and I expect more fighting against Islamic State." Fear of an Islamic State comeback or insurgent campaign is the stated reason for not declaring an official end to the operation in Sirte.

Libyan security officials say a significant number of militants left Sirte before the battle or in its early stages, and that Islamic State has cells along Libya's western coast as well as in the hinterlands. Even as the fighting continued in Sirte's residential neighborhoods, the group carried out attacks from behind the front lines, including suicide bombings and a major ambush.

Military officials say they will now move to deal with this threat by securing the desert valleys south of Sirte and chasing down fugitive militants. But they are also nervous about Khalifa Haftar, the commander of the LNA in the east, who has fought on the side opposed to Misrata's brigades in a stop-start national conflict since 2014, and has recently been boosted by his own military advances. In September, with Misrata's fighters still tied up in Sirte, Haftar's forces moved to seize the Oil Crescent ports, some of them just 200 km to the east, and many see him edging towards national power. —Reuters

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MOST TROUBLING IS RUSSIA REACTION TO SCANDAL

Troubling as the details of the McLaren Report were, a news item out of Russia earlier this week was equally so. The new chair of the country's "revamped" anti-doping agency will be Yelena Isinbayeva, the pole vault great who has spent the past year thumbing her nose at all the evidence and at those who've dared to mete out punishment for the malfeasance. Isinbayeva's appointment to the RUSADA board, made a mere two days before Part 2 of the McLaren report arrived, was all you needed to conclude that either Russia does not fully grasp the depths of depravity that Richard McLaren painstakingly detailed in his 144-page report or, maybe worse, that it just doesn't care.

The details in McLaren's report, released Friday, are as predictable as they are terrible. The 1,000 athletes and who-knows-how-many government and quasi-government officials involved in Russia's doping scandal are symbols not of a system that failed to catch its cheats, but of one that was undercut by the very people we'd presume were hired to protect it.

Isinbayeva herself was never implicated in the doping scandal, and when all but one member of the Russian track team was barred from the Rio Olympics, she paid a heavy price. The two-time gold medalist and world-record holder stayed back because track's international federation had the courage to declare that anyone involved in the Russian sports machine simply could not compete, given the evidence that had been unearthed to that point.

Isinbayeva called the suspension “a blatant political order”, claiming, as many in her government did, that Russia was being unfairly targeted as part of an East vs. West power play. She called it “a violation of human rights,” and vowed to “prove to the IAAF and World Anti-Doping Agency that they made the wrong decision.” After Friday’s report came out, she said “of course it’s in my interests not to allow the situation which I ended up in, so that our athletes from our country are treated the same as everyone else.”

Though she was applauded - and is now being rewarded - in her own country and elsewhere for taking this stance, her words are not those of someone who either grasps the seriousness of the problem, or is devoted to bringing meaningful change. Is anyone in Russia devoted to that? Hours after the report went public, Russian deputy prime minister Vitaly Mutko, implicated in the report as an architect of the doping program, said the country would "move into the legal arena"; and that "it was simply not realistic ... to do what they are accusing us of".

Indeed, were it not for the excruciating detail McLaren took to conduct his research, it would be hard to believe intelligence agents could open sealed doping bottles and replace tainted urine with clean to beat the drug-testing system at the Sochi Games. McLaren found Russians who won 15 medals in Sochi had their samples tampered with.

He said Russia's doping program also corrupted the 2012 London Olympics on an "unprecedented scale."

Those were Isinbayeva's last games. Since being barred from Rio, she has retired from the sport, won a spot on the IOC and, now, become the chair of RUSADA. WADA protested, saying it was supposed to have been consulted about important moves, such as the naming of RUSADA's new board. For WADA to hope that anyone – say, the IOC – will have its back on this is only that: hoping. The IOC is the same body that rejected WADA's call to ban the entire Russian team from the Rio Games. It argued that it had to walk a careful line between anti-doping and politics, and that it needed to carefully weigh the consequences of "col-

lective responsibility versus individual justice," while basically ignoring the "individual justice" owed to the dozens of athletes who have been and might still be beaten by cheating Russians.

How many of those Russians were in Rio de Janeiro? Time will tell. Though the track team was banned, Russia still sent 271 athletes to the Summer Games, and they combined for 55 medals. McLaren is forwarding the evidence from his report to the IOC and to the individual sports, and those bodies will decide what punishments to levy. Meanwhile, the Winter Olympics are only 14 months away, and already, questions about whether Russia should be eligible for those games are being asked. — AP

MALI'S FOOT-DRAGGING TRAPS PEACE MISSION

Last week, the offices of the UN peacekeeping mission in the desert city of Gao in northern Mali were flattened by a truck bomb. On Tuesday, just five suspected Islamist militants succeeded in freeing 93 inmates from a jail in the town of Niono. "Peace" in Mali looks increasingly like war by another name. As both rebels and government go slow on implementing a deal signed last year, it is the UN peacekeeping mission, which has lost 100 lives and is costing nearly a billion dollars a year, that is paying the price.

“The war makes a living for a lot of people,” said Moussa Mara, a former prime minister who led an abortive effort to retake the lawless desert town of Kidal in 2014 but no longer has a government post. “There are those in the peace process who don’t want it to conclude. They get their ‘per diems,’ they get their travel paid. These armed groups are not in a hurry,” Mara told Reuters, recalling that one meeting on implementation that was supposed to take an afternoon had ended up dragging on for weeks.

Ever since French forces intervened in 2013 to push back Islamists who had hijacked an ethnic Tuareg uprising in Mali's desert north, world powers, especially former colonial master France, have invested huge sums in trying to soothe the complicated rivalries that caused Mali to implode. The UN peacekeeping mission, MINUSMA, has 13,000 staff from 123 nations. France maintains a 4,000-strong parallel peace-keeping operation, "Barkhane". And the European Union has 580 instructors training the Malian army.

'Time is our enemy'

The aim is to ensure the success of the July 2015

PIPELINE PROTEST PROMISES TO GALVANIZE ACTIVISM

US veterans, thousands of whom last week helped stop a contested oil pipeline running through North Dakota, could become important partners of activists on the environment, the economy, race and other issues that divide Americans. Several academics said the effort to support the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others opposed to the pipeline project was likely the biggest gathering of its kind of former military personnel since the early 1970s when US veterans marched against the Vietnam War.

That so many veterans mobilized in less than two weeks to rural North Dakota speaks to the power they may have on public opinion, because of their status as having put their lives on the line for their country, veterans and academics said. "The sense that vets are distinctively American figures, regardless of political beliefs, always seems to have currency, even when they are working on different sides of an issue," said Stephen Ortiz, a history professor at the State University of Binghamton in New York.

Many veterans who went to Cannon Ball, North Dakota, to join the months-long protests by Native Americans and environmentalists against the 1,885-km Dakota Access Pipeline, said they were already looking for their next issue to support. "Militarily-trained soldiers have now discerned, on their own, a genuine, just cause for which to promote and defend, and this

time without being under orders to do so," said Brian Willson, whose 2011 memoir "Blood on the Tracks: The Life and Times of S Brian Willson," described how after serving in the Vietnam War, he became a non-violent protester for social change in the United States.

Law enforcement tactics, particularly the use of water cannons, against the protesters had been considered extreme by some. Veterans said in interviews they felt galvanized to act as a human shield, providing a respite for those who had been at the protest camp for months. The pipeline owned by Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners LP, is routed adjacent to the Standing Rock Sioux's reservation. Protesters have said the \$3.8 billion project could contaminate the water supply and damage sacred tribal lands. The veterans at Standing Rock were led by former Marine Michael Wood Jr and Army veteran Wes Clark Jr, son of retired US general Wesley Clark, former commander of NATO. The group raised \$1.1 million through online crowdfunding to help transport, house and feed veterans at the camp.

Battle resumes with Trump presidency
On Sunday, the US Army Corps of Engineers said it turned down a permit for the pipeline's completion, handing a victory to the protesters. But the saga will not end there. Republican President-elect Donald Trump has said he wants the pipeline built;

his team said he would review the decision when he takes office. Even though the fight is not over in North Dakota, some see this as a way forward on other issues.

"There's a lot of these pipelines being built around the county. Flint (Michigan) has a water crisis. So we're going to see if we can keep this movement going and really change some things in America," said Matthew Crane, 32, from Buffalo, New York, who served in the US Navy from 2002 to 2006. Clark's group, called Veterans Stand With Standing Rock (VSSR), asked for 2,000 volunteers but said twice as many arrived. Comments on the VSSR Facebook page criticized Clark for a lack of planning and for not having contingencies in place for North Dakota's harsh winters.

As a blizzard blew in on Monday, many hunkered down at the main protest camp. Hundreds more slept in the pavilion of the Prairie Knights Casino in Fort Yates, roughly 10 miles away on the Standing Rock reservation. Clark, who himself was snowed-in at the casino, said in a Facebook video posted Wednesday night that the response meant “a huge tax on the supply chain and on accommodations.”

Asking forgiveness

As part of their journey to North Dakota, many veterans asked forgiveness in two ceremonies for what they considered crimes and mistreatment of Native Americans by

the US government and military over the past 150 years. One ceremony took place Monday on Backwater Bridge near the camp, the site of two heated confrontations with law enforcement earlier this fall. Thousands of veterans and tribal members prayed, emoting war cries on the bridge's southern cusp.

One veteran, wearing a flak jacket and a Veterans for Peace flag, yelled to the crowd from atop a horse. "We didn't serve this country to see our brothers and sisters here persecuted," said the man, whose name was inaudible in the fury of the arriving blizzard. "Are we not all human?" Some veterans said they planned to remain in North Dakota, unwilling to trust that Energy Transfer Partners would abide by the federal government's decision. Most had left by Wednesday, however, said Heather O'Malley, a US Army veteran who monitored news for the group. She said it was unclear if they would return to the area in January if needed.

Clark and others said this was a way for veterans to address other efforts around the country. "This is a small battleground in a larger war that is developing in our country that has to do with race, the economy and the powers that be taking advantage of those who really don't have a voice," said Anthony Murtha, 29, from Detroit, who served in the US Navy from 2009 to 2013. — Reuters

WORLEY WINS SECOND STRAIGHT GIANT SLALOM



SESTRIERE: Tessa Worley won her second straight World Cup giant slalom yesterday after first-run leader Mikaela Shiffrin struggled in her second trip down the 2006 Turin Olympics course. With her 10th career giant slalom win, Worley matched the French record set by Carole Merle between 1988 and 1993. Worley finished 0.15 seconds ahead of rising Italian skier Sofia Goggia, while defending overall World Cup champion Lara Gut was third, 0.29 back. Worley also won a GS in Killington, Vermont, two weeks ago. Shiffrin, the American who won the slalom at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, lost a big chunk of time early in her second run after getting thrown off course and finished sixth. Shiffrin's lead over Gut in the overall standings was cut to eight points. — AP



DUBAI: Shanshan Feng of China holds the trophy after she won the Dubai Ladies Masters golf tournament in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, yesterday. — AP

FENG CLINCHES RECORD DUBAI LADIES MASTERS

DUBAI: Defending champion Feng Shanshan won a record fourth Dubai Ladies Masters title yesterday following a brilliant eight-under par final round 64.

The 27-year-old from China started the day five shots behind overnight leader Felicity Johnson of England. But she claimed back-to-back titles finishing on a 10-under par total of 206 as the leaders fell by the wayside on a windy day at the Majlis course of Emirates Golf Club.

Feng, the highest ranked player in the field at world No4, was chased home by England's Charley Hull second at eight-under par following a 65. India's Aditi Ashok signed off a brilliant season tied for third place with England's Florentyna Parker at six-under par 210 in the tournament that was reduced to 54 holes following the death of caddie Maximilian Zechmann on the opening day Wednesday.

American Beth Allen won the LET Order of Merit crown, while Ashok was the Rookie of the Year. Feng made the most of the early holes playing downwind, making four birdies in a row from the second onwards, and then had another fantastic stretch from the difficult par-4 ninth onwards, as she added three more to her tally. "I'm really happy that I actually brought out my 'A game' today," said Feng. "I knew that it was going to be windy and I knew that playing in the wind is one of my strongest parts. So even though I was five behind, I always thought that maybe I would still have a chance to win this week and I tried my best.

Eight-under was a pretty good score."

Hull, who won her first LPGA Tour title three weeks ago at the CME Group Tour Championship, had a similar story to Feng. After two quiet days, the 21-year-old from Woburn caught fire and posted a bogey-free 65. "Today, I kind of woke up and got into my golf game. I've been a bit lazy all week on the golf course, but today I got in there and kind of concentrated," said the world No18.

"I holed a few putts today and I missed a lot of putts. I hit it pretty well and it was really windy today. So I'm quite happy with my score in them conditions."

Ashok, who shot a third consecutive round of 70 with four birdies and two bogeys, was happy with her finish, although disappointed that she could not make the most of the first four holes that played easy yesterday. "It was pretty solid. I actually didn't start very well today. I was one-over in the first four holes when all four were actually birdieable with the tailwind. So I didn't really make use of that," said the Olympian who also qualified for the LPGA Tour next year.

Allen, who won twice in the season before finishing tied 55th at six-over this week, topped the LET Money List with 313,079 euros (\$330,000), while Ashok was second in the standings at EUR206,665. The event was marred by the death of 56-year-old Zechmann who was caddying for France's Anne-Lise Caudal when he collapsed on the 13th fairway on the first day. — AFP

CABRERA BELLO SCENTS END TO LONG WIN DROUGHT

HONG KONG: Ryder Cup star Rafa Cabrera Bello recovered from a late stumble to retain a share of the Hong Kong Open lead and move within sight of his first victory in four years yesterday.

The Spaniard leads alongside Australia's Sam Brazel on 11-under-par 199 after surviving a double bogey on the par-four 14th by birdieing two of his last four holes for level-par 70.

England's Tommy Fleetwood fired three-under-par 67 to lie in sole second spot with an aggregate score of 201, one stroke better than America's David Lipsky who shot 66. Cabrera Bello, a bright spot in Europe's Ryder Cup defeat in October, is bidding to join fellow Spaniards Jose Maria Olazabal, Miguel Angel Jimenez and Jose Manuel Lara as a Hong Kong winner.

"I had a tough day," said Cabrera Bello, who has topped the leaderboard after all three rounds following his 64 and 65 on Thursday and Friday at Fanling.

"I didn't find my rhythm so well, I didn't find the serenity I had played with the first couple of days, so I struggled with bogeys and birdies."

But the 32-year-old, who has been waiting for his third European Tour win since the 2012 Dubai Desert Classic, said he would be calm heading into the last day.

"I've been joint leader or leading by myself many times, looking for that third win," he said. "So it's a very common position for me. I'm just confident."

Brazel, the world number 480, shot 67 to

become a challenger for what would be by far the biggest victory of his career. He said keeping his nerves in check would be key today.

ROSE WILTS

"I'm going to try and control the nerves better than I did... and just enjoy it, enjoy the atmosphere of it all and take it all in, it's been fun," he told reporters.

Brazel, whose partner died suddenly from bacterial meningitis in 2009, said winning the Hong Kong Open would "mean the world" to him.

Fleetwood said an eagle on the par-five 13th had got his "juices flowing" as he also aims to end a long win drought.

The 25-year-old Englishman has not won on the European Tour since clinching the 2013 Johnnie Walker Championship at Gleneagles. "I haven't won for a long time, I had a year out of the game really-I was playing dreadful from mid-2015 to mid-this year-so I've sort of being on a path since August getting my game back," he said.

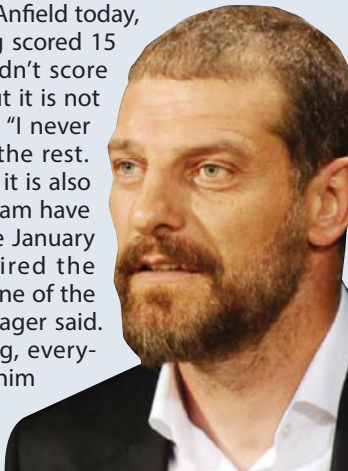
Last year's winner Justin Rose admitted he had "no prospects" of victory as he shot 70 to lie one-under for the tournament, where he is struggling to recover from a back injury. Elsewhere, US Masters champion Danny Willett was six off the lead after a forgettable round of 71 marked by four bogeys on the back nine. Fellow Englishman David Howell equalled the course record of 63 to lie four shots back from the leaders in a tie for fifth place. —AFP

ATLETICO NACIONAL TO HONOR CHAPECOENSE

OSAKA: Colombia's Atletico Nacional arrived in Japan for the Club World Cup yesterday, still dealing with the trauma of the recent airplane crash that caused the cancellation of the Copa Sudamericana final. Atletico was to play Chapecoense in the final but the plane carrying the Brazilian team to the game crashed on Nov. 28, killing almost all on board. Nacional qualified for the Club World Cup by winning the Copa Libertadores in July, and vowed to honor the memory of its rivals when it faces either South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns or Japanese champions Kashima Antlers on Wednesday. "The best tribute we can give them is to play a great tournament and reach the final," Nacional coach Reinaldo Rueda said at Kansai International Airport. The directors of Atletico asked the governing body of South American football to award Chapecoense the Copa Sudamericana championship. Atletico is hoping to advance to a final against Spanish giants Real Madrid on Dec. 18. "We know the responsibility we have to South America," Atletico captain Alexis Henriquez said. —AP

BILIC PRAISES STURRIDGE BEFORE LIVERPOOL TRIP

LONDON: West Ham United manager Slaven Bilic has admitted his team need to improve in front of goal and praised Liverpool striker Daniel Sturridge who has been linked with a move to the Premier League strugglers. West Ham, who travel to Anfield today, are 17th in the Premier League table, having scored 15 goals in 14 matches so far. "The strikers didn't score enough goals or as many as we expected but it is not only down to them," Bilic told British media. "I never want to divide the team into strikers and the rest. Although it is the strikers' job to score goals, it is also the responsibility of the whole team." West Ham have been linked with a move for Sturridge in the January transfer window, and Bilic said he admired the England international's natural ability. "He's one of the biggest talents, he's a great player," the manager said. "The talent is there, the touch, the finishing, everything is great. The only thing that's stopped him being regular for club and country are the injuries." —Reuters



RUSSIA FACES BAN CALLS AFTER DAMNING DOPING REVELATIONS

LONDON: There were growing calls yesterday for Russia to be banned from the Winter Olympics and other major international events after the latest startling revelations of state-sponsored doping across Russian sport.

Richard McLaren described on Friday how Russia "hijacked" sport by involving more than 1,000 athletes in an "institutional conspiracy" to win by mass doping at the Sochi 2014 Winter and London 2012 Olympics and other global competitions.

The Canadian lawyer, who detailed in a previous report how Russian security services were involved in the nefarious scheme, said in a second report for the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) that at least 30 sports were implicated and that salt and instant coffee were used to manipulate Russian samples. Russia's sports ministry-said to be central to the ruse to cheat its way to success over several years-again denied state backing for doping, saying that it "will continue the fight against doping with zero tolerance". Russia's track and field team was already banned from international competition for doping and was barred from the Rio Olympics in August, but there is now growing pressure-not to mention anger-for more sanctions. The United States, Britain and Germany all swiftly condemned Russia, while the International Paralympic Committee, which banned Russia completely from the Rio Paralympics in September, called the McLaren findings "astounding". Liz Nicholl, chief executive of UK Sport, which is tasked with helping Britain to Olympic success, said that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) should exclude all Russian competitors from the Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea in 2018.

"Absolutely. Until there's evidence that Russian athletes are competing clean," The Daily Telegraph quoted her as saying. "All the evidence that we've got is that they're not likely to be doing so. So, yes, I think the IOC should be taking a very strong stance and should be excluding Russia until such time as they've put their house in order." Clemens Prokop, president of the German athletics federation (DLV), called for a total ban on all Russian competitors.

"Russian sport should be excluded from all international competitions, including the Olympic Games, until its credibility is restored," said Prokop. "This is a fundamental attack



LONDON: World Anti-Doping Agency investigator Richard McLaren speaks during a press conference in London on Friday. A new report into systematic Russian doping details a wide-ranging "institutional conspiracy" that involved more than 1,000 athletes across more than 30 sports, including evidence corroborating large-scale sample swapping at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. — AP

against the Olympic movement when the values of the movement are dragged through the mud by a country." The IOC responded to McLaren's latest damning report by announcing it would reanalyse all 254 urine samples taken from Russian athletes at Sochi. The report, the IOC declared, showed that there "was a fundamental attack on the integrity of the Olympic Games and on sport in general".

WORLD CUP QUESTIONED

Several major international sporting events are on the calendar in the coming months, including the IAAF (athletics) World Championships in London in August next year.

The Winter Olympics take place in Pyeongchang in February 2018 and Russia is due to hold the football World Cup that summer. McLaren identified doping as being rife in

Russian athletics and weightlifting, but his report found evidence of banned substances being used in football too.

"We didn't really have a chance to look at Russian soccer across the board, to look at different teams and what's going on," McLaren told AFP after presenting his report findings in London. "I think there are 33 footballers listed in the report. Not all of those are Russian by the way-some are foreigners." That led British MP Damian Collins to question whether Russia was fit to host the 2018 World Cup.

"FIFA now have to look very seriously at the way in which the World Cup is going to be staged," Collins, of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, told the BBC. "How can Russia give confidence to FIFA and to the world that there will be proper anti-doping measures in place during the World Cup?" — AFP

CLEAN OLYMPIANS DESERVE A PROPER MEDAL CEREMONY

ATLANTA: Adam Nelson received his Olympic gold medal in the food court at Atlanta's airport. Now, let's give him - and all other clean athletes - the recognition they deserve. As more startling revelations came out Friday in the Russian doping scandal and an almost daily lineup of cheating athletes are nabbed through improved testing methods, the International Olympic Committee needs to send a symbolic but powerful message that it will honor those who do things the right way.

No matter how long it takes. Starting with the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang and the 2020 Summer Games in Tokyo, the IOC should hold official medal ceremonies for those athletes who were cheated out of their glory because competitors were taking performance-enhancing drugs.

We're talking about actual ceremonies, in the arena or stadium where their sport is being held, complete with a podium and flowers and flags

and national anthems, with thousands of fans cheering them on and billions from around the world watching on television.

For Nelson, that would mean awarding him a gold medal in Tokyo that he actually won in the shot put 16 years earlier, on the fields of Ancient Olympia at the 2004 Athens Games. It won't begin to make up for what he lost. But it's a good start.

"Anything they could do to recognize the athletes that were robbed of the moment would certainly go a long way toward repairing some of the damage that was done," Nelson said when reached by phone, not long after the release of a sickening report further detailing systematic doping in Russia that involved more than 1,000 athletes across more than 30 sports.

The IOC has taken baby steps to address this enormous stain on fair competition, most notably storing the doping samples it takes at each Olympics so they can be tested up to 10

years later using enhanced techniques that weren't available at the time.

Nelson is one of those who benefited, but he's hardly alone. So far, a total of 88 athletes from the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2012 London Games have turned up positive when further testing was conducted - more than half of them medalists, including five gold medalists. The IOC says ominously that many more positive tests are still expected from the retesting of those 4-year-old samples.

DESERVE EVEN MORE

All of this has led to a massive re-writing of the official results, and a redistribution of medals to athletes who were clean. They deserve even more. Think of those who initially finished outside the top three. They were denied a chance to step onto the podium, have a medal hung around their neck by a dignitary, watch proudly as their country's flag was raised above the arena. Those who received a belated gold lost out on the playing of their national anthem, a ritual that often brings tears to even the biggest stars.

All of this is easily rectified.

Bring them to the next Olympics. The IOC has no firm rules governing exactly how athletes should be awarded their reassigned medals. It leaves that up to the national Olympic committees, recommending that they invite dignitaries and the media and play the Olympic anthem.

Four Belgium women who were bumped up to gold in a 2008 track and field relay after the Russian runner tested positive got a rousing ceremony and standing ovation from a 40,000-strong crowd during a meet in Brussels three months ago.

For others, the medal handover wasn't nearly so glamorous. Nelson settled for silver at the 2004 Athens Olympics , only to learn more than eight years later than the competitor who beat him, Yuriy Bilonog of the Ukraine, had been caught doping by a later round of testing.

The IOC asked Nelson to return his silver medal before he received the gold. Rightfully skeptical, he refused to give up what he had until he got what was rightfully his. Finally, in what sounds like a hostage exchange, an arrangement was made in July 2013 with the US Olympic Committee.— AP



BRUSSELS: In this Sept. 9, 2016, file photo, Belgian runners Kim Gevaert, Elodie Ouedraogo, Olivia Borlee and Hanna Marien stand on the podium after receiving the gold medal for the Women's 4 x 100 meters relay at the 2008 Beijing Olympics during the Diamond League Memorial Van Damme athletics event at the King Baudouin stadium in Brussels. The Belgian team, initially winning silver, were moved up to gold after one runner on the Russian team tested positive for a banned substance. — AP

AUSTRALIA REGAIN CONFIDENCE FOR PAKISTAN SERIES

MELBOURNE: Lacking context, suspense and crowd enthusiasm, the Chappell-Hadlee series between Australia and New Zealand may not have generated the returns projected by its commerce-minded organisers.

The home side, however, enjoyed a windfall of confidence from the 3-0 series win which captain Steven Smith hopes will be banked for the tests against Pakistan starting this week in Brisbane.

Scarcely 20,000 fans turned up to the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Friday to watch the finale against New Zealand, a year after more than 90,000 packed the stadium for the World Cup final between the same teams.

With New Zealand's batsmen skittled for 147 in 36.1 overs, Australia won by 117 runs, bringing an unloved tournament jammed between two test series to a premature conclusion. Former players and pundits have long bemoaned the proliferation of one-day tournaments that jam up the international calendar and tend to offer little more than bragging rights to the winning team and revenues to the hosting cricket board.

The International Cricket Council is weighing proposals to inject relevance to the format, including making bilateral series serve as qualifiers for the quadrennial World Cup. "There's been a few proposals that have come up and you

want as much relevance for every series as possible," Smith told reporters after the Melbourne win.

Australia enjoy the top ranking in one-day cricket but selectors have often been loath to field their strongest teams. They sent an under-strength squad to South Africa, resting frontline pacemen Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood, who were duly hammered 5-0. Local media blamed the whitewash in South Africa in part for the humbling 2-1 test series loss at home to the Proteas. The South Africa one-day tournament was another that lacked any meaningful context, but Proteas captain Faf du Plessis said his side's victory gave them an edge

ahead of the highly anticipated test series. Smith will hope for the same spur against Pakistan, who they play in the first day-night test at the Gabba from Thursday. "Obviously it's going to be different in Brisbane against the pink ball and against a quality opposition like Pakistan, so we'll have to be at our best if we want to score some runs at there," he said. "It's been a great series for us and great for our confidence as well. "Winning is a lot better than losing and it becomes a bit of a habit as well. Hopefully we can keep up this habit for the rest of the summer."

Since being humiliated in Hobart to lose the South Africa test series with a game to spare, Smith's side have

bounced back with four straight wins, including the dead rubber test in Adelaide with a re-jigged side.

While in-form opener David Warner was man-of-the-series with two centuries against New Zealand, the return to form of pace spearhead Mitchell Starc is ominous for Pakistan. The left-armer was in full flight at the MCG, capturing three wickets and two with a pair of almost unplayable inswinging yorkers. "I think he's got better with every game he's played (and) I think he's getting back to his best," said Smith. "When he's (bowling yorkers) we know he's going pretty well, so hopefully we can see a big series against Pakistan." —Reuters

REBUILDING N ZEALAND PUNISHED FOR 'TREPIDATION': HESSON

MELBOURNE: New Zealand's rebuilding one-day international side played with "trepidation" against a resurgent Australia and their lack of intensity in the field contributed to a 3-0 series whitewash, Black Caps coach Mike Hesson said.

Australia, fired by another match-winning century from opener David Warner, completed the sweep with a 117-run rout of the touring side at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Friday.

That followed a pair of stinging losses for the Black Caps in Sydney and Canberra, magnifying a steep decline since Brendon McCullum's team contested the World Cup final against the same opponents last year.

"The first couple of games I'd describe them as a passive performance, especially in the field and with the ball," Hesson told reporters.

"There were some good signs (in Melbourne) with a more complete performance with the ball and in the field but we weren't able to back that up with the bat. "The energy and intensity in the field is something we've really instilled into whoever has come into the group and those first couple of games that was the most disappointing, that we didn't offer as much as we needed to in the field and didn't back up our bowlers enough.

"We haven't played well at all. We've played a side with a little bit of trepidation. It's exposed us in some areas that we knew a little bit about but it's shown us we've got plenty of room to move."

With Ross Taylor scratched from the tour to have eye surgery, opener Martin Guptill and all-rounder James Neesham were the only New Zealand batsmen to excel with the bat in Kane Williamson's team.

Opener Tom Latham, BJ Watling and all-rounder Mitchell Santner had dreadful series, all averaging under 12.

Pace spearhead Trent Boult battled hard for his six wickets but had precious little support until Melbourne, where left-arm spinner Santner and Colin de Grandhomme made belated contributions.

"We've lost 10 players from our side from a year ago and we've got some players there who are trying to find their feet in international cricket," said Hesson. "They've played against a very good side and some have shown glimpses and others have been found a little bit wanting in areas where we thought they'd be better in." New Zealand take on a newly-confident Bangladesh in another three-match one-day series from Dec. 26 in Christchurch before three T20s and a two-test series against the same side in January. — Reuters

HARTLEY RED-CARDED AFTER SIX MINUTES

PARIS: England captain Dylan Hartley was red-carded after just six minutes on the pitch as his Northampton Saints slumped to a 37-10 defeat to Leinster in the European Champions Cup on Friday.

Hartley, who had started on the bench following autumn international duty, replaced Mikey Haywood after 50 minutes for his 50th appearance in the tournament.

However, just six minutes later, the 30-year-old hooker was heading off in disgrace for aiming a wild punch at the head of Leinster flanker Sean O'Brien. As well as helping to condemn 2000 champions Northampton to a second defeat in three games in Pool 4 and allow Leinster cement top spot, the incident could dent Hartley's hopes of captaining the British and Irish Lions in New Zealand next year.

Northampton ended the game with 13 men when replacement forward George Pisi was yellow-carded for a high tackle.

"It's happening too much," said Saints director of rugby Jim Mallinder of his team's woeful disciplinary record. "The players don't do it on purpose but you have to be so careful now. We have spoken about it over the last few weeks and we have had our disciplinary issues and it continues to haunt us."

Leinster's new Irish star Garry Ringrose scored the only try of the first half after just two minutes when he sprinted clear following a clever shimmy and dummy from full-back Rob Kearney.

Skipper and winger Isa Nacewa popped over the conversion for 7-0 which soon became 10-0 for the three-time champions when the 34-year-old New Zealander kicked a penalty.

METRONOMIC BOOT

Northampton's only points of the first period came via a 20th-minute penalty from the metronomic boot of Stephen

Myler. Northampton were level at 10-10 in the 45th minute thanks to a try from Samoan winger Ahsee Tuala who finished off a move inspired by former Munster centre JJ Hanrahan.

Myler added the extras before Nacewa hit a monster penalty to restore Leinster's lead at 13-10.

That signalled the entrance of Hartley but he and his fellow forwards were soon over-powered when O'Brien was barged over the try line thanks to the supporting muscle of No8 Jamie Heaslip.

Nacewa again hit the extras for 20-10 before Hartley's brief appearance came to an end for his right-handed haymaker at the head of O'Brien.

Referee Jerome Garces had no hesitation in reaching for the red card as Hartley trotted off much to the dismay of watching England coach Eddie Jones.

Leinster scored a third try when debutant Rory O'Loughlin outjumped an inattentive Ben Foden to dot down a clever crossfield kick from Ross Byrne.

Nacewa missed the extras but Leinster soon made their one-man advantage count when Jamison Gibson-Park skipped through a weary Northampton defence for a 32-10 lead and a bonus point. Nacewa added the fifth try in the last minute.

On Saturday, defending champions Saracens will seek to make it 12 straight wins in Europe when they take on English Premiership rivals Sale in Pool 3.

Saracens have not lost in Europe since they were beaten 13-9 by Clermont in the 2015 semi-final. The other game in Pool 3 pitches Scarlets against Toulon.

Other top match-ups see Leicester, in Pool 1, face Munster in a re-run of the 2002 final. Top 14 leaders Clermont head to Belfast to face Ulster in Pool 5 while Toulouse will be seeking their first victory in Pool 2, away at Italians Zebre. —AFP



MUMBAI: India's captain Virat Kohli plays a shot on the third day of the fourth Test cricket match between India and England at the Wankhede stadium in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP

KOHLI, VIJAY PUT INDIA AHEAD AGAINST ENGLAND

MUMBAI: India captain Virat Kohli maintained his red-hot form as he and Murali Vijay struck fine centuries to help the hosts overtake England on day three of the fourth test at the Wankhede Stadium yesterday.

The hosts, leading 2-0 in the five-match series, reached 451 for seven at the close, 51 runs ahead of the touring side.

Captain Kohli was unbeaten on 147 at stumps with Jayant Yadav on 30 not out. The 28-year-old Kohli brought up his 15th test hundred and second of the series and celebrated with a leap in the air, bringing the 22,000 crowd at the stadium overlooking the Arabian Sea to their feet.

Kohli batted majestically, rarely looked in trouble, and hit 17 fours with sublime stroke-making. He shared crucial stands with the lower-order batsmen - 57 with Ravindra Jadeja for the seventh wicket and an unbroken 87 with Yadav.

Vijay and Kohli, who also passed 1,000 test runs in 2016 and 4,000 in his career, added 116 for the third wicket before the former was out for 136, hitting a full toss from Adil Rashid straight back to the leg-spinner.

England successfully reviewed the umpire's not out decision to dismiss Karun Nair lbw for 13 off Moeen Ali before part-time off-spinner Joe Root picked up the wickets of Parthiv Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin in four balls.

India, who were comfortably placed on 262-2,

| SCOREBOARD | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|-----|
| MUMBAI, India: Scoreboard at stumps yesterday on the third day of the fourth test between India and England at Wankhede Stadium. | | | |
| England 1st Innings: 400 | India 1st Innings (Overnight: 146-1) | Extras: (5b, 7lb, 2w) | 14 |
| Lokesh Rahul b Ali | 24 | TOTAL: (for 7 wickets) | 451 |
| Murali Vijay c and b Rashid | 136 | Overs: 142. | |
| Cheteshwar Pujara b Ball | 47 | Fall of wickets: 1-39, 2-146, 3-262, 4-279, 5-305, 6-307, 7-364. | |
| Virat Kohli not out | 147 | Still to bat: Umesh Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar. | |
| Karun Nair lbw b Ali | 13 | Bowling: James Anderson 15-5-43-0, Chris Woakes 8-2-34-0 (1w), Moeen Ali 45-5-139-2, Adil Rashid 44-5-152-2, Jake Ball 14-5-29-1 (1w), Ben Stokes 8-2-24-0, Joe Root 8-2-18-2. | |
| Parthiv Patel c Bairstow b Root | 15 | Series: India leads 2-0. | |
| Ravichandran Ashwin c Jennings b Root | 0 | | |
| Ravindra Jadeja c Buttler b Rashid | 25 | | |
| Jayant Yadav not out | 30 | | |

were reduced to 307-6 before Kohli and Jadeja propped them up. Jadeja was out to Rashid for 25. The hosts could have been in more trouble if Rashid had held on to a return catch from Kohli, then on 68. Root also dropped Yadav on eight off James Anderson, compounding England's problems. Yadav was relieved again on 28 when replays showed he had edged Moeen to wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow down the leg side but England did not have any reviews left to challenge the umpire's not out decision.

Resuming on 146 for one, the hosts suffered

an early jolt when Cheteshwar Pujara (47) was bowled by the second ball of the morning shouldering arms to paceman Jake Ball.

However, it proved to be the only success for the English bowlers in the morning as Vijay and Kohli flayed the attack. Vijay reached his second century of the series with a single against off-spinner Moeen and hit 10 fours and three sixes in his knock. He was given out lbw to Rashid on 116 but managed to overturn the decision on review as replays suggested he got an inside edge before the ball struck his pad. — Reuters

TARASOVA AND MOROZOV CLINCH MAIDEN CROWN

MARSEILLE: Russia's Evgenia Tarasova and Vladimir Morozov won their first major title on Friday when they clinched the pairs crown at the Grand Prix figure skating final, sounding out a warning for the 2018 Olympics.

In their four-year partnership, their best previous performances had been bronze medals at the 2015 and 2016 European championships.

But on Friday, they triumphed with 213.85 points, winning the free programme ahead of Canadian favourites Meagan Duhamel and Eric Radford.

Skating to Music by English rocker John Miles, they obtained 135.25 points in the free programme with the Canadians on 134.55.

"Obviously, you always have the goal to win, but we focused on skating clean," said Tarasova.

"We've had two weeks of good preparation and worked very hard and this is the result. This victory is a big step forward for us. The judges now look at us as potential winners and that is important."

World champions Duhamel and Radford, who finished third overall behind China's Yu Xiaoyu and Zhang Hao, paid

dearly for a fall on a triple axel.

In the women's individual event, Russia's world and European champion Evgenia Medvedeva started her Grand Prix final defence by taking the lead in the short programme.

The 17-year-old scored 79.21 points ahead of Canada's Kaetlyn Osmond on 75.54. "Setting records is not important to me, I'm not chasing after them," said Medvedeva.

"I just want to show what my coaches have taught me and the work we do every day in practice. Today I'm happy with my performance, but there is still room to grow." In ice dance, Canada's Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir marked their return after two years with a scintillating performance to a soundtrack of hip-hop, blues and Prince standards.

They beat the world record with 80.50 points to take the overall lead after the sort programme ahead of Maia Shibutani and Alex Shibutani of the United States and French pair Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron.

Virtue and Moir were the 2010 Olympic champions on home ice in Vancouver and silver medalists in 2014 in Sochi. —AFP



MARSEILLE: Evgenia Tarasova and Vladimir Morozov of Russia pose with the gold medal after winning the Pairs Program during ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Marseille, southern France, Friday. — AP



PARIS: England captain Dylan Hartley was sent off just six minutes after coming on as a substitute.

HOUSTON PROMOTES MAJOR APPLEWHITE TO HEAD COACH

HOUSTON: The University of Houston didn't end up needing to go far in replacing head coach Tom Herman. Major Applewhite, who served as Herman's offensive coordinator the last two seasons, was promoted to the job on Friday. It will be the first head coaching job for the 38-year-old Applewhite.

"We had our sights set on a focused competitor who has demonstrated success and possesses a deep connection to college and high school football in the great state of Texas," Houston athletic director Hunter Yurachek said. "As this process was completed, it was clearly evident the only individual to offer our position to was Major Applewhite and he was

indeed the right man to lead our program," Herman recently left Houston to become the coach at Texas after two years with the Cougars and there was speculation Houston might hire Alabama offensive coordinator Lane Kiffin. Instead, Houston went with Applewhite, a Louisiana native who nonetheless has deep ties and familiarity with Texas.

"Living in the best state for high school football is a true blessing and advantage for our program and I cannot be more thankful for the support of our outstanding high school coaches from throughout the state," he said.

The Cougars meet San Diego State in the Las Vegas Bowl on Dec. 17. Applewhite

steps into a program that has had lot of success in the last 10 years and has become a launching pad for coaches. Art Briles went 34-28 with a Conference USA title at Houston from 2003-07 before moving on to Baylor. Kevin Sumlin went 35-17 from 2008-11 before leaving for Texas A&M. Herman went 22-4 with an American Athletic Conference championship in 2015 and was perhaps the hottest coaching commodity during his two-year tenure at Houston. Under Applewhite's direction, the Cougars gained more than 500 yards 11 times and passed the 600-yard mark four times. The offense piled up 40 points 12 times and scored at least 50 points five other occasions in the past two seasons.

EXPLOSIVE PASSING

"It's no coincidence that the success UH football has achieved over the past two seasons happened with Major Applewhite running our offense," Houston President Renu Khator said. "His energy and creativity are responsible for one of the most explosive passing games in college football and I am confident that as our head coach he will continue our upward trajectory as a nationally relevant athletics program."

Applewhite spent seven seasons as an assistant at Texas before joining Herman's staff. He was the co-offensive coordinator

in his last four seasons with the Longhorns after working as assistant head coach for the first three seasons. The running backs had plenty of success under Applewhite's guidance with their best season coming in 2011 when the group combined for 2,300 yards rushing and 23 touchdowns. A year later the team's running backs combined for almost 2,000 yards rushing.

His time at Texas wasn't without problems. Applewhite was disciplined in 2009 for what Texas called an "inappropriate" conduct with a student trainer on a bowl trip. Applewhite's pay was frozen for a year and he was ordered to undergo counseling. He was later promoted to offensive coordinator.—AP

WAKE FOREST OUTLASTS DENVER TO REACH NCAA SOCCER FINAL

HOUSTON: After a frustrating first half that saw his team stymied by a resilient Denver defense, Wake Forest coach Bobby Muuss' message to his team was to keep going.

"If we're enjoying playing, we'll be victorious tonight," Muuss said. Following a dominant second half and overtime, Ian Harkes broke in the 102nd minute and Wake Forest beat Denver 2-1 in double overtime Friday to advance to the College Cup title game.

Wake Forest (19-3-2) will face Stanford in the championship today. Stanford beat North Carolina 10-9 on penalty kicks after the teams failed to score in regulation and two overtime periods. The Demon Deacons reached the championship game for the first time since winning the 2007 title.

Harkes calmly slotted his low finish past goalkeeper Nick Gardner into the bottom corner to cap an impressive Demon Deacons counter attack. Wake Forest had plenty of opportunities to seal the victory prior to Harkes' goal, outshooting Denver 14-2 in the second half and overtime.

"I didn't really expect it to be off the counter-attack," Harkes said. Wake Forest's Jon Bakero opened the scoring in the seventh minute. Bakero took possession from Denver defender Graham Smith 30 yards from goal in the center of the field, turned to his right and delivered a curling effort past Gardner.

Trailing for only the fourth time this season, the Pioneers (20-1-3) responded 10 minutes later. Graham Smith sent a lofted pass over the defense to forward Andre Shinyashiki, who pounced on a rebound to equalize after his first shot was saved by goalkeeper Alec Ferrell. It was Shinyashiki's team-high ninth goal of the season.

After halftime, Muuss credited his team for settling the game down and taking control.

"They're tight games," Muuss said. "No one wants to make mistakes. I thought they did a really great job of staying compact."

The Pioneers outshot Wake Forest 5-4 in the first half, 5-4, but the Demon Deacons settled the game down and took control from the start of the second half.

"I think there was a little bit of frustration today," Harkes said. "We need to settle the game down. In the first half, it was a lot of back and forth."

The Demon Deacons had the best chances in the second half. Bakero took a cross from the right wing and hit a shot off the crossbar, while Harkes had a shot in the final minute go straight at Gardner.

The winner in the second overtime came off the counter-attack following a Denver corner kick. Bakero turned past a defender near midfield and started a 3-on-1 counter with Harkes to his right. "There was just one defender there and I took a big touch," Bakero said. "I tried to take him to the left to create space for Ian." The loss was Denver's first of the season and first since losing to SMU in the NCAA Tournament last season.

"I'm really proud of my group," senior midfielder Sam Hamilton said. "I think we took the program to a place it's never been, which is not an easy thing to do. We built a belief for the program to feed off of."

Muuss coached and recruited Denver's Jamie Franks to play for the Demon Deacons in 2005 as an assistant. Muuss then took his first head coaching job in Denver in 2007. Franks joined his former coach's staff and became the head coach of the Pioneers when Muuss moved to Wake Forest.

"We had a moment before the game underneath the tunnel that was special," Franks said. "He's my mentor." — AP



DETROIT: Columbus Blue Jackets center Alexander Wennberg (10), of Sweden, knocks the puck away from Detroit Red Wings defenseman Niklas Kronwall (55), also of Sweden, during the first period of an NHL hockey game Friday, in Detroit. — AP

BLUE JACKETS WIN FIFTH STRAIGHT OVER RED WINGS

DETROIT: Brandon Dubinsky scored a tiebreaking goal in the second period and the surging Columbus Blue Jackets won their fifth straight game, 4-1 over the Detroit Red Wings on Friday. Lukas Sedlak got his first NHL goal for the Blue Jackets, who have earned at least a point in 12 of their last 13 games. Cam Atkinson contributed a short-handed goal in the first period for Columbus. Dylan Larkin's power-play goal in the second was the only scoring of the night for the Red Wings. Sergei Bobrovsky had 32 saves for the Blue Jackets. Sam Gagner scored into an empty net with 13.9 seconds remaining. Detroit goalie Petr Mrazek was pulled in favor of Jimmy Howard after Sedlak's goal made it 3-1 in the second.

DUCKS 3, SHARKS 2

Hampus Lindholm got his first goal of the season with 5:38 remaining, helping Anaheim beat San Jose after blowing a two-goal lead. Goals by Brent Burns and Kevin Labanc brought San Jose back after Rickard Rakell and Antoine Vermette scored in the first period for Anaheim. The 22-year-old Lindholm held out this season before signing a six-year contract extension in late October. He didn't play his first game until Nov. 9 and got his first goal in 15 contests. Jonathan Bernier had 22 saves for the Ducks and withstood a frantic final attack after San Jose pulled its goalie with 2 minutes left. Martin Jones stopped 29 shots for the Sharks.

RANGERS 1, BLACKHAWKS 0

Nick Holden scored 55 seconds into overtime, Anti Raanta made 26 saves against his former team and the New York Rangers beat the Chicago Blackhawks 1-0 on Friday night. Derek Stepan passed from the boards to a streaking Holden in the middle of the ice, and he beat Scott Darling on the stick side for his fourth goal of the season. Darling was going for his second straight shutout while subbing for injured starter Corey Crawford but had to settle for another solid performance. Raanta, who made his NHL debut with Chicago in 2013 and played for the Blackhawks for two seasons before he was traded to New York, improved to 15-0-3 in 20 career appearances at the United Center. The 27-year-old Raanta had 17 saves in Thursday's 2-1 victory at Winnipeg, and coach Alain Vigneault opted to give him a second straight start over Henrik Lundqvist because of his recent play and his success in Chicago.

WILD 3, OILERS 2, SO

Eric Staal scored in the sixth round of a shootout and Minnesota beat Edmonton. Matt Dumba and Jason Zucker scored in regulation for Minnesota, which has won three straight. Wild goalie Devan Dubnyk made 25 saves. He entered with a league-best .946 save percentage and 1.65 goals-against average. Leon Draisaitl and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins had goals for the Oilers, whose four-game losing streak began with a 2-1 home overtime loss to the Wild last Sunday.

CAPITALS 4, SABRES 1

T.J. Oshie and Marcus Johansson each scored a goal, Philipp Grubauer made 27 saves and Washington beat Buffalo for its third straight win. Jakub Vrana and John Carlson also scored, helping Washington beat Buffalo for the third time in 15 days. Kyle Okposo had a goal and Robin Lehner made 25 saves for Buffalo. The Sabres have lost three of their last four.

BLUES 4, DEVILS 1

Robby Fabbri scored twice and Vladimir Tarasenko had three assists, lifting St. Louis over New Jersey. Tarasenko had eight of St. Louis' 32 shots on goal, while Ryan Reaves and Jaden Schwartz also scored for the Blues. Jake Allen stopped 20 shots and won for the ninth time in 10 starts. Keith Kinkaid had 28 saves for New Jersey, and PA Parenteau had a goal. — AP

NHL results/standings

Anaheim 3, San Jose 2; NY Rangers 1, Chicago 0 (OT); Minnesota 3, Edmonton 2 (SO); Columbus 4, Detroit 1; St. Louis 4, New Jersey 1; Washington 4, Buffalo 1.

| Western Conference | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|--|----|----|---|-----|----|----|
| Central Division | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | L | OTL | GF | GA | PTS | | | | | | | |
| Chicago | 17 | 8 | 4 | 78 | 69 | 38 | Ottawa | 16 | 9 | 2 | 68 | 69 | 34 |
| St. Louis | 16 | 8 | 4 | 78 | 76 | 36 | Boston | 15 | 11 | 2 | 68 | 66 | 32 |
| Minnesota | 14 | 8 | 4 | 72 | 55 | 32 | Tampa Bay | 14 | 12 | 2 | 78 | 77 | 30 |
| Winnipeg | 13 | 14 | 3 | 78 | 87 | 29 | Detroit | 13 | 12 | 3 | 70 | 76 | 29 |
| Nashville | 12 | 10 | 4 | 77 | 74 | 28 | Florida | 12 | 12 | 4 | 66 | 75 | 28 |
| Dallas | 11 | 11 | 6 | 72 | 89 | 28 | Buffalo | 10 | 11 | 6 | 56 | 72 | 26 |
| Colorado | 10 | 14 | 1 | 56 | 75 | 21 | Toronto | 10 | 10 | 5 | 74 | 80 | 25 |
| Pacific Division | | | | | | | Metropolitan Division | | | | | | |
| Anaheim | 14 | 9 | 5 | 76 | 74 | 33 | NY Rangers | 19 | 9 | 1 | 100 | 70 | 39 |
| Edmonton | 14 | 11 | 5 | 90 | 83 | 33 | Pittsburgh | 17 | 7 | 3 | 93 | 81 | 37 |
| Calgary | 15 | 13 | 2 | 75 | 84 | 32 | Columbus | 16 | 5 | 4 | 81 | 54 | 36 |
| San Jose | 15 | 11 | 1 | 64 | 58 | 31 | Washington | 16 | 7 | 3 | 69 | 59 | 35 |
| Los Angeles | 13 | 11 | 2 | 67 | 69 | 28 | Philadelphia | 16 | 10 | 3 | 96 | 92 | 35 |
| Vancouver | 12 | 13 | 2 | 65 | 79 | 26 | New Jersey | 12 | 9 | 6 | 69 | 77 | 30 |
| Arizona | 8 | 13 | 5 | 58 | 82 | 21 | Carolina | 11 | 10 | 6 | 66 | 72 | 28 |
| Eastern Conference | | | | | | | NY Islanders | | | | | | |
| Atlantic Division | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Montreal | 18 | 6 | 3 | 81 | 61 | 39 | Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L) | | | | | | |



HOUSTON: Denver's Karsten Hanlin (17) tries to stop Wake Forest's Alex Knox (18) from getting control of the ball during the first half of the NCAA soccer men's College Cup semifinal Friday, in Houston. — AP

CLOCK TICKING ON BECKHAM'S MIAMI PLAN: MLS COMMISSIONER

TORONTO: David Beckham's protracted efforts to bring a Major League Soccer team to Miami are coming up against a deadline, league commissioner Don Garber said Friday.

Beckham announced nearly three years ago that he intended to bring a team to the South Florida city, exercising an option he had to create a new franchise.

But the former England, Manchester United and Real Madrid midfielder has faced problems finding a stadium deal raising questions over the viability of the project.

MLS's board are meeting on Thursday to discuss further expansion plans for the league and the Beckham situation will be on the agenda. "There is a deadline on the Miami deal. I am not going to share that deadline, it is an agreement we have with David and (his business partner) Simon Fuller," Garber told reporters. "But ... we need to resolve the Miami situation so that we can go forward with our expansion plans for (expansion) teams 25-28 because they are team 24 and if they are not going to be 24 there are going to be a lot of things that need to move around and it is something we will discuss at our board meeting," he said.

"We may or may not come out of that meeting with anything definitive that we will announce publicly as it relates to Miami," added Garber. MLS will add its 21st and 22nd teams next season with Atlanta United and Minnesota United joining the league. A new Los Angeles franchise will join in 2018 with Beckham's Miami team projected to be the

next in line. "There is a timetable and we continue to work with our ownership group because we want a team in Miami. We try to do everything we can to ensure we have the right recipe for success as we are building clubs that we would like to be there for the rest of time," said Garber.

"We continue to be very engaged there. We have reached agreement on land, we have investor groups, we have all sorts of community issues ... zoning issues and it is all happening in real time," he said.

After announcing his plan in February 2014, Beckham had proposals for stadiums at two different waterfront sites rejected by local politicians. A plan to build a stadium next to the Miami Marlins baseball park also fell through and Beckham's group are now working on a site in the Overtown district of the city. — AFP



David Beckham

ABUSE SCANDAL - WHAT WE KNOW

LONDON: The sex abuse scandal that has rocked English football's foundations has seen new revelations every day since they first surfaced a fortnight ago.

Here AFP Sports takes a look at what we know so far:

COACHES ACCUSED

At least seven youth coaches or scouts-three of whom are now dead-have been accused of sexual abuse, although the National Police Chiefs Council revealed on Friday there are 83 potential suspects. Two of those still alive-former Crewe Alexandra youth coach Barry Bennell, who has served three jail terms for sex offences, and Northern Irishman Jim McCafferty, who served as kitman and a scout at Celtic-have been charged. Bennell, who also had links with Manchester City, Stoke and Leeds, was found unconscious in a hotel near London before being charged with eight counts of sex abuse whilst McCafferty spoke to the Irish Mirror as he wanted to 'cleanse his soul' before walking into a police station where he was subsequently charged although with non-football linked offences committed in Ulster.

CHELSEA AND SAINTS IN EYE OF THE STORM

Some of the biggest names in English football such as Chelsea and Manchester City figure among the 98 clubs from all levels the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) say have been 'impacted'. The present Chelsea regime has attracted a welter of criticism for paying compensation to former youth player Gary Johnson-who was abused by ex-Chelsea scout Eddie Heath in the 1970s when the club was under different ownership-but with a gagging order attached in 2015. He broke that condition to go public and the club issued a statement 'apologising profusely' for his suffering. Another Premier League club who are in the sights of former players is Southampton. Around a dozen have claimed they were abused by former youth coach Bob Higgins with some taking legal action against the Saints. Higgins was found not guilty of sex abuse in 1992. Three years earlier, police and social services issued a joint letter warning

he was dangerous to children. He has yet to comment.

NUMBER OF VICTIMS

The number of victims, according to the NPCC, still stands at around 350 although that figure could well rise as 'Operation Hydrant'-the overall investigation into historic sex abuse covering all walks of life-sifts through the allegations, "with processes to determine if the referral relates to a victim or a witness and whether the information received is new or a duplication of information already received".

FA COVER-UP?

Present FA chairman Greg Clarke doesn't believe so although he admits people may have preferred to turn a blind eye to the rumours. The FA do not emerge well from the 1997 Channel Four documentary exposing sex abuse in football dismissing the allegations with a 'no comment'. However, four years later they launched a review into child protection at football clubs led by an eminent specialist, Professor Celia Brackenbridge. Meant to last four years it was abruptly halted in 2003. The researchers criticised the clubs' attitude and added the clubs were at loggerheads with the FA over the 'importance of the issue'. Clarke, who has only been in the job for a few months, has launched a review headed by an eminent lawyer to uncover how much the FA knew about the allegations raised down the years in what he has described as being the biggest crisis in English football that he could recall.

INVESTIGATIONS GROW AS SCANDAL WIDENS

Aside from the FA review, such is the breadth of the scandal that 21 of the United Kingdom's 45 territorial police forces are holding investigations. The NPCC said on Friday every call or allegation was being acted upon as quickly as possible but given the number of claims not all could be dealt with immediately. "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," they said. —AFP

CONTE WANTS CHELSEA TO UNDERLINE TITLE CREDENTIALS

LONDON: Antonio Conte has called on Chelsea to underline their status as favourites for the Premier League title with an dominant display against West Bromwich Albion today.

Conte's side are three points clear at the top after a blistering run of eight successive victories including last weekend's impressive triumph at title rivals Manchester City.

The Blues have scored 22 goals and conceded just two in their winning streak, but Chelsea boss Conte believes he will have a clearer picture of his team's title chances at the end of the busy Christmas programme.

Pointing out to his players that Chelsea started the season as also-rans in the title race according to many pundits, Conte called on them to prove they

can cope with the pressure of leading from the front by seeing off Albion at Stamford Bridge.

"It's difficult to accept (being favourites) because we have played only 14 games," Conte said. "We started as underdogs this season, but I suppose it's normal if you're playing good football and winning a lot of games.

"It's important to continue, that from this win we don't lose our hunger." On paper, Chelsea have a golden opportunity to cement pole position heading into the new year as their fixtures after the West Brom clash are against Sunderland, Crystal Palace, Bournemouth and Stoke City. But Conte stressed the importance of focusing only on the next opponent and demanded his players show their commitment by playing with high inten-

sity in training. "It's always difficult to say if these five games are a great opportunity," Conte said. "This league has taught me that every game is very tough. "If you don't face every game with great concentration and preparation you can find yourself in trouble.

"Today is the type of game we can find difficult if we don't put the same concentration, the same focus, that we had in the previous games.

COMPELLING

"The best reply from my players is to be focused every day during the training session. "If you have a good training session you show me that you are focused for the game. "It's important to talk with the players, but the reply in training and on the pitch is important."

Conte insisted "January is far away" as he fended off transfer window questions amid speculation of an audacious bid for Arsenal forward Alexis Sanchez.

Chelsea midfielder Cesc Fabregas has been linked with a move, but the Spaniard produced a compelling performance against City and Conte has been delighted with his recent improvement after a poor start to the season.

Asked if Fabregas provided an example for the whole squad with his composure in bidding his time then taking his chance, Conte said: "For sure, I want this.

"If there is good competition, great competition, this is very important. "If I haven't a problem for the decision and it's always the same line-up, that's not good. "It means that our level, our squad is improving. It's important to continue

this challenge."

Albion shouldn't be underestimated by Conte's men as Tony Pulis's side will arrive in west London in confident mood after winning three of their last four matches. Pulis, known for his conservative game-plans, has sparked the Albion surge by playing a more expansive style of late. But that attacking philosophy will be tested by fixtures against Chelsea, Manchester United and Arsenal in the next few weeks.

"Let's get through the tough Christmas period, with difficult games coming up, starting with Chelsea on Sunday," Pulis said.

"Then we've got Swansea, Man United and Arsenal too. They're really tough games, great games to play, full houses over the festive period." — AFP

MAN UNITED AND SPURS IN SCRAMBLE TO STAY IN TOUCH

LONDON: The threat of a long, dark winter hangs over Jose Mourinho's Manchester United as they prepare to welcome Tottenham Hotspur to Old Trafford in the Premier League today.

Without a home win in four league games, United trail fifth-place Tottenham by six points and will be left with a chasm to bridge just to secure a Champions League place if they lose.

Their preparations have been disturbed by Thursday's Europa League trip to Ukraine, where they beat Zorya Luhansk 2-0 to secure a last 32 slot, but Paul Pogba says it cannot serve as an excuse.

"When you're playing those competitions, you're playing every three days," the France midfielder told MUTV. "We have the team to change and be ready. We have to be ready for those games. When you prepare in pre-season, it's to play those games every three days.

"We know how hard it is to play against Tottenham. We're playing at home, where we didn't win for four games, with four draws, so we just want to win this game and get to the top of the league."

Although its transport implications have provided unwelcome complications for Mourinho, the Europa League has given United some rare moments of positivity in recent weeks.

It has been particularly kind to Henrikh Mkhitaryan, who temporarily disappeared from view following his close-season switch from Borussia Dortmund. The Armenian playmaker shone in the 4-0 win over Feyenoord and opened his account for the club with a fine goal on Thursday, having inspired United to a 4-1 League Cup win over West Ham United in between.

With United having scored just seven goals in their last eight league games a run that has yielded a solitary win-he seems increasingly integral to Mourinho's hopes of salvaging the season.

"We know how good he is," Pogba said. "You just have to be confident and now he's playing more, he has more games in his legs. "He is just getting going."

MOURINHO 'STILL SPECIAL'

Having recently endured a sequence of one victory in 10 matches in all competitions, Tottenham can sympathise with United's struggles.

Their sticky patch ended their Champions League campaign before it had really begun and saw them slip seven points below leaders Chelsea in the title race. But they will travel north energised by two handsome victories, having crushed Swansea City 5-0 last weekend before sinking CSKA Moscow 3-1 in mid-week to join United in the Europa League.

The stunning form of Mourinho's former club Chelsea under Antonio Conte has only deepened the gloom surrounding the Portuguese, but Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino remains an ardent admirer.

"For me, he is the Special One and will always be the Special One," said Pochettino, who saw his side outclass United 3-0 at White Hart Lane when the teams last met in April. "For me, he was a reference when I started my career at Espanyol. He was always very kind to me and opened his door. "I always assess my colleagues and try to be objective. I really believe he is one of the best.

"Sometimes you struggle a bit. It's not easy to arrive at a new club, set up ideas and philosophy, but for me he was, is and will be one of the best managers in football history." Pochettino will once again be without winger Erik Lamela, who remains in Argentina attending to his hospitalised brother, while striker Vincent Janssen has an ankle injury. But defensive lynchpin Toby Alderweireld is in line to make his first start in eight weeks following a knee problem, having come off the bench against CSKA at Wembley on Wednesday.

United are also expected to welcome back a key central defender after Eric Bailly made his return from a knee injury in Ukraine. Bailly's centre-back partner Chris Smalling and Luke Shaw remain out, but Michael Carrick and Antonio Valencia could feature after being rested for the trip to Odessa. — AFP



CLEVELAND: Miami Heat's Derrick Williams, right, passes around Cleveland Cavaliers' Kyrie Irving and Kevin Love in the first half of an NBA basketball game Friday, in Cleveland. — AP

JAMES MOVES INTO 9TH ON NBA SCORING LIST AS CAVS TOP HEAT

CLEVELAND: P LeBron James scored 27 points to move into ninth place on the NBA scoring list, and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Miami Heat 114-84 on Friday. James passed Elvin Hayes on a driving layup with 6:58 remaining and has 27,315 career points. The four-time MVP was removed about a minute later and received a loud ovation from the Cleveland crowd. Kevin Love, a game-time decision because of back spasms, scored a team-high 28 points and had 15 rebounds for the Cavaliers. He missed the morning shootaround but was in the lineup after warming up on the court about an hour before tip-off. Kyrie Irving added 23 points for the Cavs. They have won three straight after losing three in a row. Derrick Williams scored 17 points to lead the short-handed Heat. They have lost four straight.

ROCKETS 102, THUNDER 99

James Harden scored 21 points, and the Houston Rockets overcame Russell Westbrook's seventh consecutive triple-double to beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 102-99. Harden also had 12 assists and nine rebounds to help the Rockets win their fifth straight. Houston withstood Harden's 6-for-23 shooting effort. Westbrook finished with 27 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists. He has the longest triple-double streak since Michael Jordan had seven straight in 1989. The most in a row is nine by Philadelphia's Wilt Chamberlain in March 1968. It was Westbrook's 12th triple-double this season and the 49th of his career. He is the NBA's active leader in the category and ranks sixth overall. The Thunder had won the previous six games during Westbrook's triple-double binge.

RAPTORS 101, CELTICS 94

Kyle Lowry scored 21 of his season-high 34 points in the second half for Toronto. Toronto erased an eight-point halftime deficit and led by as many as 11 in the fourth quarter. Boston pulled within four in the final minute, but Al Horford fouled Lowry on a 3-point attempt with 30 seconds to play. Lowry made all three free throws to help close out the victory. DeMar DeRozan added 24 points, and Norman Powell had 20. Horford and Avery Bradley each had 19 points to lead Boston. Celtics point guard Isaiah Thomas sat out his second straight game with a strained right groin.

PISTONS 117, TIMBERWOLVES 90

Andre Drummond had 22 points and 22 rebounds for his second straight 20-20 game and Detroit cruised past Minnesota. Marcus Morris had 15 points and seven rebounds and the Pistons had their way with Minnesota's struggling defense, hitting 14 of 29 3-pointers. Andrew Wiggins scored 16 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 14 points and 12 rebounds

for the Wolves. They have lost seven of their last eight games.

MAVERICKS 111, PACERS 103

Wesley Matthews matched a season high with 26 points, Harrison Barnes had 25 and Dallas beat Indiana for just its third win in 15 games. Two nights after a listless second half in a 31-point home loss to Sacramento prompted a team meeting, the Mavericks started the third quarter with a 10-2 run that gave them a double-digit lead. Matthews outscored the Pacers by himself during a 32-11 spurt that turned a 50-42 deficit into a 74-61 lead. The shooting guard had 16 points during the run, capped by a 3-pointer. Paul George had 22 points for the Pacers.

HAWKS 114, BUCKS 110

Dennis Schroder scored a career-high 33 points and Atlanta rallied from 20 down in the second half to beat Milwaukee. Paul Millsap added 23 points and 14 rebounds, and Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 18 points. The Hawks ended a seven-game losing streak Wednesday night with a win over Miami. Jabari Parker scored 27 points for Milwaukee.

HORNETS 109, MAGIC 88

Nic Batum and Michael Kidd-Gilchrist each had 16 points, and Charlotte routed Orlando for its third straight victory. Kemba Walker had 15 points in limited action, and Ramon Sessions and Jeremy Lamb each scored 12 off the bench. Batum missed out on a chance at a triple-double because Charlotte's starters didn't play in the fourth quarter with the game out of hand. He had nine rebounds and seven assists. Evan Fournier had 14 points for Orlando.

SUNS 119, LAKERS 115

Eric Bledsoe had 30 points and nine assists, Leandro Barbosa added 21 points and Phoenix ended its three-game losing streak with a victory over slumping Los Angeles. Devin Booker had 15 points before fouling out for the Suns, who hit a season-high 13 3-pointers and withstood a late rally by the short-handed Lakers. Lou Williams hit six 3-pointers and scored 35 points in another monster game off the bench for the Lakers, who have lost five straight after a promising start to their first season since Kobe Bryant retired. Los Angeles has faltered during a busy portion of its December schedule while playing without four injured regulars: D'Angelo Russell, Nick Young, Tarik Black and Jose Calderon. Alex Len had 14 points and 13 rebounds, but the Suns blew most of an 18-point lead in the second half. Phoenix hung on for just its seventh victory of the season after losing five of its previous six.

KNICKS 103, KINGS 100

Carmelo Anthony scored 33 points, including two free throws with 14.8 seconds remaining, and New York held on to beat Sacramento for its fifth victory in six games. Kristaps Porzingis added 17 points and 10 rebounds for New York. Brandon Jennings scored 13 in place of injured Derrick Rose, and the Knicks beat the Kings for the second time in six days. The Kings missed multiple shots in the waning moments, including an uncontested driving layup by DeMarcus Cousins with 22 seconds left that would have given Sacramento the lead. Rudy Gay missed a potential tying 3-pointer with 3.9 seconds remaining, and Cousins also missed a desperation heave from beyond midcourt that hit the rim at the buzzer. Cousins finished with 28 points, 11 rebounds and six assists. — AP

NBA results/standings

Dallas 111, Indiana 103; Atlanta 114, Milwaukee 110; Houston 102, Oklahoma City 99; Detroit 117, Minnesota 90; Cleveland 114, Miami 84; Toronto 101, Boston 94; Charlotte 109, Orlando 88.

| Eastern Conference | | | | | Western Conference | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|-----|--------------------|----|----|------|------|
| Atlantic Division | | | | | Northwest Division | | | | |
| | W | L | PCT | GB | | | | | |
| Toronto | 16 | 7 | .696 | - | Oklahoma City | 14 | 9 | .609 | - |
| Boston | 13 | 10 | .565 | 3 | Utah | 14 | 10 | .583 | 0.5 |
| NY Knicks | 13 | 10 | .565 | 3 | Portland | 12 | 12 | .500 | 2.5 |
| Brooklyn | 6 | 15 | .286 | 9 | Denver | 8 | 15 | .348 | 6 |
| Philadelphia | 5 | 18 | .217 | 11 | Minnesota | 6 | 17 | .261 | 8 |
| Central Division | | | | | Pacific Division | | | | |
| Cleveland | 16 | 5 | .762 | - | Golden State | 20 | 3 | .870 | - |
| Chicago | 12 | 10 | .545 | 4.5 | LA Clippers | 16 | 7 | .696 | 4 |
| Milwaukee | 11 | 10 | .524 | 5 | LA Lakers | 10 | 15 | .400 | 11 |
| Detroit | 13 | 12 | .520 | 5 | Sacramento | 8 | 14 | .364 | 11.5 |
| Indiana | 11 | 12 | .478 | 6 | Phoenix | 7 | 16 | .304 | 13 |
| Southeast Division | | | | | Southwest Division | | | | |
| Charlotte | 14 | 9 | .609 | - | San Antonio | 18 | 5 | .783 | - |
| Atlanta | 12 | 12 | .500 | 2.5 | Houston | 16 | 7 | .696 | 2 |
| Orlando | 10 | 14 | .417 | 4.5 | Memphis | 16 | 8 | .667 | 2.5 |
| Washington | 8 | 13 | .381 | 5 | New Orleans | 7 | 16 | .304 | 11 |
| Miami | 7 | 16 | .304 | 7 | Dallas | 5 | 17 | .227 | 12.5 |



SUITA: Club America's Oribe Peralta, right, and team head coach Ricardo La Volpe, left, attend the official press conference at the FIFA Club World Cup soccer tournament at Suita City Football Stadium in Suita, western Japan, yesterday. Club America will fight against Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors today. — AP

CAMPBELL LATE SHOW GETS PALACE OUT OF PRISON

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------|
|  | Crystal Palace | 3 |
|  | Hull City | 3 |

PARIS: A last-gasp Fraizer Campbell header brought Crystal Palace a point in a see-saw 3-3 draw at fellow Premier League strugglers Hull yesterday.

Londoners Palace came into the encounter on the back of a rousing 3-0 win over Southampton which snapped a six-match Premier League losing streak.

But they were on the brink of a damaging loss which would have left them on the brink of the bottom five before Campbell nodded home from a Wilfried Zaha cross to keep them three points above the bottom three. The dropped points left Hull firmly in the drop zone just a point clear of tailenders Sunderland as they missed out on a win bonus which would have seen them go above out of sorts Leicester.

Mike Phelan's hosts took a 27th-minute lead from the penalty spot from Robert Snodgrass after he was fouled by Scott Dann in the box.

Palace fought back and levelled three minutes after the break after Snodgrass himself conceded a spot-kick converted by Christian Benteke, twice on target in the win over Southampton. Palace welcomed back midfielder Yohan Cabaye from suspension and the Frenchman was pulling the strings in midfield as the visitors stepped things up, Zaha shooting them ahead on 70 minutes following a corner.

But the lead lasted barely 90 seconds as Adama Diomande drove home for 2-2 after Harry Maguire fed him. With 12 minutes remaining Hull were back in front as Snodgrass provided an assist for Jake Livermore.

But late Palace pressure born of desperation saw Campbell, a former Hull loanee who helped the Tigers into the top flight seven seasons ago, come to the rescue as Zaha jinked his way through before sending over a tantalising cross which the one-cap England striker buried.

The comeback eased the pressure on Palace manager Alan Pardew, who was taking charge of his 300th Premier League game. Three years ago Pardew, then at Newcastle, was sanctioned after pushing his head into the face of Hull's David Meyler. On this occasion he left the venue with more to cheer as Palace avoided a repeat of their demoralising 5-4 loss at fellow relegation candidates Swansea last month when they led going into injury

time. The South Londoners went into that game with the worst form across 2016 in the whole of the English league structure, having garnered just 0.71 average points per game. — AFP

| Live Matches on TV (Local Timings) | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE | | |
| Chelsea v Albion | 15:00 | beIN SPORTS 2 HD |
| Manchester v Tottenham | 17:15 | beIN SPORTS 2 HD |
| Southampton v Middlesbrough | 17:15 | beIN SPORTS 1 HD |
| Liverpool v West Ham United | 19:30 | beIN SPORTS 2 HD |
| SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA DIV | | |
| Eibar v Deportivo Alaves | 14:00 | beIN SPORTS 3 HD |
| Vigo v Sevilla | 18:15 | beIN SPORTS 3 HD |
| Espanyol v Sporting Gijon | 20:30 | beIN SPORTS 3 HD |
| Real Betis v Bilbao | 22:45 | beIN SPORTS 3 HD |
| ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE SERIE A | | |
| Cagliari v Napoli | 14:30 | beIN SPORTS 4 HD |
| Atalanta v Udinese | 17:00 | beIN SPORTS 7 HD |
| Bologna v Empoli | 17:00 | beIN SPORTS |
| Torino v Juventus | 17:00 | beIN SPORTS 4 HD |
| Palermo v Chievo Verona | 17:00 | beIN SPORTS |
| Inter Milano v Genoa | 22:45 | beIN SPORTS 4 HD |
| GERMAN BUNDESLIGA 1ST DIV | | |
| Borussia Monchen' v Mainz | 17:30 | beIN SPORTS 5 HD |
| Schalke v Leverkusen | 19:30 | beIN SPORTS 5 HD |
| FRENCH LEAGUE 1ST DIV | | |
| Lyonnais v Stade Rennes | 17:00 | beIN SPORTS 6 HD |
| Saint Etienne v Guingamp | 19:00 | beIN SPORTS 6 HD |
| Paris Saint v Nice | 22:45 | beIN SPORTS 6 HD |



HULL: Crystal Palace's Frazier Campbell scores his side's third goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Hull City and Crystal Palace at the KCOM stadium in Hull, England yesterday. — AP

OKAKA'S WATFORD BRACE DEEPENS EVERTON GLOOM

| | | |
|---|----------------|----------|
|  | Watford | 3 |
|  | Everton | 2 |

WATFORD: Italian striker Stefano Okaka's first two Watford goals inspired a 3-2 comeback win over Everton yesterday, leaving Ronald Koeman's side with one win in 10 Premier League games.

Romelu Lukaku scored twice for Everton, bookending the scoring, but Okaka's double the first a brilliant flick-and a Sebastian Prodl header earned Walter Mazzarri's men victory.

It was Watford's first win over Everton since a 2-1 success in March 1987 and took them above the Merseyside club in the table, putting them level on points with Manchester United.

Everton have gone five games without a win and now face a daunting pair of home games against Arsenal and derby rivals Liverpool before a trip to champions Leicester City. Everton received a blow this week with the news close-season signing Yannick Bolasie is likely to miss the rest of the campaign due to a serious knee injury.

Gerard Deulofeu took over from the former Crystal Palace winger at Vicarage Road and drew an unorthodox, volleyball-style save from Watford goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes with a teasing early cross.

The hosts seemed to be building up a

head of steam, with Ramiro Funes Mori obliged to slide in and prevent Okaka reaching Etienne Capoue's low cross, when Everton took a 17th-minute lead.

Gareth Barry did not even need to look up to know where Lukaku would be running, hoisting a first-time pass over the Watford defence for the Belgium striker to finish past Gomes.

Okaka's first attempt at an equaliser lacked the pace or placement to trouble Everton goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg, but his second effort was a gem. Nordin Amrabat curled a cross into the box from the right and Okaka-signed from Anderlecht in August-stole in front of his marker before pirouetting to flick a graceful back-heel volley home from six yards.

Watford might have gone ahead before half-time, but Troy Deeney miscued after ghosting in to meet Adlene Guedioura's deep cross. The second goal would not elude them for long, however, as Jose Holebas bent a free-kick into the box from the left in the 59th minute and Prodl charged in to plant a header past Stekelenburg. Within five minutes it was 3-1. Stekelenburg produced a finger-tip save to keep out Miguel Britos's header, but from the resulting corner Holebas picked out Okaka to glance in his second goal. Koeman sent on Ross Barkley, Enner Valencia and Aaron Lennon and the latter's left-wing cross allowed Lukaku to reduce the arrears with a close-range header four minutes from time. But Watford held on, a stoppage-time Barkley free-kick the only meaningful effort Gomes had to save. — AFP



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's Spanish midfielder Thiago Alcantara (L) and Wolfsburg's midfielder Yannick Gerhardt (R) vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match between FC Bayern Munich and Wolfsburg in Munich, southern Germany, yesterday. — AFP

BAYERN REGAIN TOP SPOT AS LEIPZIG LOSE UNBEATEN RECORD

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski netted twice as Bayern Munich returned to the top of the Bundesliga yesterday with a 5-0 win over Wolfsburg after RB Leipzig lost their unbeaten record. Leipzig's shock 1-0 defeat at bottom side Ingolstadt, who finished with ten men, ended their three-week stint as leaders.

Carlo Ancelotti's Bayern cut the three-point gap and regained top spot on goal difference with both teams on 33 points.

"We're top of the table again—that'll be good for our Christmas party!" quipped Thomas Mueller, who scored his first league goal in 999 minutes, as Bayern prepared for the club's festive celebrations. Second-placed RB had their 13-match unbeaten run ended—a record for a club at the start of their first Bundesliga season—as coach Ralph Hasenhuettl endured a horror return to Ingolstadt, who he left after last season. "Defeats always hurt, it doesn't matter against who," said Hasenhuettl, who's side battered the Ingolstadt goal with 13 shots, to the hosts four, but could not score. "The opponents forced their own game on us, we had little influence and didn't show enough courage.

"We were better after the break, but we couldn't make our 300 percent (more shots) count. The ball didn't want to go in."

Ingolstadt had Australia striker Mathew Leckie sent off for two yellow cards in quick succession in the final stages, but his team held on

and them win took them off bottom leaving Darmstadt, who lost 1-0 at Freiburg, last. Bayern host Leipzig on December 21 at Munich's Allianz Arena, where the hosts romped to a heavy win over Wolfsburg.

The 2015 German Cup winners have fallen from grace and defeat leaves Wolfsburg 15th, only clear of the relegation zone on goal difference. Head coach Valerien Ismael, who took over after Dieter Hecking was sacked in October, left Germany's attacking midfielder Julian Draxler out of the squad. The 23-year-old cost 35 million euros (\$37.3m) from Schalke in August 2015 and Wolfsburg say they are open to sell him in January's winter break. Bayern started with Jerome Boateng on the bench with a shoulder injury and his centre-back partner Mats Hummels was missing with gastroenteritis. Arjen Robben opened the scoring by curling his superb shot around Wolfsburg's goalkeeper Diego Benaglio on 18 minutes.

REUS RESCUES DORTMUND

Lewandowski netted five goals in a record nine minutes in the same fixture in September 2015 and the Poland hot-shot needed just 21 minutes to also get on the scoresheet.

To compound Wolfsburg's problems, defender Marcel Schaefer went off with a knee injury after 23 minutes as it finished 2-0 at the break. Lewandowski added his second on 58 minutes,

Mueller grabbed his first league goal of the season by firing home Robben's pass on 76 minutes then Brazil winger Douglas Costa added Bayern's fifth just before the whistle. Fresh from their 2-2 Champions League draw at Real Madrid, Borussia Dortmund needed a 90th-minute Marco Reus goal to rescue their 1-1 draw at ten-man Cologne.

Cologne took the lead when Germany defender Jonas Hector fired in a long-range free-kick and Artjoms Rudnevs slipped his marker, heading past Dortmund goalkeeper Roman Weidenfeller on 28 minutes. But Reus rescued a point when he coolly slotted Adrian Ramos' cross for a point which kept Dortmund sixth as Cologne had Salih Ozcan sent off late on for a second yellow.

Hamburg stay in the bottom three despite their 1-0 home win over Augsburg as both sides finished with ten men.

The hosts took the lead when Nicolai Mueller hit the post and Serbia international Filip Kostic converted the rebound on 68 minutes. Hamburg had Lewis Holtby sent off just before the break for lashing out after Augsburg's midfielder Dominik Kohr's rough tackle. But Kohr was also shown a red when he earned his second yellow soon after.

On Friday, Hoffenheim were held to a goalless draw at Eintracht Frankfurt but are now the only unbeaten team in Germany's top flight. —AFP

HENDRICK CRACKER BRINGS BOURNEMOUTH DOWN TO EARTH

| | | |
|---|--------------------|----------|
|  | Burnley | 3 |
|  | Bournemouth | 2 |

BURNLEY: Irish midfielder Jeff Hendrick's sensational flick-and-hit volley inspired Burnley to a 3-2 victory over Bournemouth in the Premier League yesterday.

Hendrick struck from long range in the 13th minute and further goals from Stephen Ward and George Boyd secured the three points despite Benik Afobe and Charlie Daniels replying for Bournemouth.

Victory ended a run of three consecutive defeats for Sean Dyche's Burnley, who are now five points above the relegation zone and a point below Bournemouth, who slipped one place to 11th.

Bournemouth had stormed back from 3-1 down to beat Liverpool 4-3 on their previous outing, but manager Eddie Howe could not engineer a repeat performance against his former club. Ryan Fraser was rewarded for inspiring Bournemouth's comeback against Liverpool with a starting place as the south-coast club went in search of a first ever win at Turf Moor at the 14th attempt.

His early run created a chance for Afobe, who was brilliantly denied by fit-again Burnley goalkeeper Tom Heaton. Dan Gosling also put a shot over Heaton's crossbar, but it was Burnley who drew first blood, and in stupendous fashion. Racing down the inside-right channel, Hendrick leapt to bring down a pass from a team-mate, kneed the ball up and then cracked an unstoppable, looping volley into the top-right corner from 25 yards.

His fellow Irishman Ward added a second less than three minutes later, slamming home after Bournemouth goalkeeper Artur Boruc failed to hold Ben Mee's header.

Boruc then had to save from Michael Keane, but after Adam Smith had extended Heaton with a free-kick at the other end, Afobe tucked away Simon Francis's cut-back to reduce the arrears in first-half injury time.

After Afobe had squandered a good chance to make it 3-1, scuffing hopelessly wide, Dyche turned to his bench, sending on Andre Gray and Ashley Barnes for Sam Vokes and Steven Defour. Gray procured a clear opportunity to stretch the hosts' lead when the ball fell to him in a kind position, but he thrashed his shot straight at Boruc.

He made a more telling contribution in the 75th minute, his back-heel teeing up Boyd to double Burnley's lead, and although Daniels hit back for Bournemouth in stoppage time, it came too late. — AFP



SWANSEA: Swansea City's Jay Fulton, right, and Sunderland's Didier Ndong in action during the English Premier League soccer match between Swansea City and Sunderland at the Liberty stadium in Swansea Wales, yesterday. — AP

SWANSEA BEAT SUNDERLAND 3-0 IN RELEGATION CLASH

| | | |
|---|-------------------|----------|
|  | Swansea | 3 |
|  | Sunderland | 0 |

SWANSEA: A Gylfi Sigurdsson penalty and a brace from Fernando Llorente gave Swansea City a 3-0 win over fellow strugglers Sunderland in the Premier League yesterday, relieving the pressure on manager Bob Bradley.

Sigurdsson struck from the penalty spot

in the 50th minute after a handball by Jason Denayer and he turned provider four minutes later, sliding a low corner into the box which Spaniard Llorente steered past goalkeeper Jordan Pickford.

Llorente wrapped up the three points in the 80th minute when he headed in Jefferson Montero's cross following an interception by the excellent Leon Britton, who was making his first appearance since the start of November. The win was Swansea's second under American Bradley, the favourite with British bookmakers to be the next Premier League manager to lose his job, and made it back-to-back victories at the Liberty Stadium for his team. — Reuters

Sports

Kohli, Vijay
put India ahead
against England



Bayern regain top
spot as Leipzig
lose unbeaten
record



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2016

BLUE JACKETS WIN FIFTH STRAIGHT OVER RED WINGS

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LEICESTER: Leicester City's English striker Jamie Vardy (2nd R) takes the ball around Manchester City's Chilean goalkeeper Claudio Bravo on his way to scoring their third goal during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Manchester City at King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England yesterday. — AFP

VARDY TREBLE BLASTS GUARDIOLA'S SORRY MAN CITY



Leicester 4



Manchester City 2

LEICESTER: Jamie Vardy ended his Leicester City goal drought with a brilliant hat-trick as the Premier League champions crushed Pep Guardiola's shambolic Manchester City 4-2 yesterday. Leicester returned to form in style, racing into a 4-0 lead as Vardy ended a run of 16 club games without a goal by scoring a fine treble.

Andy King also scored for the champions as Guardiola's men were torn apart, suffering an embarrassing reverse despite late

goals by Aleksandar Kolarov and Nolito halving Leicester's winning margin.

After a bruising 3-1 defeat by Chelsea last weekend, Guardiola faces more tough questions, while Leicester manager Claudio Ranieri can finally enjoy a much-needed win after a poor defence so far of their title.

A dream start for Leicester came in only the third minute as Vardy's barren spell ended with the finishing touch to a pleasing move. Riyad Mahrez started it with a fine touch to bring down a high ball and lay it off to Islam Slimani, who slid a pass to the feet of Vardy. The England striker slotted a shot into the bottom-left corner with the composure of a man who had been scoring prolifically. The lead was doubled within three minutes courtesy of another goal from the top drawer as Robert Huth headed

down a Christian Fuchs throw and Slimani laid off a pass to King.

But it was still no more than a half-chance until the Wales midfielder unleashed a fantastic curling shot that flew in off the fingertips of goalkeeper Claudio Bravo.

On 12 minutes it might have been 3-0 when another Huth knock-down found Slimani, but the Algerian striker sent a shot over. Visitors City produced a rare moment of promise on 15 minutes when Kevin De Bruyne tried his luck from just inside the Leicester penalty area with a shot that flew just wide. But five minutes later the damage got worse for the visitors as Leicester turned on the style for their third goal.

STONES BLUNDER

A long pass from Fuchs was cushioned bril-

liantly by Mahrez into the path of Vardy, who rounded Bravo and rolled a low shot into the gaping goal.

It could have been 4-0 moments later when Mahrez danced his way to the edge of the area with some fine footwork, but saw his shot turned away to safety by Bravo.

The visitors were denied a penalty in first-half stoppage time when Kelechi Iheanacho went down under Marc Albrighton's heavy challenge.

Seconds later Albrighton presented a chance for 4-0 on a plate for Slimani, only for the striker to head an excellent cross wide. The visitors increased their tempo after half-time and began to pin Leicester back inside their own half. Pablo Zabaleta and De Bruyne both had shots blocked in a goalmouth scramble before Ilkay Gundogan went close to giving

his side a lifeline, shooting narrowly wide from Iheanacho's lay-off. But Slimani had another chance when he glided into the penalty area, only to see his shot saved low down by Bravo.

Vardy made it 4-0 on 78 minutes as he completed his hat-trick, pouncing on a terrible back-pass from John Stones and scoring with a shot that just crept over the line from an almost impossible angle. City made the scoreline look a little more respectable in the closing stages with two impressive goals of their own.

First, Kolarov curled a fine free-kick into the top corner from 20 yards with City's first shot on target and then Nolito side-footed home superbly from a Kolarov cross. But Leicester held on to claim a vital three points and condemn their visitors to a crushing defeat. — AFP

OZIL PROVES WORTH AS ARSENAL GO TOP



Arsenal 3



Stoke City 1

LONDON: Mesut Ozil provided a timely reminder of his importance to Arsenal's title hopes with a superb header in a 3-1 win against Stoke that moved the Gunners to the top of the Premier League yesterday.

The futures of Ozil and Alexis Sanchez remain uncertain with the Arsenal duo entering the final 18 months of their current deals.

But both were central figures as Arsene Wenger's team secured the two-goal margin of victory that lifted them above Chelsea on goals scored.

Ozil's stunning second-half header, a goal that came about in controversial circumstances in the eyes of Stoke manager Mark Hughes, was the highlight of the win.

Arsenal had fallen behind to Charlie Adam's 23rd-minute penalty but levelled before half-time thanks to Theo Walcott's 10th goal of the season.

Ozil and Alex Iwobi struck after the break to shift the pressure onto Chelsea 24 hours before Antonio Conte's side host West Bromwich Albion.

Wenger had complained angrily about referee Lee Mason's decision to award a penalty after Stoke's Joe Allen was floored by a leading elbow from Granit Xhaka.

But it was Hughes' turn to complain when Ozil scored in space vacated by Stoke left-back Erik Pieters, who was out of position after receiving treatment at the other end of the pitch. Arsenal had started the game positively, finding plenty of room down the right hand flank. But for the most part, Stoke man-

aged to restrict the home side to the occasional half-chance before they took the lead through Adam's penalty.

Shortly before the Scotland international gave the visitors the lead, the midfielder had shown his quality with a lofted ball that allowed Marko Arnautovic to set up an opportunity that Allen sent wide.

And Adam showed impressive composure to send Cech the wrong way from the spot after Allen had been floored by Xhaka in a clumsy challenge between the pair.

VULNERABLE

Arsenal's problems increased when Shkodran Mustafi was forced off with what appeared to be a hamstring injury and the introduction of Hector Bellerin prompted a reshuffle of the home back-four.

But the substitute's most significant first half contribution came at the other end of the pitch when he produced the cross that led to Walcott's 42nd-minute equaliser.

Stoke had continued to appear vulnerable on their left hand side, with Allen providing only limited cover for Pieters.

The left-back was isolated once again when the ball was played out to Bellerin from a central position and the Spaniard drilled in a low cross that was turned home by Walcott at the near post.

The goal brought relief for Wenger and his players who had been growing increasingly frustrated in their efforts to cancel out the controversial opening goal.

But it was soon the visitors' turn to feel hard done to when they fell behind to Ozil's clever, looping header.

Moments before, Stoke had pressed forward with Pieters requiring treatment after clashing with Bellerin as he went for a far post header and the left-back had not recovered his ground when Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain



LONDON: Arsenal's German midfielder Mesut Ozil (L) runs for the ball with Stoke City's Portuguese-born Dutch defender Bruno Martins Indi during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Stoke City at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. — AFP

picked out Ozil with a floated pass.

There was no doubting the quality of the Germany international's finish but the playmaker was helped by Pieters' absence.

While Stoke fumed, Arsenal continued to press with Xhaka and Oxlade-Chamberlain both testing Grant with long-range shots.

But Arsenal were unlikely to squander the lead and finally established the two-goal advantage they needed to go top when Iwobi picked up the loose ball after Sanchez had been fouled on the edge of the Stoke area. — AFP

MESSI DOUBLE BRINGS BARCELONA RELIEF

MADRID Lionel Messi struck twice as Barcelona recorded their first win in four La Liga games to close to within three points of Real Madrid at the top of La Liga with a 3-0 win at Osasuna.

Barca should have killed the game off in the first half as Luis Suarez and Messi missed two big chances each against La Liga's bottom side. However, Suarez rounded off a fine team move to break the deadlock just before the hour before Messi's double in the final 17 minutes moved him ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo as La Liga's top scorer with 11 for the season.

Real can extend their lead once more and set a new club record unbeaten run of 35 games when they host Deportivo la Coruna later. "We are Barcelona and we know we can never give up," Suarez told Beln Sports Spain.

"We are candidates to win the league, it doesn't matter if we are four, five, six or seven points behind, we won't give up."

Barca were in desperate need of a lift after conceding in the last minute to Real in last weekend's El Clasico. The Catalans' upturn in performance since captain Andres Iniesta's return from a six-week injury layoff continued in the first half at Osasuna, but Barca were in danger of paying for their profligacy in front of goal. Suarez fired wide when through on goal and then hit the post inside 20 minutes. Osasuna remain five points off safety and it was easy to see why they are still without a home win all season as the hosts were opened up at will.

Suarez turned provider for Messi, but Nautzet Perez rushed from his goal to block. And the goalkeeper frustrated the five-time World Player of the Year

again moments later by just raising a hand in time to divert Messi's attempted chip behind.

"We were patient and generated a lot of chances," said Barca boss Luis Enrique. "It was key to go in front and calm ourselves down. The goals came in the second-half, but we deserved to go in front in the first-half and have a much easier game."

Sergio Leon gave Barca a scare at the start of the second-half when his brilliant lob over Marc-Andre ter Stegen came back off the underside of the bar.

Barca created fewer chances in the second half, but were more clinical. Sergio Busquets and Messi combined to release Jordi Alba on the left and his low cross was rolled into an unguarded net by Suarez despite Osasuna calls for offside.

The second goal came about in similar fashion 13 minutes later as Alba again got to the by-line and his cross was volleyed home by Messi at the near post.

And Messi didn't need any help for his second in stoppage time as he wriggled clear of three Osasuna defenders and left Perez on the floor before lifting the ball high into the net.

Valencia remain above the relegation zone only on goal difference despite more penalty heroics from goalkeeper Diego Alves in a 3-2 defeat at Real Sociedad. Alves saved the 23rd penalty of 47 he has faced in Spanish football from Carlos Vela, but it mattered little as a Willian Jose double and Juanmi's injury time strike moved Sociedad up to fourth.

Valencia have won just one game in eight since former Italy boss Cesare Prandelli took charge in October. — AFP

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QATAR EYES DEAL IN VIENNA AS RUSSIA PROMISES TO FULFILL COMMITMENT

Lighthizer, who along with DiMicco is considered a strong candidate to be the new U.S. Trade Representative, is known for his work during the Reagan administration pressuring Japan into voluntary export restraints. —Reuters



CARACAS: People watch the window of a shoe shop displaying signs informing of a 30% discount, in Caracas on Friday. The Venezuelan government ordered the owners of shops selling clothing, footwear and accessories to reduce their prices by 30% during Christmas. —AFP

VENEZUELA ORDERS STORES TO GET INTO CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

MANDATORY ‘SALES’ PUSHING RETAILERS TO THE BRINK OF BANKRUPTCY

CARACAS: Ever since Venezuelan government agents put up a giant “Sale” sign in his storefront, crowds have been lining up outside Juan Vieira’s shoe shop. But he’s having a hard time getting into the Christmas spirit. “What good is it to sell shoes if I’m giving away my product?”

Stuck in a nasty economic crisis, Venezuela is facing a Scrooge-worthy Christmas this year. The world’s highest inflation rate has gutted Venezuelans’ incomes and chronic shortages have left them struggling to buy food, let alone presents. Seeking to spread some cheer, President Nicolas Maduro’s socialist government has set aside its distaste for consumerism and sent a small army of bureaucrats and soldiers to force more than 200 retail stores in Caracas to hold Christmas sales.

“Our worker-president has ordered us to guarantee fair prices for the people, and we are complying. These economic hitmen can’t take away our merry Christmas,” said William Contreras, head of the National Superintendency for the Defense of Socioeconomic Rights, known by the acronym Sundde. The government accuses the owners of the targeted stores of jacking up prices by 300 to 500 percent.

But Vieira and other owners deny that, saying the mandatory markdowns are pushing them to the brink of bankruptcy. In the capital’s historic center where Vieira keeps shop, most storefronts carry signs sporting the government’s seal and advertising “Sundde sales” or a “30-percent

Sundde discount.” The discount is always 30 percent—the maximum amount of profit stores are allowed to make under a 2014 law. Two soldiers guard the entrance to Vieira’s store, allowing customers in two at a time.

“This is pure populism,” a furious Vieira said in the back room of the store, which he opened in 1995. “If we keep going at this rate, I’ll run out of shoes this month. I’m about to go bankrupt and close.” Vieira, 54, already lost one shoe store in 2010, when the government of Maduro’s late mentor, Hugo Chavez, expropriated the building where it was located.

Shoppers’ guilt

Many customers are thrilled with the sales, however. “This is the best thing the government could have done this year because you have to give up eating just to buy yourself a shirt,” said Yaroski Mendoza, a 19-year-old cook waiting in line to buy a shirt, her baby in her arms.

Getting to the discounts means standing in long lines, but Venezuelans are used to that. They regularly wait hours to buy groceries. “We have to take advantage of this opportunity. Venezuelans like sporting new clothes for Christmas or New Year’s Eve,” said Isaac Quintero, a 28-year-old office worker.

But some shoppers feel guilty over the stores’ plight. “They’re practically giving their products away. (The government) is making them go broke for no reason,” said Anis Rodriguez, 50, a

housewife shopping at a store where T-shirts were selling for less than half the usual price.

Jobs at risk

The T-shirt business was “destroyed” when the forced sale was imposed, said the manager, Mary, who asked that her last name not be used for fear of reprisals. She said the agents who swooped on the store were “very rude” and did not even bother looking at the records she showed them documenting the store’s pricing practices. “Our orders come from high up,” she said they told her. “This is a smoke bomb,” Mary added. “Since there’s nothing in this country, they have to distract people with something.” She fears losing her job because her boss has vowed to shut the store if the mandatory sale continues.

Venezuela’s oil-dependent economy has tanked as global crude prices have gone on a downward spiral since 2014. Short of the petrodollars on which it relies to import goods, the country is facing crippling shortages and inflation the IMF forecasts will hit 475 percent by year’s end.

It is not the first time Maduro—whose popularity has plunged along with the economy—has ordered Christmas sales. In 2013, he forced a household appliance chain to slash its prices by up to 70 percent. The company survived, but some stores’ shelves were still bare as much as a year later. —AFP

DUBAI INVESTMENTS TO CLOSE \$299.52M LOAN BY YEAR-END

DUBAI: Dubai Investments, part owned by sovereign wealth fund Investment Corp of Dubai, plans to close a 1.1 billion dirham (\$299.52 million) loan by December 31, its chief executive said yesterday.

United Arab Emirates banks First Gulf Bank (FGB) and Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank have been mandated for the loan, Khalid Bin Kalban told reporters in Dubai. The loan will be used to build a residential project in Dubai’s Mirdif neighborhood located near the world’s busiest airport for international travel, Dubai International.

Bin Kalban said the company would not take the entire loan, which is to be delivered in tranches, if off-plan sales of the project meet expectations. Sales launched yesterday.

He also said there are plans to list 30 percent of Dubai-based Emirates District Cooling (Emicool), a joint venture between Dubai Investments and Union Properties,

on the Dubai bourse next year.

Bin Kalban is also chairman of Union Properties. The listing, expected to raise \$200 million, would only go ahead if market conditions improved, he said, adding that plans to list this year were cancelled. Dubai Investments is also planning to build and operate business parks in Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Angola.

A joint-venture project to build a business park valued at 600 million dirhams in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, is expected to break ground in the next month, Bin Kalban said. A similar project is planned for the Angolan capital Luanda and Morocco’s Tangier, he said. Dubai Investments will go into Angola on its own, whilst would consider a joint venture in Morocco, Bin Kalban said. The three projects would be similar to a 23 square kilometre business park the company owns and operates in Dubai. —Reuters

FITCH AFFIRMS BRITISH DEBT RATING, OUTLOOK NEGATIVE

WASHINGTON: The Fitch ratings agency Friday affirmed the AA long-term debt rating and negative outlook for the United Kingdom and the Bank of England, when they have been since June.

In the wake of the surprise vote in June to exit the European Union, which touched off fears of slower growth, prompting a cut in the debt rating from AAA, Fitch said Friday recent political events suggested Britain likely will seek to control immigration from the EU and reject the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. “In our opinion, and

based on the stated position and interests of the EU, this would make it unlikely that the UK remains a member of the European Single Market after leaving the EU,” the agency said in a statement.

Those developments also create uncertainty about the economy and new investment. “Fitch assumes that private-sector investment growth will decline in 2017 as firms delay capital spending commitments in the face of the uncertainties about future trading arrangements with the EU and the regulatory environment,” the statement said. —AFP



ATLANTA: A Delta Air Lines jet sits at a gate at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in Atlanta. Delta announced that the airline is rolling out new free snacks for customers in the main cabin, including brand-name yogurt bars and pretzels. —AP

DELTA WILL UPGRADE FREE SNACKS IN ECONOMY CLASS

NEW YORK: If it’s true that an army travels on its stomach, will better snacks keep passengers loyal to one airline? Delta Air Lines is rolling out new free snacks for customers in the main cabin, including brand-name yogurt bars and pretzels. Some will come in larger portions than before because, Delta has figured out, that’s what customers crave.

The menu move comes about a year after United Airlines brought back free snacks by offering noshes like stroopwafels - a gooey Dutch confection - and better coffee. Earlier this year, American Airlines restored free snacks on domestic flights.

Airline executives say they’re focusing on both big and little things in the battle for customers. Delta said Thursday that beginning next week it will retire the airline’s brand of peanuts and pretzels and replace them on longer flights with

Snyder’s of Hanover pretzels, Squirrel honey-roasted peanuts and NatureBox yogurt bars. Fans of the Biscoff cookies need not fret - those are staying.

Delta also is testing free sandwiches and other meals in economy on some flights between New York and California. For decades, air travelers took it for granted that they would be served meals as part of their ticket price. Airlines gradually took away that perk to save money, but came off looking Scrooge-like. Continental Airlines claimed it would save \$2.5 million by no longer giving away pretzels in 2011. That year parent United Continental Holdings Inc. earned \$840 million.

Airlines today seem even more financially healthy enough to feed their customers: Atlanta-based Delta Air Lines Inc. earned \$4.5 billion last year. —AP

KUWAIT OIL PRICE UP 94 CENTS TO \$49.54PB

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil was up 94 cents to \$49.54 per barrel on Friday after being at \$48.60 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation yesterday. At the global level, the price of oil was up by one percent on hopes that the Saturday meeting for OPEC countries and non-member states in Vienna would finalize an agreement on reducing production by the beginning of 2017. The price of the Brent crude was up by 44 cents to \$54.33 per barrel, the same case with the price of the American crude which was up by 66 cents to \$51.50 pb. —KUNA

JAPAN OKS PACIFIC TRADE PACT THAT TRUMP PLANS TO DUMP

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe won parliamentary approval Friday for ratification of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, despite US President-elect Donald Trump’s plan to withdraw from the 12-nation trade pact.

Upper house lawmakers approved the TPP on Friday, heeding Abe’s calls to push ahead with it despite Trump’s rejection of the free-trade initiative championed by President Barack Obama.

Abe’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party has an ample majority in both houses of parliament. Ratification of needed regulatory revisions by the Cabinet is expected soon.

The market opening measures required by the trade pact are seen as a way for Abe to push through difficult reforms of the agricultural and health sectors. So far, Abe has made scant

progress on a slew of changes he has proposed to help improve Japan’s lagging productivity and competitiveness.

Trump has vowed to take steps to exit the pact right after he takes office. A US withdrawal would kill the trade pact unless its terms are revised. The agreement between the dozen members requires both the US and Japan to join to attain the required 85 percent of the group’s total GDP since the US economy accounts for 60 percent of that total, and Japan less than 20 percent.

After expending political capital to fight vested interests fearful of market opening and reforms likely to be required by the trade pact, Abe and other leaders in Asia have bemoaned the impending loss of the US as TPP flag bearer. —AP

| EXCHANGE RATES | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|--|--|---------------------------|---------|--------------|--|--|
| AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO. | | | | | | | | | |
| ASIAN COUNTRIES | | | | | | | | | |
| Japanese Yen | 2.680 | | | | Sterling Pound | 388.630 | | | |
| Indian Rupees | 4.515 | | | | Canadian dollar | 231.120 | | | |
| Pakistani Rupees | 2.920 | | | | Turkish lira | 89.110 | | | |
| Srilankan Rupees | 2.062 | | | | Swiss Franc | 304.740 | | | |
| Nepali Rupees | 2.812 | | | | Australian Dollar | 228.930 | | | |
| Singapore Dollar | 215.700 | | | | US Dollar Buying | 304.450 | | | |
| Hongkong Dollar | 39.408 | | | | GOLD | | | | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.835 | | | | 20 Gram | 239.11 | | | |
| Philippine Peso | 6.157 | | | | 10 Gram | 122.48 | | | |
| Thai Baht | 8.604 | | | | 5 Gram | 62.08 | | | |
| GCC COUNTRIES | | | | | DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD | | | | |
| Saudi Riyal | 81.561 | | | | Rate for Transfer | | Selling Rate | | |
| Qatari Riyal | 84.004 | | | | US Dollar | 305.100 | | | |
| ani Riyal | 795.309 | | | | Canadian Dolla | 230.445 | | | |
| Bahraini Dinar | 812.140 | | | | Sterling Pound | 390.340 | | | |
| UAE Dirham | 83.261 | | | | Euro | 330.010 | | | |
| ARAB COUNTRIES | | | | | Swiss Frank | 285.180 | | | |
| Egyptian Pound - Cash | 23.000 | | | | Bahrain Dinar | 808.795 | | | |
| Egyptian Pound - Transfer | 17.180 | | | | UAE Dirhams | 83.460 | | | |
| Yemen Riyal/for 1000 | 1.228 | | | | Qatari Riyals | 84.680 | | | |
| Tunisian Dinar | 133.760 | | | | Saudi Riyals | 82.285 | | | |
| Lebanese Lira/for 1000 | 430.710 | | | | Jordanian Dinar | 431.490 | | | |
| Syrian Lira | 2.038 | | | | Egyptian Pound | 17.561 | | | |
| Morocco Dirham | 31.030 | | | | Sri Lankan Rupees | 2.058 | | | |
| EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES | | | | | Indian Rupees | 4.487 | | | |
| US Dollar Transfer | 305.650 | | | | Pakistani Rupees | 2.910 | | | |
| Euro | 329.340 | | | | Bangladesh Taka | 3.871 | | | |
| | | | | | Philippines Pess | 6.148 | | | |
| | | | | | Cyprus pound | 167.550 | | | |
| | | | | | Japanese Yen | 3.680 | | | |
| | | | | | Syrian Pound | 2.430 | | | |
| BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY | | | | | | | | | |
| CURRENCY | BUY EURO | SELL | | | | | | | |
| Nepalese Rupees | 3.800 | | | | | | | | |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 69.630 | | | | | | | | |
| Chinese Yuan Renminbi | 41.235 | | | | | | | | |
| Thai Bhat | 9.555 | | | | | | | | |
| Turkish Lira | 87.065 | | | | | | | | |
| Australasia | | | | | | | | | |
| Australian Dollar | 0.218700 | 0.230700 | | | | | | | |
| New Zealand Dollar | 0.21155 | 0.220655 | | | | | | | |
| America | | | | | | | | | |
| Canadian Dollar | 0.224493 | 0.233493 | | | | | | | |
| Georgina Lari | 0.138049 | 0.138049 | | | | | | | |
| US Dollars | 0.301550 | 0.306250 | | | | | | | |
| US Dollars Mint | 0.302050 | 0.306250 | | | | | | | |
| Asia | | | | | | | | | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 0.003373 | 0.003957 | | | | | | | |
| Chinese Yuan | 0.042953 | 0.046453 | | | | | | | |
| Arab | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahraini Dinar | 0.804171 | 0.812671 | | | | | | | |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.015613 | 0.024866 | | | | | | | |
| Iranian Riyal | 0.000085 | 0.000086 | | | | | | | |
| Iraqi Dinar | 0.000180 | 0.000240 | | | | | | | |
| Jordanian Dinar | 0.426047 | 0.435047 | | | | | | | |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 1.000000 | 1.000000 | | | | | | | |
| Lebanese Pound | 0.000152 | 0.000252 | | | | | | | |
| Moroccan Dirhams | 0.020100 | 0.044100 | | | | | | | |
| Nigerian Naira | 0.000400 | 0.001035 | | | | | | | |
| Omani Riyal | 0.787475 | 0.793155 | | | | | | | |
| Qatar Riyal | 0.083143 | 0.084593 | | | | | | | |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.080420 | 0.081720 | | | | | | | |
| Syrian Pound | 0.001296 | 0.001516 | | | | | | | |
| Tunisian Dinar | 0.130383 | 0.138383 | | | | | | | |
| Turkish Lira | 0.083891 | 0.094191 | | | | | | | |
| UAE Dirhams | 0.081793 | 0.083493 | | | | | | | |
| Yemeni Riyal | 0.001012 | 0.001092 | | | | | | | |

HOW TO USE BAYT.COM FOR YOUR CAREER IN HR INDUSTRY

Career opportunities in HR are abundant, as any medium-to-large-sized company requires a dedicated department to manage employees and maximize their performance. This means if you are a Human Resources Officer, Senior Officer, Manager, or even a fresh graduate with an interest in HR, you should be excited about the prospects of this field, which are extremely valuable to businesses nowadays. If you are considering an HR career in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the Bayt.com Middle East Job Index Survey (September 2016), shows that HR is, in fact, among industries that are hiring the most.

In order to move forward with your career in HR, you need the suitable tools and strategies to land your desired job or move up the career ladder. This process is made easier with the following tips from Bayt.com, the #1 Job Site in the Middle East.

1. Search thoroughly

A simple search on Bayt.com can provide you with a very large number of job opportunities. Using the Advanced Job Search tool gives you the ability to filter down those positions to what suits you exactly. This is done through keywords, or filtering results based on position title, location, desired salary, employment type, experience level, and more. You can specify your search criteria to your preferences and find your ideal position from hundreds of job announcements in the HR industry.

2. Connect with HR experts

The learning process is continuous. Having work experience does not mean you already know everything you want to know. In order to learn more and share your knowledge with others, you can join professional social platforms such as Bayt.com Specialties. This plat-

form lets you engage in insightful discussions regarding the trends and developments in your industry. You can post questions, provide answers, follow discussions, and expand your knowledge base in the HR field. It also allows you to stand out among your peers when showcasing your expertise, which in turn attracts job providers to you.

3. Evaluate salaries

When seeking new opportunities, it is important to have an understanding of your prospective compensation and benefits. Bayt.com Salaries is a tool that provides you with timely and accurate salary levels, as well as pay structures in the market. It also allows you to navigate customized reports for each role, industry, and location if you are on the lookout for enhancing your established career in HR. This helps you make more informed decisions.

4. Learn on your own time

Employers are aware of candidates who work to improve their skills and expand their competencies. Bayt.com Learning Portal offers numerous courses, workshops, and learning opportunities to complement your degree and experience. The topics cover an extensive variety from strategic HR management, to international HR certificates. There are many skills to acquire and develop, even for current HR employees, who may simply need to sharpen their skills and grow their areas of expertise. It is worth noting that many of these courses are free of charge, and completing them adds a competitive edge to your CV.

5. Be within reach

Word of mouth is one of the most effective methods of learning about someone. Even with 40,000 employer

under the belt, unregistered employers might be curious about your skills, expertise, and accomplishments. The easiest way to find your qualifications is through the Bayt.com Public Profile. By setting up a public profile, you are creating for yourself an online business card. This enables search engines like Google to find you, and it helps your friends and colleagues to spread the word about your experiences and endorse you for your competencies.

Bayt.com is the #1 job site in the Middle East with more than 40,000 employers and over 26,750,000 registered job seekers from across the Middle East, North Africa and the globe, representing all industries, nationalities and career levels. Post a job or find jobs on www.bayt.com today and access the leading resource for job seekers and employers in the region.



DEARBORN: Bill Ford Jr, Ford Motor Company Executive Chairman, speaks during news conference on the 2015 F-150 pickup truck at the Dearborn Truck Plant in Dearborn, Michigan. — AP

TRUMP THREATS WON'T CHANGE SMALL CAR PLANS: FORD CEO

DETROIT: Ford Motor Co is going ahead with plans to move small-car production from the US to Mexico despite President-elect Donald Trump's recent threats to impose tariffs on companies that move work abroad.

CEO Mark Fields said Ford's plan to move production of the Ford Focus from Michigan to Mexico will proceed, in part because US consumers demand low prices for small cars. The Focus starts at \$16,775, which is less than half the average price that US consumers pay for new vehicles.

"It always has to start with the customer. The customer demands a certain level of price and value in that segment, and it's important for us as a company to have financial success with that product," Fields told The Associated Press in an interview Friday. But Fields stressed that no US jobs will be lost, since the Michigan plant that makes the Focus will be getting two new products. "If you're a worker in that plant, you now have even more job security because we have two products coming in instead of one," he said.

In a series of tweets last weekend, Trump reiterated a threaten to impose a 35-percent tariff on companies that build new plants abroad and sell products back to the US. "The US is going to substantially reduce taxes and regulations on businesses, but any business that leaves our country for another country, fires its employees, builds a new factory or plant in the other country, and then thinks it will sell its product back into the US without retribution or consequence, is WRONG!" Trump tweeted. "There will be a tax on our soon to be strong border of 35 percent for these companies."

Although Ford wasn't mentioned specifically, Trump did target the company a number of times during the campaign on the issue of trade and US jobs. Trump also praised Ford last month when the company said it won't go ahead with a plan to move production of its Lincoln MKC SUV

from Kentucky to Mexico. Fields said tariffs can't be imposed on individual companies, only entire sectors, so they would wind up hurting the whole auto industry. Nissan Motor Co, General Motors Co, Fiat Chrysler and Toyota Motor Co are among the other companies that export Mexican-made vehicles to the US.

Asked if he was worried about Trump's threats, Fields said, "Of course. We're always looking at what are the risks and opportunities are out there." But Fields also said he's optimistic that Trump supports pro-growth policies like tax reform and regulatory reform that could help the auto industry.

"We strongly believe that the right policies are going to prevail, because I think we all share the same objective: We want a healthy and vibrant US economy and we're going to continue to do our part to contribute to that," he said.

Fuel economy standards

One area Ford and Trump could see eye to eye on is fuel economy standards. The company criticized the US Environmental Protection Agency last week for its recommendation to keep regulations in place that would more than double automakers' fleet-wide fuel efficiency standards by 2025. The EPA was scheduled to make a final decision in 2018, but rushed its plans into place before Trump takes office in January.

Fields said Ford will make its vehicles as fuel-efficient as possible, and he noted that the company needs to meet even stricter emissions targets in China. But he said automakers want to make sure the standards reflect market realities, like lower-than-expected US gas prices and rising SUV sales. Fields said Ford plans to take up the issue with the Trump administration. "We're absolutely dedicated to improving the fuel economy of our customers, but doing it in a way that preserves customer choice, that preserves vehicle affordability and preserves American jobs," Fields said. — AP

TRUMP DEEPENS GOLDMAN TIES AS HE BUILDS ECONOMIC TEAM

PRESIDENT-ELECT'S AIDES DENY HE IS GOING BACK ON PROMISES

WASHINGTON: In the heat of the presidential campaign, Donald Trump accused primary rival Ted Cruz of being controlled by Goldman Sachs because his wife, Heidi, previously worked for the Wall Street giant. He slammed Hillary Clinton for receiving speaking fees from the bank.

"I know the guys at Goldman Sachs. They have total, total control over him," Trump said of Cruz. "Just like they have total control over Hillary Clinton." Now, Trump is putting Goldman executives at the helm of his administration's economic team. He's expected to name bank president Gary Cohn to an influential White House policy post, according to two people informed of the decision, and has already nominated former Goldman executive Steve Mnuchin to lead the Treasury Department. Steve Bannon, Trump's incoming White House senior adviser, also worked at Goldman before becoming a conservative media executive.

Wall Street executives have long wielded influence in Washington, filling top jobs in both Republican and Democratic administrations. Goldman Sachs itself has produced several Treasury secretaries, White House chiefs of staff and top economic advisers.

But the financial industry's high-level presence in Trump's burgeoning administration runs counter to some core campaign messages that energized his supporters.

And Goldman Sachs stocks are up 33 percent since Trump's election. Trump repeatedly warned that Clinton's Wall Street ties - the Democrat gave paid speeches to Goldman and other banks - meant she would never reform the financial industry. He promised that he would "drain the swamp" in Washington, a city he painted as beholden to financial and political special interests. And he cast himself as a champion for working-class people who watched the big banks grow wealthier after a government bailout, but haven't seen the effects of an improving economy in their own lives. "I'm not going to let Wall Street get away with murder," Trump told voters in Iowa. "Wall Street has caused tremendous problems for us." To Democrats, the fact that Trump is now plucking advisers from Wall Street smacks of



NEW YORK: Goldman Sachs COO Gary Cohn talks on his phone as he waits for the start of a meeting with President-elect Donald Trump at Trump Tower in New York. Trump is expected to pick Cohn to lead the White House National Economic Council, according to two people informed of the decision. — AP

hypocrisy. "Everyone who voted for Trump, who thought he'd defend working people, pay attention to the reality of what he's doing, not just his rhetoric," said Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who rallied against Wall Street's influence in Washington when he ran against Clinton in the Democratic primary.

The concentration of power among so many players who once worked at Goldman is sure to feed suspicions of a government at the service of Wall Street. Goldman was involved in the securities market for subprime mortgages, the same financial instruments that helped fuel the housing bubble and ultimately led millions of Americans to lose their homes to foreclosure. Wall Street executives also opposed the Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation signed by President Barack Obama, legislation Trump has vowed to overhaul. Trump's advisers dismiss charges that the president-elect is going back on his promises to put the interests of working-class Americans

ahead of financial institutions. They say Trump is tapping people who bring real-world experience and business acumen to Washington. "You're not going to find better people than those who have been at the top of finance, the top of our markets, understand the way our markets work," Kellyanne Conway, Trump's senior adviser, said on MSNBC. Democrats are sure to make an issue of Mnuchin's Wall Street ties in his confirmation hearing. Cohn doesn't need to be confirmed to serve as director of the National Economic Council, the White House post Trump is expected to name him to.

The NEC helps coordinate domestic and global issues, providing economic policy advice to the president and monitoring how the White House's agenda is implemented across the government. If Cohn accepts the job, he also will be the third Goldman executive to run the NEC. Robert Rubin was the NEC director under Bill Clinton, and Stephen Friedman had the job during George W Bush's administration. — AP

GREECE TO APPROVE NEW CUTS FOR 2017 IN PARLIAMENT VOTE

ATHENS: Greek lawmakers were to approve a new round of pay cuts and tax hikes for 2017 demanded by international creditors, with Athens hoping for an ECB stimulus next year. The vote in parliament, expected after midnight, will levy around one billion euros (\$1.07 billion) in extra taxes on cars, fixed telephone service, pay TV, fuel, tobacco, coffee, beer and other items.

Public spending on salaries and pensions will also be cut by 5.7 billion euros next year. Thousands of Greeks took part in union demonstrations and a general strike this week against the new cuts, but the leftist government majority is expected to approve the budget despite the misgivings of many of its lawmakers. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras needs to stay on good terms

with EU-IMF creditors to conclude an ongoing reforms audit early next year. Greece hopes that a deal will persuade the European Central Bank (ECB) to include Greek sovereign debt in its asset purchase program, known as quantitative easing, or QE. Without access to QE, the country will not be able to make a planned return to debt markets by early 2018, according to the Greek finance ministry.

Last week, eurozone lenders approved short-term relief measures to help Greece manage repayment on its huge public debt, which will reach 315 billion euros this year, according to the latest EU data. But Germany, facing public bailout fatigue and federal elections next year, has led a hardline stance among eurozone lenders to force

Greece to adopt austerity reforms well beyond the end of its present bailout 2018. Hardline EU states also want Greece to run a primary surplus, after debt servicing, of 3.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), beyond 2018.

Athens has flatly refused to consider further austerity measures beyond 2018. Tsipras on Thursday made a surprise move, announcing a one-off payout to 1.6 million low-tier pensioners, and a sales tax break for islands sheltering thousands of migrants. The European Commission said it was "not made aware of all the details of the announcement before they were made" and would need to study the 617-million-euro package "before commenting any further or acting further."

Tsipras' critics at home immedi-

ately denounced an electoral ploy, but the government insisted this was not the case. "Europe owes a debt to (these islanders), the Greek state owes them its support," Tsipras said in his announcement, with officials noting that the money would come out of 1.0 billion euros of tax surplus raised in 2016. Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos yesterday said Greece could manage a primary surplus of 2.5 percent, and dedicate a further 1.0 percent to tax breaks for small and medium businesses.

Tsakalotos on Saturday also praised Eurogroup chief Jeroen Dijsselbloem, a frequent critic of the Tsipras administration, as a man of principle. "He may be harsh some times, but he keeps his word," the minister told financial newspaper Agora. — AFP

SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY TO BUY STILLWATER MINING FOR \$2.2BN

BILLINGS, Montana: The company that owns Montana's largest mining complex announced Friday that it will be acquired by a South African company for \$2.2 billion in a deal that requires US government approval.

Sibanye Gold Limited will buy Littleton, Colorado-based Stillwater Mining Company under a merger agreement expected to close in the second quarter of 2017, said Stillwater Chief Executive Officer Mick McMullen. Sibanye (sih-BAHN'-yay) also will assume \$500 million of Stillwater's debt.

Stillwater is the only US producer of platinum and palladium, precious metals used in catalytic converters to reduce pollution from cars and trucks, and as jewelry. It employs more than 1,400 people at two mines in southern Montana's Beartooth Mountains and at a smelter and refinery in the small Montana town of Columbus.

As precious metals prices dropped in recent years, the company cut its workforce significantly, including about 120 workers from the Stillwater Mine and the Columbus facility. With prices rising for palladium, most of those workers have since been rehired and McMullen said he does not anticipate further job losses

stemming Friday's announcement.

"It's business as usual," McMullen told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. "These guys (Sibanye) have brought into a company that's not a turnaround story. This thing is running itself."

A US subsidiary of Sibanye will pay \$18 per share in cash in the acquisition, Stillwater said. Sibanye also will take on some of Stillwater's debt. Stillwater's pending plans to expand operations with two mining projects located near its existing mines and known as Blitz and Lower East Boulder will continue.

The deal was approved unanimously by Stillwater's board of directors, of which former Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer is chairman. The two-term governor and other board members will resign when the deal closes. Scott McGinnis with United Steelworkers Local 11-0001, the union for much of the company's workforce, said miners had no further information about the impact of the deal but will meet with Sibanye representatives on Monday. The acquisition must be approved by the two companies' shareholders and the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, an inter-agency committee that reviews takeovers of US businesses by foreign entities. — AP

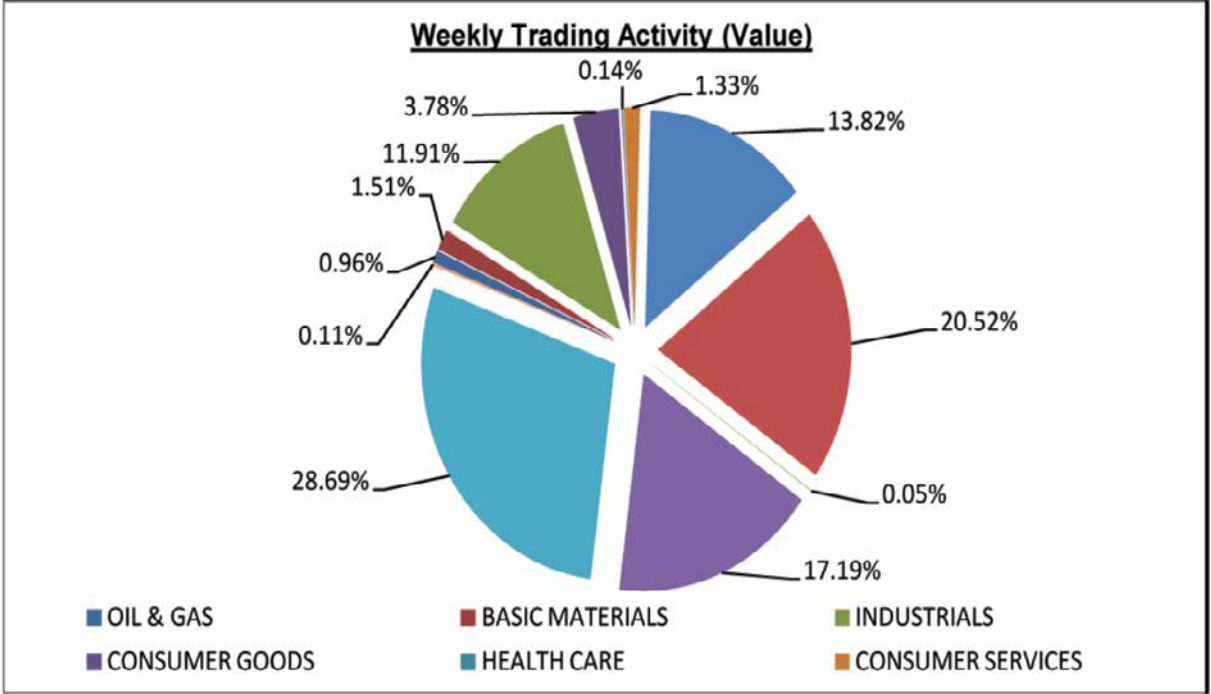
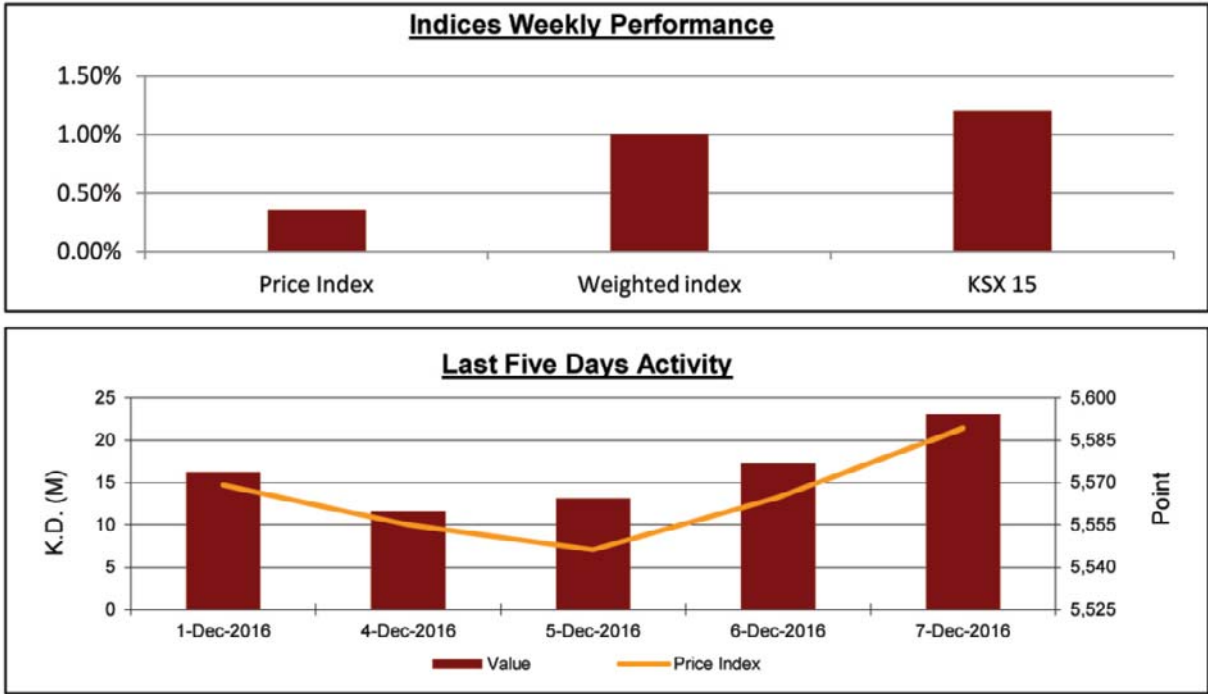


ATHENS: People shop at a green market in central Athens on Friday. The Greek Seamen Federation (PNO) decided to extend its strike until December 11, 2016. All kinds of ferries and ships have been docked at the ports since December 2, leading to shortages on the islands and driving farmers in outrage as they cannot send their agriculture and food products to the mainland or abroad. — AFP

AUDITORS REQUIRED

- ❖ Bachelor degree in Accounting at minimum.
- ❖ Prefer CPA, ACCA, CA.
- ❖ Three or more years of Audit work experience.
- ❖ Up-to-date knowledge in IFRS and IAS.
- ❖ Strong work ethics and professional conduct.
- ❖ Ability to manage time effectively and efficiently.
- ❖ Excellent command in English & Arabic languages.
- ❖ Excellent computer skills.
- ❖ Transferable residence.

If you fulfill the above requirements, kindly
Fax your C.V. to : 22454248
Email your C.V. to: hr_at013@yahoo.com



BOURSA KUWAIT EQUITIES REMAIN BUOYANT

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week in the green zone. The Price Index closed at 5,589.16 points, up by 0.36 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index increased by 1 percent after closing at 373.31 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 872.82 points up by 1.21 percent. Furthermore, the week's average daily turnover increased by 32.58 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 16.23 million, whereas trading volume average was 165.96 million shares, recording an increase of 61.89 percent.

The Boursa's three main indices were able to realize weekly gains once again after it witnessed fluctuation in its performance during the earlier week, affected by the purchasing activity on the heavy and leading stocks, especially the ones expected to distribute cash dividends and stocks for the financial year 2016. Despite the negative start that the Boursa initiated its last week's trading with, where the indices recorded different losses in the first session of the week as a result to the profit collection operations; it was able to compensate its losses gradually supported by the return of the purchasing operations to be in control over the trading activity once again, to end the week in the green zone.

As per the daily performance, the Kuwait Boursa's indices initiated its first session of the week with different losses recorded to its three indices affected by the selling pressures and the profit collection operations that included some stocks of previous increases; such performance came in light of a decline in the trading activity compared to the previous session, where the liquidity level dropped at the end of the session by 28.5 percent, while the volume decreased by 36.51 percent.

Monday's session witnessed a mixed closing to the three indices, where the Price Index continued its decline due to the profit collection operations and the quick speculations executed on some small-cap stocks, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices were able to increase by the end of the session supported by the random trading and the purchasing

| BOURSA KUWAIT INDICES | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|--------|
| Weekly | | Price Index | Weighted index | KSX 15 |
| | Last week | 5,589.16 | 373.31 | 872.82 |
| | Previous week | 5,569.00 | 369.61 | 862.41 |
| | Change (Point) | 20.16 | 3.70 | 10.41 |
| Annual | | | | |
| | Last year | 5,615.12 | 381.70 | 900.43 |
| | Change (Point) | -25.96 | -8.39 | -27.61 |
| | Change (%) | -0.46% | -2.20% | -3.07% |

operations that included some leading stocks; the Boursa witnessed such performance in light of an increased trading activity compared to Sunday's session, where the cash liquidity recorded by the end of the session an increase of 13.16 percent, while the volume increased by 37.85 percent.

On Tuesday's session, the three market indices were able to increase and end the session in the green zone, supported by the continued purchasing activity on the leading and operational stocks, in addition to the speculative operations executed on some small-cap stocks; such performance came as a result to the continued growth in the trading activity, where the value increased by 31.32 percent, and the volume grew by 19.48 percent. On the end of week session, the Boursa indices returned to fluctuate once again, where the Price and Weighted indices were able to realize gain by the end of the session, however the KSX-15 went against the current and ended the last session of the week in the red zone; and such performance came in light of a growth in the trading levels, as the value reached its highest level since last October being at KD 23.03 million, up by 33.80 percent, and the volume recorded a growth of 18.35 percent to reach 216.58 million stock.

By the end of the week, the market capitalization for the listed companies in the primary market reached KD 25.63 billion, up by 2.28 percent compared to its level in a week earlier, where it reached then KD 25.06 billion. On an annual level, the market cap for the listed com-

panies in the primary market recorded a growth of 1.44 percent from its value at end of 2015, where it reached then KD 25.27 billion.

As far as Boursa Kuwait annual performance, the price index ended last week recording 0.46 percent annual loss compared to its closing in 2015, while the weighted index decreased by 2.20 percent, and the KSX-15 recorded 3.07 percent loss.

Sectors' Indices

Five of KSE's sectors ended last week in the green zone, six recorded declines, whereas the Health Care sector's index closed with no change from the week before. Last week's highest gainer was the Real Estate sector, achieving 2.19 percent growth rate as its index closed at 852.06 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Consumer Goods sector's index closed at 1,133.91 points recording 1.73 percent increase. The Basic Materials sector came in third as its index achieved 1.56 percent growth, ending the week at 974.11 points.

On the other hand, the Technology sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 11.67 percent to end the week's activity at 617.46 points. The Consumer Services sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 1.07 percent, closing at 910.62 points, followed by the Insurance sector, as its index closed at 950.47 points at a loss of 0.60 percent.

Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a

| MARKET ACTIVITY | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------|--------|
| | Last Week | Previous Week | Ch. % |
| Volume | 663,832,259 | 512,575,762 | 29.51% |
| Value (K.D) | 64,935,407 | 61,222,674 | 6.06% |
| Deals | 14,053 | 12,501 | 12.42% |

| MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.) | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Last Week | Previous Week | Weekly Ch. % | Annual Ch. % |
| 25,627,985,847 | 25,056,419,488 | 2.28% | 1.44% |

| TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------|
| Company | Last Week Closing | Previous Week Closing | Ch. (fils) | Ch. % |
| MASAKEN | 53.00 | 45.00 | 8.0 | 17.78% |
| AGHC | 55.00 | 49.00 | 6.0 | 12.24% |
| NRE | 102.00 | 91.00 | 11.0 | 12.09% |
| AREEC | 192.00 | 172.00 | 20.0 | 11.63% |
| SOKOUK | 35.00 | 32.00 | 3.0 | 9.38% |

| TOP LOOSERS OF THE WEEK | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------|---------|
| Company | Last Week Closing | Previous Week Closing | Ch. (fils) | Ch. % |
| OSOS | 134.00 | 164.00 | -30.0 | -18.29% |
| ALIMTIAZ | 95.00 | 104.00 | -9.0 | -8.65% |
| FUTUREKID | 106.00 | 114.00 | -8.0 | -7.02% |
| MARIN | 80.00 | 86.00 | -6.0 | -6.98% |
| UNICAP | 44.50 | 47.00 | -2.5 | -5.32% |

total trade volume of around 260.52 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 39.25 percent of the total market trading volume. The Real Estate sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 38.47 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 255.40 million shares.

On the other hand, the Financial Services

sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 18.63 million or 28.69 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Banks sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 13.33 million representing 20.52 percent of the total market trading value. — Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.

| SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY | | | | | SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Sector | Volume | To Market % | Value | To Market % | Sector | Last Week Closing | Previous Week Closing | Weekly Ch. % | Annual Ch. % |
| OIL & GAS | 15,786,483 | 2.38% | 621,638 | 0.96% | OIL & GAS | 778.08 | 781.41 | -0.43% | -4.97% |
| BASIC MATERIALS | 3,163,942 | 0.48% | 979,786 | 1.51% | BASIC MATERIALS | 974.11 | 959.14 | 1.56% | -1.24% |
| INDUSTRIALS | 40,540,723 | 6.11% | 7,734,951 | 11.91% | INDUSTRIALS | 1,268.09 | 1,269.86 | -0.14% | 21.58% |
| CONSUMER GOODS | 2,665,191 | 0.40% | 2,453,800 | 3.78% | CONSUMER GOODS | 1,133.91 | 1,114.58 | 1.73% | 3.56% |
| HEALTH CARE | 206,530 | 0.03% | 87,791 | 0.14% | HEALTH CARE | 1,267.54 | 1,267.54 | 0.00% | 36.98% |
| CONSUMER SERVICES | 5,763,604 | 0.87% | 861,221 | 1.33% | CONSUMER SERVICES | 910.62 | 920.44 | -1.07% | -9.72% |
| TELECOMMUNICATIONS | 28,639,304 | 4.31% | 8,977,152 | 13.82% | TELECOMMUNICATIONS | 625.36 | 625.83 | -0.08% | 4.47% |
| BANKS | 49,601,448 | 7.47% | 13,327,245 | 20.52% | BANKS | 828.61 | 821.54 | 0.86% | -8.65% |
| INSURANCE | 867,832 | 0.13% | 30,387 | 0.05% | INSURANCE | 950.47 | 956.17 | -0.60% | -15.66% |
| REAL ESTATE | 255,402,580 | 38.47% | 11,161,244 | 17.19% | REAL ESTATE | 852.06 | 833.76 | 2.19% | -9.43% |
| FINANCIAL SERVICES | 260,522,876 | 39.25% | 18,631,409 | 28.69% | FINANCIAL SERVICES | 580.62 | 574.59 | 1.05% | -2.48% |
| TECHNOLOGY | 671,746 | 0.10% | 68,783 | 0.11% | TECHNOLOGY | 617.46 | 699.03 | -11.67% | -24.71% |

RECORD-SETTING STOCK STREAK HITS 6TH DAY ON BROAD GAINS

GLOBAL MARKETS WEEKLY ROUNDUP

NEW YORK: US stocks rose for the sixth day in a row Friday as major indexes continued to set records. The biggest gains went to companies that have been mostly left out of the post-election rally, including health care companies and makers of household goods.

Stocks were solidly higher throughout the day and jumped an hour before the close of trading. Coca-Cola and Pfizer both gained 2.5 percent. Investors have mostly avoided consumer goods makers and health companies in recent weeks. Instead they've bought banks and machinery companies, which could benefit more from a faster-growing economy.

"What we're seeing today is investors who are fearful they'll be left behind," said Kate Warne, investment strategist for Edward Jones. "So it may not be surprising that they're buying less aggressive stocks and sectors." The Dow Jones industrial average climbed 142.04 points, or 0.7 percent, to 19,756.85. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 13.34 points, or 0.6 percent, to 2,259.53. The Nasdaq composite gained 27.14 points, or 0.5 percent, to 5,444.50. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks edged up 1.71 points, or 0.1 percent, to 1,388.07.

The S&P 500's six-day winning streak is its longest in two and a half years. Among household goods companies, PepsiCo gained \$1.42,

or 1.4 percent, to \$103.57. Energy drink maker Monster Beverage also rose, as did drugstore chains CVS and Walgreens.

Coca-Cola climbed as investors reacted positively to the company's CEO transition

plans. Coke said Muhtar Kent will give up his CEO title in May, and Chief Operating Officer James Quincey, a 20-year veteran of the company, will become CEO. Drug companies bounced back from their recent losses. Those



NEW YORK: Trader Peter Tuchman works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Friday. US stocks are opening higher Friday morning as major indexes continue to set records. — AP

stocks, especially biotechnology companies, were hit hard this week after President-elect Donald Trump said he wants to reduce drug prices. Bristol-Myers Squibb gained \$1.81, or 3.3 percent, to \$57.04 and Botox maker Allergan rose \$3.78, or 2 percent, to \$192.25.

Overall, health care companies are nearly flat since Nov 8. Technology stocks rose for the sixth consecutive day and completed their best week in a year. They've slightly lagged the market since Election Day. Chipmaker Broadcom rose \$8.38, or 4.9 percent, to \$179.09 after reporting earnings that were far above expectations. The company also doubled its quarterly dividend. Apple gained \$1.83, or 1.6 percent, to \$113.95. Google parent Alphabet reversed its post-election losses and picked up \$14.28, or 1.8 percent, to \$809.45. US government bond prices slipped again. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note inched up to 2.47 percent, its highest in about 18 months, from 2.41 percent late Thursday. That yield is used to set interest rates on many kinds of loans including mortgages.

Next week the Federal Reserve will meet for the last time in 2016. Investors expect the central bank to raise its key interest rate, and Wall Street will look for clues about the Fed's plans for future interest rates. "They're hoping that the Fed continues with the current message:

that they'll be patient, that they're watching the economy, and that they see the risks as balanced," said Warne.

Banks made small gains. The S&P 500 financial index has climbed 18.5 percent since Nov. 9, twice as much as any other sector. The S&P 500 overall is up 3.1 percent. Banks are trading at their highest prices since early 2008.

Benchmark US crude oil jumped 66 cents, or 1.3 percent, to \$51.50 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, the international standard, added 44 cents to \$54.33 a barrel in London.

Gold lost \$10.50 to \$1,161.90 an ounce. Silver fell 13 cents to \$16.97 an ounce. Copper picked up 2 cents to \$2.65 per pound. Gold reached a 10-month low Friday, and that helped pull mining companies lower. Basic materials makers also struggled. In other energy trading, wholesale gasoline was little changed at \$1.51 a gallon. Heating oil picked up 1 cent to \$1.64 a gallon. Natural gas gained 5 cents, or 1.4 percent, to \$3.75.

European stocks had an even stronger week than their US counterparts after the European Central Bank said it will spend another \$579 billion to stimulate the economy by buying bonds, but said it will buy slightly smaller amounts of bonds each month. It said the danger of deflation, which damages growth, had passed. — AP

KHALID AL-ZANKI: LAZY LEADERSHIP IS DEAD

MCCARTHY'S FAMOUS SEMINARS TO TAKE PLACE TODAY IN KUWAIT



Khalid Al-Zanki

KUWAIT: Entrepreneurs await the world's renowned corporate consultant, trainer and coach, Tom McCarthy to ignite their leadership skills at LAUNCH ON FIRE Meetup today.

Entrepreneur in Kuwait are reminded that McCarthy's visit is his 12th to Kuwait, which strictly aims at developing leadership styles and delivering peak performance. Creating a compelling story, surrounding yourself with winners and A-Players and many more are all among the many topics that will be discussed throughout McCarthy's keynote, titled: "Disrupt & Dominate."

Entrepreneur in Kuwait will learn the secrets to knowing what constitutes a true leader and how to deliver peak performance and become one of the top 10% of all effective leaders.

Khalid Al-Zanki, Host & Producer of LAUNCH ON FIRE Podcast said: "We are pleased to host Tom McCarthy in Kuwait for the 12th time due to his exceptional seminars and his extraordinary ability in igniting performance specially in small busi-

nesses. I work with Tom McCarthy all the time in developing the content and outcomes of customized seminars for Kuwait. We are keen on developing a national leadership programs for small and medium businesses in Kuwait and address these gaps through a series of seminars, workshops or trainings."

For more than a decade as a corporate consultant, speaker, trainer and coach, Tom has successfully taught hundreds of thousands of people how to dramatically increase their level of performance in business and in life. He has presented more than 1,500 seminars, workshops, and training programs to corporations and associations around the world.

After graduating from the University of North Carolina in 1983 where he was an honor student and a member of the nationally ranked football team, Tom became the youngest stockbroker ever hired by a prestigious Wall Street firm. By his second-year Tom had become one of the highest pro-

ducing brokers in the entire firm. Later he founded Thomas McCarthy & Associates, a thriving training and consulting firm, which works closely with clients ranging from new ventures to Fortune 500 companies.

In addition to coaching and training peak performers in business, Tom has also been hired to work with Olympic Gold Medalists as well as several World Champion athletes and teams. Tom resides in Rancho Santa Fe, California with his wife Stacy and their two children.

LAUNCH ON FIRE Business Podcast(s) mission is to educate, empower, entertain and inspire people by spreading knowledge of business and marketing. Khalid Al-Zanki launched LAUNCH ON FIRE Podcast in February 2014. His passion for sharing how entrepreneurship is transforming businesses, companies, human interactions, as well as influencing behavior and reshaping cultures motivated him to create what would become LAUNCH ON FIRE Business Podcast(s).

BURGAN BANK INVITES PREMIER CUSTOMERS TO ATTEND SCREENING OF 'STAR WARS - ROUGE ONE'

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, in collaboration with Grand Cinemas, announced yesterday that Premier Banking customers will be offered the chance to watch the first screening of "Star Wars - Rouge One" movie for free at the most luxurious VIP movie theatre - Grand Class VIP in Al Hamra Tower, on December 15th, 2016.

Each Premier customer can reserve two free seats, which will also include access to a light mini cuisine from the buffet dedicated to Premier customers at the "Grand Class VIP" lounge.

Accordingly, Burgan Bank allocated a special number to receive calls from Premier customers to reserve their free VIP seats for any of the three shows that will be available that day.

To book for the free seats, Premier Banking customers can call 22988405 (from 9:00am to 5:00 pm). Burgan Bank is committed to reward its premier customers with exclusive offers and a wide

range of benefits. These matchless benefits include the full attention of a highly professional Personal Banking Executive (PBE) who is assigned as a financial advisor for each premier banking customer. Other benefits include free access to more than 70 international airport lounges across the world, a variety of concierge services such as courier service, airport transfers, limousines for occasions, efficient car registration, and the payment of their children's school installments.

Additional benefits include a free travel insurance policy, which is provided upon completing a purchase transaction of airline tickets using any of Burgan Bank's Platinum (debit/credit cards) for customers and their immediate family members, in addition to free valet parking service at select venues and shopping malls across Kuwait and merchant discounts at selected retail outlets throughout the country.



Jawahery receiving the awards in Dubai.

KFH-BAHRAIN WINS 'BEST WEALTH MANAGEMENT' AWARD IN ME

CPI FINANCIAL ACCORDS 'BEST CORPORATE BANK' AWARD TOO

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain (KFH-Bahrain) is proud to announce that it has won the "Best Wealth Management Bank in the Middle East" and the "Best Corporate Bank in the Middle East" Awards from CPI Financial recently held at the prestigious 'Islamic Business & Finance' Awards ceremony held at Emirates Towers in Dubai.

Abdul Razak Jawahery, Executive Manager of Wealth Management at KFH-Bahrain, proudly accepted the accolades on behalf of the Bank from Mohammed Juma - Vice Chairman of CPI Financial at the ceremony. Upon receiving the Awards Abdul Razak Jawahery said: "Winning these prestigious Awards highlights the confidence of both the industry and our clients in KFH- Bahrain and KFH Group. We are particularly delighted that our Wealth Management team has been able to achieve the "Best Wealth Management Bank in the Middle East" after only a year from launching the division that shows the successful performance to our Clients. The

Wealth Management at KFH-Bahrain is the first Islamic asset management and tend to offer more returns to the clients."

Jawahery concluded, "We are also delighted to receive the "Corporate Bank Award in the Middle East", which reflects our commitment to the corporate sector. We will continue to focus on our vision and implement our strategies while contributing towards the economic growth and sustainability of the Kingdom of Bahrain."

This prestigious global annual event is organized by CPI Financial based in Dubai. CPI Financial is the leading publisher of financial magazines in the Middle East, namely, Banker Middle East, Islamic Business & Finance, FinanceME, Banker Africa and WEALTH Arabia. The Islamic Business & Finance Awards have been designed to encourage, inspire and reward excellence within the global Islamic Business and Finance community and they have become the yardstick by which Islamic Finance

institutions and practitioners across the globe measure themselves.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 446 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan, and Dubai.

KFH's mission is to achieve highest levels of excellence and innovation in the field of client service, while developing common interest for all those concerned with the financial institution. KFH's vision is to spearhead the global development in Islamic financial services, and to upgrade the bank into the level of becoming the most sustainable profitable Islamic bank in the world.

FEDERAL REGULATORS DECLINE TO RECONSIDER OREGON PIPELINE

PORTLAND, Oregon: Federal regulators on Friday refused to reconsider a 230-mile liquefied natural gas pipeline that would have terminated in the southern Oregon coastal town of Coos Bay, handing a serious setback to a multi-billion project to deliver the gas to markets in Asia.

In a 15-page opinion, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission denied requests from the Jordan Cove Energy Project, the Pacific Gas Connector Pipeline, the state of Wyoming and the Wyoming Pipeline Authority to reopen the case and reaffirmed the agency's decision from earlier this year. In that March 11 ruling, the agency found there was little evidence to support the need for a pipeline and not enough public benefit from the project, which has been tied up in a legal fight for several years.

Supporters of the pipeline, however, challenged the decision in an appeal and also moved to swing public opinion to their side. Wyoming, which was among those challenging that ruling, argued that FERC should have considered the economic benefit from the pipeline to its residents from increased natural gas production, royalties and taxes.

Colorado sent representatives to Oregon to lobby for the pipeline this fall

and Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper asked federal regulators to take another look at the \$7 billion project, which would allow it to ship natural gas to markets in Japan.

TV advertisements touting the pipeline's potential economic benefits aired in Oregon during last summer's Olympic Games.

Veresen Inc., the Calgary, Alberta-based company, said in a statement Friday that it would consider another appeal or might submit a new application to FERC.

"Veresen remains committed to this important energy infrastructure project," said Don Althoff, Veresen's president and CEO. "We are very disappointed by FERC's decision, especially in light of the significant progress that has been made in demonstrating market support for the project and the strong showing of public support for the project."

The pipeline route would have stretched from the farming town of Malin east of the Cascade Mountains, just north of the California border, to Coos Bay on the southern Oregon coast. The route, which was opposed by private landowners and environmentalists, would have crossed rivers, mountain ranges and a mix of private and public lands. — AP



PORTLAND: Native Americans from left, Eugene Sanchez, Jason Umtuch, Marten Mendenhall, and Hugh Ahnatock, all of Portland, Oregon, drum and sing at the Oceti Sakowin camp where people have gathered to protest the Dakota Access oil pipeline in Cannon Ball, ND. — AP

KIB NAMED 'BEST ISLAMIC BANK IN GCC' BY WORLD FINANCE

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that it was named "Best Islamic Bank in the GCC 2016" by World Finance. This recognition came as part of the annual GCC Investment & Development Awards bestowed by the leading UK-based magazine, renowned for being an independent assessment body specializing in the banking and finance sectors.

KIB received this latest accolade as a result of its outstanding performance in a number of key areas, including: quality of services and products, competitive future strategy, sound leadership, developing the local workforce and creating job opportunities, corporate governance and dedication to transparency, sustainable development, commitment to innovation and technological development, and leading social responsibility policies.

Commenting on this latest accolade, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman of KIB, said: "Receiving this award is a milestone achievement for KIB, and it only adds to our existing record of excellence and leadership within the Arab Islamic banking sector. It also underscores our position as a premier Islamic bank not only in Kuwait, but across the GCC as well."

Al-Jarrah further added: "We are proud to always be developing and growing as a bank, and this honor comes as a continuation of KIB's ongoing streak of successes and accomplishments. It also serves to highlight a new phase in our journey, marked by stability and high performance within the framework of a highly competitive regional and international banking



industry. Today, we are determined more than ever before to forge ahead with our strategic plans, which focus on enhancing our position and status within the market by offering innovative sharia compliant banking solutions."

Additionally, Al-Jarrah spoke of KIB's commitment to supporting and developing human capital, stating: "The success of any organization depends on the efforts and dedication of its employees; therefore KIB prioritizes human resources development and focuses heavily on investing in its human capital. The Bank's team



Sheikh Mohammad Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah

features highly qualified and experienced banking professionals across all levels of the organization, and we strive to attract the best local and international talent who add value to our business and operations."

In a testament to the Bank's ongoing success and solid performance, KIB has garnered numerous local and international prestigious awards over the span of the past few years. One of the biggest accolades was being named "The Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait" by World Finance for three consecutive years (2014, 2015 and 2016). KIB was also named "Best Sharia-Compliant Bank in the Middle East" for the year 2015 by Capital Finance International, and won "Best Banking Vision" for the year 2016 by CPI Financial in the Islamic Business and Finance Awards category.



NISSAN AL-BABTAIN BREAKS NEW GROUND WITH REENGINEERED ALL-NEW PICK-UP NAVARA

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain Co (AABC), the authorized agent of Nissan in the State of Kuwait launched its all-new Nissan pick-up Navara, which sets completely new standards for the segment in toughness, performance, styling and advanced features.

The all-new Nissan pick-up Navara has already been named International Pick-up of the Year 2016 in Europe. It builds on Nissan's 80-year heritage with 14 million pickups sold in over 170 countries through 12 generations. Combining toughness and modernity, it is the ideal vehicle for dual users who depend on their pick-up for professional and personal use.

In-line with Nissan's promise of "Innovation that Excites", the all-new pick-up Navara introduces an array of new features and in-car technology to a segment that has traditionally been slow to adopt the very latest in comfort and safety while delivering unmatched fuel efficiency and the lowest maintenance costs for its class. Many of these features set the benchmark for this segment and provide customers with more advanced levels of technology than ever seen in a pick-up.

Key features of the all-new pick-up Navara Tough

Segment Leader in Power and Torque. The all-new Nissan pick-up Navara is changing the standards that modern pick-ups are measured by, and with one engine size 2.5l (diesel and gasoline) it is already a segment leader in power and torque, offering the highest horse power in its class of 162 Hp and 403Nm of torque (within 2.5 liter engines range).

Class leading transmission

The all-new Nissan pick-up Navara offers class-leading transmissions and is a segment leader in delivering a 7-speed automatic transmission. The all-new Navara is also the only Japanese pick-up that offers a 6-speed manual transmission in any pick-up class, making it uniquely appealing to both types of drivers.

As customers have come to expect, the new model is as capable off-road as it is on-road. The four-wheel drive system builds on the strengths of the previous generation model to deliver surefooted traction over

rough terrain. The system is engaged and disengaged electronically via a rotary button located on the dashboard. For best economy and handling drivers can stay in 2WD mode on the road, while for off-road conditions drivers can select the 4HI mode while driving up to 100km/h.

Fully boxed frame

The all-new Nissan pick-up Navara's full boxed frame delivers improved stiffness and durability that is usually reserved for full-size trucks, while boosting the Navara's payload to 1-ton.

Improving refinement and delivering a SUV-style driving experience was a key element of the model's development. To help achieve this without compromising the vehicle's acclaimed off-road ability, Nissan designed an all-new rigid leaf suspension system, providing significantly improved ride comfort and improved handling.

Advanced

Striking Interior and Exterior Design: The all-new Nissan pick-up Navara has an

advanced design that encompasses many unique design features as standard including signature LED headlamps, electric folding side mirrors, roof rails, side steps, 16-inch alloy wheels and chrome exterior accents to complement its exciting, modern look. Moreover with D/C bed size of 2.5M2 this makes it a segment leader.

The strikingly designed interior brings new levels of luxury and refinement to the segment, too, with a leather steering wheel and a 5-inch central infotainment screen providing a premium look and feel.

SUV-like technologies

Nissan has a proven track record in the SUV segment and has brought much of that design influence to the fore with this new pick-up. The all-new interior has been designed for comfort and modernity, and is packed with SUV-like technologies that come as standard including a 5-inch color display with rear-view reverse camera, Bluetooth connectivity, parking sensors, dual zone air-conditioning, smart key entry with push-button starter, cruise con-

trol and audio switch controls on the steering wheel.

Segment leader in running cost

The all-new Nissan pick-up Navara is also a segment leader in running costs due to its unmatched fuel efficiency and lowest maintenance costs for its class.

Unique safety features

The all-new Nissan pick-up Navara comes equipped with advanced safety features as standard such as ABS brakes and traction control, as well as SUV-like features that include Limited Slip Differential (LSD), Hill Start Assist which prevents the NAVARA from rolling backwards when starting up a steep ascent, as well as Hill Decent Assist to limit downhill speeds without using the brakes.

The all-new pick-up Navara, with its impressive array of performance, safety, technology, comfort and convenience features, and coupled with efficient running costs make this vehicle the ideal partner for work and leisure.

TABLEZ SIGNS MASTER FRANCHISE AGREEMENT WITH GRUPO CORTEFIEL DEAL TO BRING SPRINGFIELD AND WOMEN'S SECRET TO INDIA

BENGALURU: Tablez, the brand retailing company is all set to unfold a new chapter in the retail landscape, in association with Grupo Cortefiel, one of Europe's leading fashion retailers. In a gala ceremony held at the Shangri-La Hotel in Bengaluru on Thursday, Tablez signed a master franchise agreement with Grupo Cortefiel to bring two of its brands, Springfield - a youth-oriented casual fashion brand and Women's Secret - an innerwear, swimwear and sleepwear brand to India.

The agreement outlines plans for 60 stores in India over the next five years. The first store is slated to open by April 2017 in Bengaluru. Springfield will have a mix of large format flagship stores and exclusive brand outlets, while Women's Secret would mainly concentrate on exclusive brand outlets. A few Women's Secret stores will be alongside the large format flagship stores of Springfield.

Springfield, the group's most youthful and urban brand offers laidback casual styles based on

the concept of real clothing for real people, while Women's Secret is a brand created for and by women that work to develop a global reputation that combines prestige, femininity and modernity.

Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director, Tablez, said "We are pleased to sign this master franchise agreement with Grupo Cortefiel. We see tremendous potential for brand retailing in India and we are delighted to have aligned with Grupo Cortefiel, which has an outstanding track record in fashion retail. With the introduction of Springfield and Women's Secret, we aim to expand our footprint in the lifestyle and apparel brand segment. The young demographic of India and emergence of fast fashion segment offers opportunity for rapid growth for both the brands."

Antonios Kyprianou, Group Franchise General Manager, Grupo Cortefiel, said "It has been our long intention to enter the market in India, as its one of the most important markets but at the same time challenging. For every international

company that wants to be successful in any market outside of their home market, one of the most important parameters is finding the right local partner. With Tablez team we share the same vision and passion for this market and for this reason we decided to partner together on this challenge."

Tablez is a brand retailing company and has recently introduced innovative food brands like Bloomsbury - the Boutique Café and Artisan Bakery, Galitos - Flame Grilled Chicken and Cold Stone - the Ultimate Ice Cream Experience to India.

CORTEFIEL GROUP was founded in 1880 as a family business in the Madrid Romanones street and is now one of Europe's leading fashion retailers operating in the specialised chain segment. It is made up of four own brands: Cortefiel, Springfield, Women's Secret, Pedro del Hierro and an outlet chain: Fifty Factory. Grupo Cortefiel, headquartered in Spain has a network of more than 2,100 stores across 85 countries.



MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS' OPENS SHOWROOMS IN HAWALLY, MAHBOULA



Malabar Gold & Diamonds' Mahboula showroom opening



Malabar Gold & Diamonds' Hawally showroom opening

KUWAIT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds' the leading jewellery retailer across the globe launched its 159th and 160th showrooms on the same day at Hawally; next to Grand Hypermarket & Mahboula; block 1/A, street 10, Public Authority for Minors Affairs complex/A in Kuwait, both on Thursday, 8th December, thus extending its presence in Kuwait. The grand opening was celebrated exhibiting the finest collection of gold, diamond, platinum, precious gems and pearl jewellery for their customers in Kuwait. The 159th showroom at Hawally was

inaugurated by Sheikh Dawood Dawood Salman Al-Sabah from royal family in the presence of Major Ali Hamdan Zaid Al-Daihani, Chief Adviser, Farwaniya Governorate ; Fahad Salim Fajji, Protocol Officer, Farwaniya Governorate; Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; KP Abdul Salam - Group Executive Director, Malabar Group; Ayoub Kachery, Regional Director, Grand Hypermarket; Afsal Khan-Zonal Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Kuwait, invited guests, media and well-wishers.

The 160th showroom at Mahboula was inaugurated by Major Ali Hamdan Zaid Al-Daihani, Chief Adviser, Farwaniya Governorate in the presence of Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; KP Abdul Salam - Group Executive Director, Malabar Group, invited guests, media and well-wishers.

The outlets unveil a significantly large collection of traditional as well as contemporary designer jewellery. The new showrooms showcases the exquisite collection of gold jewellery in 18K, 22K and 24K

alongside Diamond, Uncut diamond and precious gem jewellery handpicked for the jewellery lovers in Kuwait. Malabar group offers exquisite and beautiful jewelry as a part of various brands presented at Malabar Gold & Diamonds' namely Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewellery, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewellery, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Divine- Indian Heritage Jewellery, Precia - Gem Jewellery and Starlet - Kids Jewellery.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has been working towards extending a strong presence across the

globe and continues striving towards being the most preferred jewellery retailer among customers. Presently, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has a strong presence in the Kuwait market having showrooms in Al-Rai, Maliya, Mahboula, Dajeej, Fahaheel, and Hawally. With six showrooms presently and few more to be launched, Malabar Gold & Diamonds' will be the largest gold & diamond jewellery retailer in Kuwait. The wide network of showrooms helps the brands stays close to its valued customers in Kuwait.

AVAYA EXTENDS ACE-FX TRAINING PROGRAM TO FURTHER DRIVE SKILLS

DUBAI: Avaya today announced it is extending its Avaya Certified Expert-Fx program to further drive skills and training in the latest SDN-Fx fabric-based networking technologies. The ACE-Fx Part II curriculum will focus on the advanced techniques required to implement Avaya's fabric solutions that are underpinning digital strategies for organizations globally. As companies look to implement digital transformation strategies and leverage technology trends like the Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing and mobility, organizations struggle to find workers with the required skills to implement these technologies safely and securely.

Lack of skills and resources was cited by 53% of organizations as one of the biggest barriers to implementing digital transformation projects, according to research by International Data Corporation (IDC). The ACE-Fx program was created to bridge this skills gap between traditional, hardware-intensive networking technologies and next-generation, software-defined fabric-based networking. It enables engineers and IT professionals to deliver the transformational networking capabilities



Maan Al-Shakarchi, Head of Networking, AMEA and APAC, Avaya

provided by the innovative Avaya SDN Fx architecture.

Avaya SDN Fx provides a complete next-generation networking solution that delivers, now, on the promise of

SDN, allowing for "connect anything, anywhere" simplicity to more easily add devices and users at the network edge. SDN Fx enables advanced strategies for smart architectures and the IoT. It elimi-

nates the tradeoff between security and complexity by automating the onboarding and access of devices, users, switches and servers to make protecting and managing every-where access effortless.

Progressive structure

With the extraordinary exponential growth Avaya's SDN Fx architecture has witnessed in the last 24 months, ACE-Fx II builds on the progressive structure of the ACE-Fx program, which is structured to provide a continuous journey for networking professionals to develop their career and enhance their skills on an ongoing basis. Since the program was launched last year, over 450 networking professionals have become members of the ACE-Fx community, with the training being successfully delivered in 50 cities worldwide.

The extended program allows individuals to deepen their knowledge and experience of advanced networking technologies under the Avaya SDN Fx umbrella, covering Fabric Connect, Fabric Extend and Fabric Attach, as well as advanced integration of IP Multicast and IP Routing. The intensive five-day

training program includes designing and implementing an Avaya Fabric solution including Fabric Extend and Fabric Attach technologies. ACE-Fx II also recognizes existing network industry certifications from other entities, allowing networking professionals to directly enter the ACE-Fx class without reinvesting in other Avaya courses.

Avaya is continually expanding and refining the ACE-Fx program, with the company introducing virtual training for Part I and Part II training. Professionals who successfully complete the courses become members of the ACE-Fx community, which allows them to attend Avaya industry events, and receive additional support and resources from Avaya. ACE-Fx II was announced at the Avaya ENGAGE event, taking place this week at Atlantis the Palm, Dubai, with more than 1,500 executives, customers and partners from over 70 countries attending. The four-day event is bringing together senior Avaya executives, industry leaders, technology innovators and key decision makers, delivering invaluable insight into key technology trends and the opportunities they represent.

SNAPCHAT, THE VANISHING-PHOTO APP MANAGED NOT TO FADE

NEW YORK: Snapchat has managed to build something lasting out of photos that vanished almost instantly. The fast-growing social network for millennial has come a long way since its founder Evan Spiegel dropped out of Stanford University in 2012, three classes shy of graduation. His goal at the time was to create a snappy way for people to send photos, videos and messages - all of which would disappear just 10 seconds after viewing.

Snapchat cut a sharp contrast to Facebook and other social networks, which encouraged people to share and share often - even those spontaneous moments they might come to regret the next morning or at the next job interview. Snapchat, by contrast, let people "show and share things that they do not want to last on the internet as a permanent record," said Ira Kalb, a marketing and branding professor at the University of Southern California.

That feature, however, quickly associated the company with "sexting," the sharing of sexually explicit photos through cellphone messaging. Had Snapchat done nothing else, it might well have faded quickly itself, as such fads often do. Instead, Snapchat showed a knack for evolving as its users did. It's now a full-featured messaging service popular with millennials and big brands alike. It even rebranded as Snap Inc. and now calls itself "a camera company."

Now it's hoping to make itself into a big winner on Wall Street as well. According to news reports, Snap is readying for a public stock offering that could value the company at \$20 billion to \$25 billion. Snap declined to comment.

Refusing to disappear

The company has worked hard to roll out new features so users don't get bored. "Stories" allows individuals and brands to create a narrative from messages, videos and photos from the past 24 hours. It's so popular that Facebook's Instagram now has a version of it, and Instagram just rolled out disappearing photos, too. A "Discover" section serves as a wide-ranging news section, featuring material tailored for millennials by a select group of publishers.

"Lenses" lets people add different animated overlays to photos and videos; the feature has proven to be popular both with young adults and advertisers. "Snapchat has steadily introduced new features ... and in terms of user engagement it seems like users are spending quite a bit of time in each," said eMarketer analyst Catherine Boyle.

Amanda Peters, 22, a dance instructor in Fairfax, Virginia, wasn't sure how much she would use Snapchat when she got it as a college freshman in 2012. But she's grown to like it more with Lenses. "I like the goofy filters," she said. "They're always changing them up, which is nice. Every day you can go to see what's new."

Snap's ad revenue has jumped from \$59 million in 2015 to nearly \$367 million in 2016, according to eMarketer. It's on pace to have more monthly active users than Twitter - which counts 317 million - by the end of the year. Of course, that is still dwarfed by Facebook, with 1.79 billion monthly active users as of Sept 30.

Learning to grow

But while Snap is popular with the coveted 18- to 34-year old audience, it will eventually have to broaden its appeal to grow. "It's a great base to start with, (but) ultimately they need to become a little bit broader in terms of appeal to users in order to become broader in terms of appeal to advertisers," Gartner analyst Brian Blau said.

Twitter went public in 2013 to high acclaim, but it hasn't succeeded in growing its membership at the rate investors want. It recently laid off 9 percent of its workforce. As part of belt tightening, Twitter also killed its Vine video app, which was wildly popular with teens but didn't have a reliable way to make revenue. It's clearly a fate Snap - with a similar youthful audience - wants to avoid.

Now you see them, now you don't

For now, though, Snap is managing to remain hip and even has an unconventional distribution strategy for Spectacles, \$130 sunglasses that take video for sharing on Snapchat. You can't just order one online - yet. Rather, they have to find a vending machine or temporary store popping up with just 24 hours' notice. So far, vending machines have showed up near the company's headquarters in the Venice Beach section of Los Angeles, as well as in Big Sur, California, and New York.

Lines in New York stretched for hours when the machines first appeared. Geoff Golberg, who works in marketing in New York, waited three hours in line. An active livestreamer, he livestreamed himself on Periscope as he bought the Spectacles. "It was a spectacle," Golberg said in a phone interview. "Inside everyone is taking video, posting content to Instagram and taking Snaps. They created so much buzz around this product by limiting supplies."

Even so, Blau said Spectacles are a niche product that likely won't be a major growth driver. And Snap needs growth - as well as even more ways to evolve to keep its existing users engaged. Savannah Russell, 16, a student in Minneapolis, is a devoted Snapchat user, building up "streaks" of daily Snaps with her friends. She said that without Snapchat, she "would show up to school on Monday and be very out of the loop." But she said she doesn't know how long she'll stick with it. "The happiness comes from being able to interact with my friends (not the app)," she said. "If something that comes up that's better I could see myself switching to that." —AP



NEW YORK: In this Monday, Nov 28, 2016 photo, a vending machine containing Spectacles stands in a closed store, in New York. —AP



CUBA: In this April 1, 2014 file photo, students gather behind a business looking for an Internet signal for their smart phones in Havana, Cuba. — AP

GOOGLE TO GIVE CUBANS FASTER ACCESS TO CONTENT 'WILLING TO GO A LITTLE FURTHER WITH GOOGLE'

HAVANA: Google and the Cuban government have struck a deal giving Cubans faster access to the internet giant's content, two people familiar with the agreement said Friday. Eric Schmidt, chairman of Google's parent company, will formally sign the deal Monday morning in Havana, the two people said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because the agreement has not yet been publicly announced.

It allows Cubans access to a network called Google Global Cache that stores content from Google-run sites like Gmail, Google Drive and YouTube on servers that sit within relatively short distances of their end users around the world. Cuba suffers from some of the world's slowest internet speeds due to a range of problems that include the convoluted, and thus slower, paths that data must travel between Cuban users and servers that are often in the US.

Cuban officials appear to be accelerating their approvals of deals with US companies in an attempt to build momentum behind US-Cuba normalization before President-elect Donald Trump takes office next month. The

Google pact will be announced less than a week after Cuba gave three US cruise companies permission to begin sailing to the island next year. Officials familiar with the negotiations say other deals, including one with General Electric, are in the works. The US and Cuba have struck a series of bilateral deals on issues ranging from environmental protection to direct mail since the declaration of detente on Dec 17, 2014, but business ties have failed to keep pace.

Weak links in the chain

The Cuban government has blamed the US trade embargo on Cuba. Many US businesses say Cuba has been moving on most proposals so slowly that some suspect the government has been deliberately limiting the development of economic ties. The Google program to be announced Monday could provide ammunition for US advocates of closer ties with Cuba. Both pro-detente forces and those arguing for a hard line on President Raul Castro's single-party government have been pushing for Cubans to have better access to information.

If the Google deal proves to truly improve

internet access for a significant number of Cubans, it ties information access to US-Cuban detente in a way that could prove politically difficult to undo for anti-Castro officials in the incoming Trump administration. It wasn't immediately clear if the Cuba server or servers would be on the island itself, or just closer than current ones. Neither was it clear how much faster Cuban users would be able to see Google content - home internet connections remain illegal for virtually all Cubans, forcing them to use public WiFi spots that are often shared by dozens of people at a time and run at achingly slow speeds.

"There are many other weak links in the chain," said Larry Press, a California-based expert on the Cuban internet. He said that while the technological impact of the deal remained unclear, it was a significant development for a country that has shied away from any ties between US companies and a telecommunications infrastructure that is closely guarded against real or imagined threats to national security. "It's also a sign that they're willing to go a little further with Google," Press said. — AP

GOV PROPOSAL ENVISIONS PHONE CALLS ON FLIGHTS

WASHINGTON: Airlines could let passengers make in-flight phone calls using Wi-Fi under a proposal from federal regulators. Flight attendants and others have complained that the calls could be disruptive. But the Department of Transportation said Thursday that it envisioned allowing the calls if airlines tell all customers about the policy when they buy their tickets.

That way, customers could make other travel arrangements if they feared sitting next to passengers chatting on their phones. There is a 60-day comment period, and the proposal leaves the door open to the possibility that federal officials could still impose an outright ban. The Federal Communications Commission prohibits passengers from making cell phone calls during flights, but not Wi-Fi calls.

"Today's proposal will ensure that air travelers are not unwillingly exposed to voice calls, as many of them are troubled over the idea of pas-

sengers talking on cell phones in flight," Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said in a statement. In 2014, the department issued a request for public comments on the possibility of permitting the calls and the response was overwhelmingly negative.

Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, said anything short of a ban on calls is "reckless." Flight attendants have said previously that they fear the calls could lead to fights between passengers who want to make calls and passengers who don't want to listen to the conversations. "It threatens aviation security and increases the likelihood of conflict in the skies. It threatens safety for crews and passengers," Nelson said.

However, the US airlines' trade group opposes a government ban on in-flight calls. "We have long held that this was not a matter for DOT to regulate, and we believe airlines should be able

to determine what services can be safely offered in flight and make those decisions based on what is in the best interests of their passengers and crewmembers," a spokeswoman for Airlines for America, Kathy Grannis Allen, said by email.

Southwest Airlines and Alaska Airlines said they have no plans to allow voice calls. "Our customers have expressed concerns regarding the potentially disruptive nature of in-flight voice calls," said Southwest spokesman Brian Parrish. Alaska Airlines spokeswoman Bobbie Egan said the carrier surveyed passengers a few years ago and got "a strong reaction" that they didn't want calls. A Delta Air Lines spokeswoman noted that the carrier has opposed voice calls for several years. United Airlines said it was reviewing the proposal and would listen to the views of customers and employees. American referred questions to the trade group. JetBlue did not have an immediate comment. —AP



NEW YORK: In this photo, medical assistant Jennifer Martinez draws blood from Joshua Smith that will be tested for PFOS levels in Newburgh, New York. —AP

TESTS SHOW LEAD IN EAST CHICAGO DRINKING WATER

EAST CHICAGO: Environmental Protection Agency officials say the federal agency's tests have discovered elevated levels of lead in drinking water in a northwestern Indiana city where contamination already has forced some residents to move. The EPA on Thursday confirmed the lead levels in some homes in East Chicago. Acting regional administrator Robert Kaplan told The (Northwest Indiana) Times that the results are preliminary and don't indicate if there is a widespread problem. He advised concerned residents to use a water filter.

Earlier this year, some residents of public housing were told to move because of high levels of lead and arsenic found at the complex, which is on the former site of a plant that melted lead and copper and is on the EPA's list of priority cleanup sites. The EPA said in November that it would conduct a number of pilot programs, including drinking water testing at properties at the Superfund site. East Chicago Mayor Anthony Copeland wrote in a letter posted online and confirmed by his office that says

the EPA told him 18 of the 45 homes tested had at least one water sample exceeding the standard of 15 parts per billion for lead in drinking water.

Even low lead levels in children can reduce IQ, ability to pay attention and academic achievement. In his letter, Copeland criticized the EPA for using what he called a "new, unproven (and) unaccredited test" and releasing the data without quality control procedures. But the EPA doesn't fault the city for not knowing about the lead drinking water levels sooner, Kaplan said.

"This is not a test typically conducted by a water authority. No one is faulting the water authority," said Kaplan, adding that the testing isn't new and has been used elsewhere. Copeland says he's asking for state and federal funding to replace all water infrastructure that may contain lead or violate water safety standards. The dangers of lead contamination were highlighted this year by the crisis in Flint, Michigan, where old pipes leached lead into the city's drinking water beginning in 2014.—AP

JAPAN LAUNCHES MUCH-NEEDED SUPPLIES TO SPACE STATION

CAPE CANAVERAL: A Japanese capsule blasted off with much-needed supplies for the International Space Station on Friday, a week after a Russian shipment was destroyed shortly after liftoff. The Russian rocket accident and the grounding of one of NASA's commercial suppliers make this delivery all the more urgent. The spacecraft should arrive at the station Tuesday. "Have a safe flight," French astronaut Thomas Pesquet said in a tweet from the space station. "Looking forward to your arrival!"

The capsule - called Kounotori, or white stork - contains nearly 5 tons of food, water and other supplies, including six new lithium-ion batteries for the station's solar power system. Astronauts will conduct spacewalks next month to replace the old nickel-hydrogen batteries that store energy generated by the station's big solar panels. This is Japan's sixth shipment to the 250-mile-high outpost, currently home to Pesquet, two Americans and three Russians. It launched from Tanegashima Space Center in southern Japan.

Launches by SpaceX, meanwhile, have been on hold since a September rocket explosion on the pad in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The helium pressurization system in the rocket's upper stage was breached, resulting in a massive fireball. The company hopes to resume flights next month from Southern California. Iridium Communications satellites will be aboard that initial launch. A space station supply run is supposed to follow a few weeks later from Cape Canaveral.

In a televised interview from the space station following Friday's launch, NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson said there are already enough supplies to last until spring. The Japanese shipment will stretch that out even further. The Russians lost a spacesuit in the Dec 1 launch accident, among many other items, she noted. "Spaceflight's not an easy thing," Whitson said. "We just have to keep pressing ourselves to do the right thing, make sure we're doing all the right tests ... so that we don't have these problems."—AP



JAPAN: In this photo taken on December 9, 2016, Japan's H-IIIB rocket launches from the Tanegashima Space Center in Tanegashima island, Kagoshima prefecture. —AFP

SOUTH BEACH HALTS ZIKA'S SPREAD, BUT RISKS REMAIN

'WE'RE 'Z-FREE' - I WON'T SAY THE WHOLE WORD'

MIAMI BEACH: Florida declared its crisis with local transmission of Zika over for the season Friday in a welcome announcement ahead of peak tourism months, but health authorities warned that travelers would continue bringing the disease into the state. Starting in late July, state health officials had identified four zones in the Miami area where the virus was spreading through local mosquitoes - the first such transmissions in the continental US - and launched aggressive efforts to control the insects.

One by one, the zones were deemed clear of continuing infections, and Gov Rick Scott announced Friday that the last one - a 1.5-square-mile area in touristy South Beach - also was cleared. The beginning of South Florida's cool winter season also helped suppress the disease-carrying mosquitoes, Florida Health Secretary Dr. Celeste Philip said. Although the mosquito threat has abated, Philip noted that travelers would continue to arrive from elsewhere with the virus and that it could still be spread between people through sexual contact.

"Hopefully, by next summer, we'll have a federal government that has a vaccine," said Scott, a

Republican who has repeatedly criticized federal officials for an impasse over Zika funding. Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez said in a statement that he met this week with the director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to plan for potential Zika outbreaks next year. Local officials also said residents should continue to do their part to control mosquitoes year-round in South Florida.

About 250 people have contracted Zika in Florida, and over 980 more Zika infections in the state have been linked to travel, according to state health officials. Zika causes mild flu-like symptoms for most people, but it can cause severe brain-related birth defects when pregnant women become infected. The CDC lifted a warning for pregnant women to stay out of the South Beach zone altogether, but the agency still urges them to consider postponing nonessential travel to Miami-Dade County. Zika testing is recommended for all pregnant women and their partners if they've traveled to Miami-Dade County since Aug 1.

There have been 187 pregnant women in Florida who tested positive for the Zika virus,

including women infected elsewhere, state health officials said Friday. Ninety-five of those women have sought treatment through the University of Miami Health System and Jackson Memorial Hospital, according to Dr. Christine Curry, an obstetrician-gynecologist and the co-director of the university's Zika Response Team. For her patients, clearing the South Beach zone "doesn't mean they get off the hook of wearing repellent and long clothing and being cautious overall," Curry said.

Researchers say some birth defects caused by Zika infections may not be apparent at birth but develop months later. Florida's tourism industry initially panicked when mosquitoes began spreading the disease in Miami's arty Wynwood district in July, but the state nonetheless saw record number of visitors so far this year, including to last week's art fairs in South Beach and Wynwood. Still, tourism officials at Scott's news conference were jubilant. "We're 'Z-free' - I won't say the whole word," Bill Talbert, president and CEO of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, said at the rooftop news conference at a hotel on South Beach's famed Ocean Drive.—AP



HONOLULU: This photo provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service shows the world's oldest known seabird, tending to an egg she laid, with her mate, at Midway Atoll, a wildlife refuge about 1,200 miles northwest of Honolulu. —AP

THE WORLD'S OLDEST KNOWN SEABIRD IS EXPECTING AGAIN

HONOLULU: The world's oldest known seabird is expecting again. Biologists spotted the Laysan albatross called Wisdom at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge earlier this month after she returned to the island to nest. She was incubating an egg at the same nest she uses each

year with her mate. She's believed to be 66 years old. She's also the world's oldest known breeding bird in the wild.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service's project leader for the refuge, Bob Peyton, said in a statement Friday that Wisdom has been returning to

Midway for over six decades. An ornithologist first put an identification band on her in 1956. She's had a few dozen chicks. Midway is about 1,200 miles northwest of Honolulu. It's part of the Papahānaumokuākea (pah-pah-HAH'-now-moh-cuh-ah-cay-ah) Marine National Monument.—AP

PARIS FIGHTS AGAINST RODENT INFESTATION

PARIS: Both Nadine Mahe des Portes and the rat panicked when she inadvertently stepped on it on her walk back from work through Paris. "I heard a terrible squeak," the property agent recalled with a shudder. "I thought I'd stepped on a child's toy or something." When Parisians are literally tripping over rats on the sidewalk, it is clear that the City of Light has a problem. Professional exterminators with decades on the job struggle to recall infestations as impressive - perhaps that should be repulsive - as those now forcing the closure of Paris parks, where squirmy clumps of rats brazenly feed in broad daylight, looking like they own the place.

On Friday, City Hall threw open one of the closed parks, the Tour Saint-Jacques square a block from the Seine, to show journalists its latest anti-rat drive. The park in the heart of the city is only a short walk from the Pompidou art museum. Two Japanese tourists searching for Notre Dame cathedral, also just minutes away, thankfully didn't notice the rats in bushes just in front of them when they stopped to ask for directions.

The furry princes of the city were all over the park, sauntering across the footpaths, merrily grazing in the undergrowth and far more bothered by pigeons competing with them for breadcrumbs than by people walking past and the rattle and hum of the morning rush hour. Unfortunately for City Hall's exterminators, they also seemed totally uninterested in recently laid traps baited with poison. The park attendant, Patrick Lambin, said his morning round had yielded just one cadaver. Before the park was closed in November, rats foraging for food hung like grapes off the trash bins and regularly scampered through the children's play area, sowing panic, he said.

'Rats are profiting'

Lambin suspects the infestation has been made worse by Parisians and tourists who leave food out for the pigeons and, in particular, a homeless man who swings by most mornings with bags of stale bread recovered from local eateries. "The rats are profiting," he said. In a 39-year career of extermination, City Hall's Gilles Demodice said he'd rarely seen anything quite like it. "A few years back, you'd not see so many rats during the day," he said. "Now it's night and day, all the time. So it's a big worry." European Union regulations governing the arsenal of poisons and traps that can be used against rats have complicated the job of extermination, he explained.

He said they used to drop biscuits of poison directly into rats' nests and seal them up, but that technique is no longer allowed, forcing them to instead lay black plastic boxes of poison - which the rats studiously ignored - among the bushes. "It's a lot less effective," he said. How many millions of rats reside in Paris is anyone's guess.

Reynald Baudet, who works in the city's most famous pest-control store and has 30 years in the business, notes that since one rat couple can produce hundreds of offspring, the population can grow quickly, if left unchecked. "This is the first year I've seen so many of them," Baudet said. His store, with dead rats hanging in its window and rat traps decorating its Christmas tree, appeared in cartoon form in the movie "Ratatouille," the animated tale of Remy, a Paris rat with dreams of becoming a chef. "The war must be total," Baudet said.—AP



PARIS: A rat looks on in the Saint Jacques Tower park, in the center of Paris, Friday, Dec 9, 2016. —AP

ENDANGERED SPECIES OF SEA OTTERS FLY INTO FRANCE

BREST, France: A pair of jetlagged sea otters arrived in France on Friday after a 9,000-kilometre flight from Alaska to their new home at a sea life park. The otters, an endangered species hunted to near extinction because of their highly prized fur, are native to the shallow coastal waters of the north Pacific. The two males, named Matchaq and Tangiq, looked relieved to take a cool bath in a quarantine centre in France after spending 15 hours aboard a private jet chartered specially for the journey.

They will go on show at the Oceanopolis sea life centre in the city of Brest in northwest France, which brought another three sea

otters to France last June from Alaska. Only one of them has survived. Their transfer from the Sealife Center in Alaska was part of a conservation effort for sea otters that have been cared for in captivity and cannot be released into the wild.

The mammal is still considered endangered, even though a hunting ban has helped their numbers rebound to an estimated 126,000 worldwide, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Thanks to their thick fur, the voracious eaters are able to spend much of their lives in the water preying on crustaceans and small fish-while trying to avoid hungry killer whales.—AFP



FRANCE: A sea otter pictured at the Oceanopolis centre in Brest, western France, on December 9, 2016. —AP

FUKUSHIMA SEABORNE RADIATION DETECTED ON OREGON SHORES

ALEM, Oregon: Researchers say seaborne radiation from Japan's Fukushima nuclear disaster has been detected on Oregon shores. Seawater samples from Tillamook Bay and Gold Beach indicate radiation from the nuclear disaster but at extremely low levels not harmful to humans or the environment. Citing the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Statesman Journal newspaper reports the samples

were taken last winter and later analyzed.

Massive amounts of contaminated water were released from the crippled Japan nuclear plant following a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. Woods Hole chemical oceanographer Ken Buesseler runs a crowd funded, citizen-science seawater sampling project that has tracked the radiation plume as it makes its way across the Pacific Ocean.—AP

US LIFE EXPECTANCY FALLS, AS MANY KINDS OF DEATH INCREASE

NEW YORK: A decades-long trend of rising life expectancy in the US could be ending: It declined last year and it is no better than it was four years ago. In most of the years since World War II, life expectancy in the US has inched up, thanks to medical advances, public health campaigns and better nutrition and education. But last year it slipped, an exceedingly rare event in a year that did not include a major disease outbreak. Other one-year declines occurred in 1993, when the nation was in the throes of the AIDS epidemic, and 1980, the result of an especially nasty flu season.

In 2015, rates for 8 of the 10 leading causes of death rose. Even more troubling to health experts: the US seems to be settling into a trend of no improvement at all. "With four years, you're starting to see some indication of something a little more ominous," said 5 Jay Olshansky, a University of Illinois-Chicago public health researcher.

An American born in 2015 is expected to live 78 years and 91/2 months, on average, according to preliminary data released Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An American born in 2014 could expect to live about month longer, and even an American born in 2012 would have been expected to live slightly longer.

In 1950, life expectancy was just over 68 years. The United States ranks below dozens of other high-income countries in life expectancy, according to the World Bank. It is highest in Japan, at nearly 84 years. The CDC report is based mainly on 2015 death certificates.

There were more than 2.7 million deaths, or about 86,000 more than the previous year. The increase in raw numbers partly reflects the nation's growing and aging population. It was led by an unusual upturn in the death rate from the nation's leading killer, heart disease.

Troubling trends

Death rates also increased for chronic lower lung disease, accidental injuries, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, kidney disease and suicide. The only clear drop was in cancer, the nation's No. 2 killer. Experts aren't sure what's behind the stall. Some, like Olshansky, suspect obesity, an underlying factor in some of the largest causes of death, particularly heart disease. But there's also the impact of rising drug overdoses and suicides, he noted. Drug overdose deaths soared 11 percent to more than 52,000 last year, the most ever, driven by increases in deaths from heroin, prescription painkillers and other so-called opioids.

"There are a lot of things happening at the same time," he said. Some years the CDC later revises its life expectancy estimate after doing additional analysis, including for its 2014 estimate. Average life expectancy declined for men, falling by more than two months, to 76 years and 3 1/2 months in 2015. It fell by about one month for women, to 81 years and 2 1/2 months, the CDC said. Death rates increased for black men, white men, white women, and slightly for Hispanic men and women. But they did not change for black women.

The new CDC report did not offer a geographic breakdown of 2015 deaths, or analysis of death based on education or income. But other research has shown death rates are rising sharply for poorer people - particularly white people - in rural areas but not wealthier and more highly educated and people on the coasts. "The troubling trends are most pronounced for the people who are the most disadvantaged," said Jennifer Karas Montez, a Syracuse University researcher who studies adult death patterns. "But if we don't know why life expectancy is decreasing for some groups, we can't be confident that it won't start declining for others," she said.—AP

CHINA OPENS INVESTIGATION INTO SLAUGHTER OF RARE SEA TURTLE

BEIJING: Authorities in southern China have opened an investigation into the slaughter and sale of a protected leatherback sea turtle by local fishermen, media reported yesterday. The case grew to national prominence after cell phone video circulated showing the 200-kilogram (440-pound) turtle being sliced into pieces and sold to eager villagers in a fishing village in the southern province of Guangdong. The meat sold for about 70 yuan (\$10) per kilogram, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Xinhua that six villagers have been referred to investigators. It said area residents were told by fishermen that the turtle was dead at the time it was caught.

Liang Daichong, a local fisheries policeman quoted by Xinhua, said the incident was the result of "bad eating habits" and simple ignorance of regulations.

China's growing animal rights movement has sought to raise awareness of abuses ranging from the slaughter of canines for an annual dog meat festival in a southern city to the farming of bears milked for their bile to be used in traditional Chinese medicine. Social media has played a major role in mobilizing such sentiments, although a push to enact animal protection legislation has made little progress through the national legislature.—AP



BANGALORE, India: In this Friday, Dec 9, 2016 photo, a crane lifts the carcass of a male Asiatic elephant, known as Sidda, to place him on the ground for autopsy after he died of his injuries, in Dabbagali village, outskirts of Bangalore, India. —AP

ELEPHANT BREAKS LEG, DIES AFTER THREE MONTHS OF CARE

‘THE INFECTION WAS NOT NOTICEABLE FROM OUTSIDE’

BANGALORE, India: After an elephant broke his leg and was left to hobble around the backwaters of a reservoir in southern India, villagers and veterinarians brought him food and tried to soothe his agony through treatment. But he died Friday after efforts lasting more than three months. Sidda, the name given to the elephant by forest guards, was estimated to be 35 years old.

Sidda fell into a ditch and broke his right leg in the Manchible dam area in late August. He also sustained abrasions all over his body, and had an abscess on his back that required treat-

ment. The accident occurred in the Savandurga reserve, a home to wild elephants in the Ramanagara district of Karnataka state.

Doctors from Wildlife SOS India began treating Sidda after villagers alerted forest guards a day after the accident. The elephant had collapsed and couldn't move, and developed sores on his left flank. Soon there was a puss formation around the wound. Doctors administered painkillers to help ease Sidda's pain and anti-inflammatory medication for the swelling and the infection in his leg. Forest guards sought the

help of the army to build a structure to support Sidda and enable him to stand on his own without collapsing. A metal frame kept Sidda suspended, and a support structure like a cradle lifted him up and eased the stress on his limbs, according to Wildlife SOS India's website. A Ramanagara forest official, Manjunath, said yesterday that Sidda died of infection early Friday. The autopsy report said the infection was caused by a puss formation inside the leg that was not noticeable from outside. Manjunath uses one name.—AP



BANGALORE, India: In this Friday, Dec 9, 2016 photo, villagers and others offer prayers next to the carcass of a male Asiatic elephant, known as Sidda, after he died of his injuries, in Dabbagali village, outskirts of Bangalore, India.—AP

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LOYAC'S LAPA PRESENTS ITS SECOND PERFORMANCE

Within its modern heritage music festival, LOYAC's LAPA recently presented its second performance at the Martyr Park, which attracted a large audience despite the cold weather.



MUBARAK ELT HOLDS SECOND SCHOOL SCRABBLE COMPETITION

Mubarak Al-Kabeer ELT supervision recently organized the second annual school scrabble competition for the area's boys high schools. The event was hosted by HOD, Hatem Abo Saif at Imam Malek Secondary School for boys where a stu-

dent represented each of the area's seven male high schools. The organizing committee was headed by Mubarak ELT Senior Supervisor, Hadeel Al-Kandari and included ELT supervisors, Mahmoud Al-Najjar, Habib Rezzouk and Ali in addition to English

teachers, Mulham Adnan, Waleed Ja'far, Hassan Abdul Bari and Scrabble expert Shakir Reshamwala as judges. The students played three qualifying rounds before the final game where student Muhab Mulham, from Imam Malek school won the first place and will

accordingly represent the area in the second round of the competition amongst all educational areas in Kuwait. Notably, scrabble was introduced as a school activity last year and ever since, the game has been attracting more and more students.



Greetings

Happy Birthday
Duaij
Alnassar...
May Allah bless your
life with love, luck
and prosperity...



IWG CELEBRATES NEW YEAR AT CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL

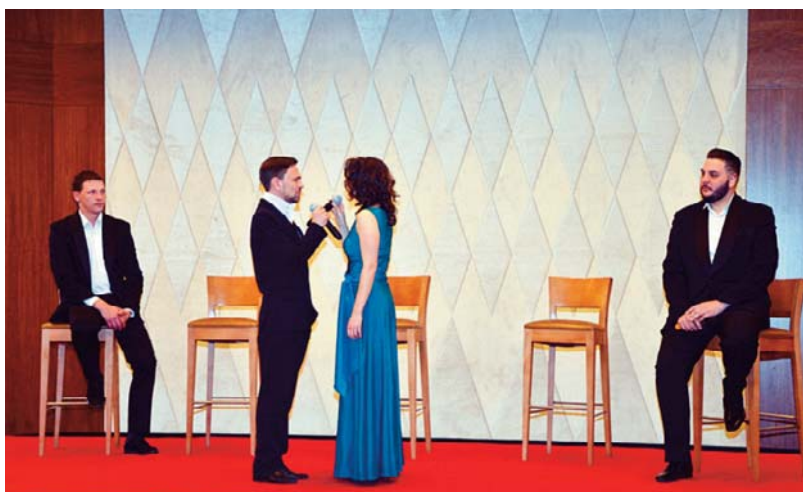
President of IWG, Elena Solomatina spouse of Russian ambassador told Kuwait Times that the International Women's Group celebrating Christmas and New Year. The event will show an amazing performance of a Russian band came directly from Russia to Kuwait. This year we had a painting and a cooking workshop and we decided to keep that going, she said.

For her part, Narjes Al-Shatti, Board Member of the International Women's Group, said every year since we started, the International Women's Group celebrates Christmas and the New Year in December by hosting a dinner for its members, with some entertaining events held during the event. Tonight, IWG says farewell to 2016 and welcomes 2017 with lots of praying and wishing for

peace to Kuwait and all people around the world.

She added, There will be a surprise in the National Day in collaboration with the National Council for Culture and Arts in February 2017, as well we will cooperate with the tourism department of the Ministry of Information, in organizing an event for public to show international dishes around from all over the world in Souk Al Bahar.

Shatti revealed that IWG will go on a trip to Oman and the Omani ambassador will plan our trip. We also were invited to visit Tajikistan and Uzbekistan Kazakhstan to see the Nowruz celebration. The event featured a show by a famous Russian band performance, then the International Women's Group presented guests with gifts.



IEI KUWAIT CHAPTER CELEBRATES ENGINEERS' DAY-2016

The Institution of Engineers (India), Kuwait Chapter is pleased to announce the upcoming 49th Engineers' Day celebration in Kuwait. This day is celebrated in memory of Bharat Ratna, Sir M Visvesvaraya, greatest Engineer and Statesman of India on his birth anniversary. In addition to Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain, many dignitaries and distinguished guests from ministries, universities, KSE, KISR, engineers, technocrats, consultants, decision makers and business leaders will be attending the function.

The theme for this year Engineers' Day is "Skill Development for Young Engineers to Reform the Core Sector: Vision 2025." Details are as below: Date: 7th November 2016, Monday Venue: Multi-Purpose Hall, Arab Fund Building, Shuwaikh. Time: 6:30pm onwards. The Registration will start at 6:30pm followed by function starting at 7:00pm. Please register your name through www.ieikuwait.org by clicking

Event Attendance or kindly send an email to ieikwt@hotmail.com. Prior registration is must and all members are advised to be seated 10 minutes prior to the arrival of VIPs. For any question, please call at the chapter's office between 5:30pm and 8:30pm at 22445588 Extn. 314 or Contact Engr. Mohandas Kamath (Mob: 67030055) / Engr. Sudhir Menghani (Mob: 97987455). Security badges will be issued. We look forward your participation in large numbers.

ZAIN HOLDS SECOND INTERNAL BLOOD DRIVE CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR



Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, recently held an internal Blood Drive campaign for its employees for the second time this year. The campaign was held in partnership with the Central Blood Bank of Kuwait. The initiative, held at the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh, is held several times annually as part of Zain's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the health of its employees. The campaign also aims at encouraging blood donation and saving lives, and witnessed positive feedback and participation from Zain employees.

Zain's support of blood drive campaigns shows its keenness in having a productive role in social and health activities, especially those that contribute with saving people that are in urgent need of blood, particularly people with rare blood types. Zain strives to contribute to its community through its numerous corporate social responsibility initiatives and is pleased with the success this particular activity has achieved.

The company is keen to organize internal blood drive campaigns for employees in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank to encourage employees to donate blood and save lives. Zain affirmed that its contribution to organizing internal blood drives falls under its CSSR strategies.

Zain's solid Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy primarily focuses on the wellbeing of the entire nation. For this reason, the company has maintained its support of numerous initiatives that spread awareness and help make a difference to people's everyday lives.

OSN MOVIES
ACTION

00:00 Combustion
02:00 Jersey Shore Shark Attack
04:00 Close Range
06:00 The Mark: Redemption
08:00 Nick Of Time
10:00 Jesse Stone: Lost In Paradise
12:00 Last Knights
14:00 Survivor
16:00 Nick Of Time
18:00 Automata
20:00 Taken 3
22:00 Constantine

ANIMAL
APLANET HD

00:50 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
01:45 Bondi Vet
02:40 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
03:35 Tanked
04:25 Borneo's Pygmy Elephants
05:15 Gator Boys
06:02 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
06:49 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
07:36 Swamp Brothers
08:00 Swamp Brothers
08:25 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
09:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
10:10 Mutant Planet
11:05 Tanked
12:00 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
12:55 Bondi Vet
13:50 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
14:45 Gator Boys
15:40 Mutant Planet
16:35 Tanked
17:30 Borneo's Pygmy Elephants
18:25 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
19:20 Wildest Europe
20:15 Tanked
21:10 Search For The Knysna Elephants
22:05 Mutant Planet
23:00 Wildest Europe
23:55 Gator Boys

BBC
FIRST

00:10 Eastenders
00:45 The Durrells
01:35 The Paradise
02:30 Orphan Black
03:15 Silent Witness
04:10 Doctors
04:40 Eastenders
05:10 Doctor Who

00:10 Eastenders
00:45 The Durrells
01:35 The Paradise
02:30 Orphan Black
03:15 Silent Witness
04:10 Doctors
04:40 Eastenders
05:10 Doctor Who



SURVIVOR ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

06:00 Doctors
06:30 Doctors
07:00 Eastenders
07:30 Holly City
08:30 Father Brown
09:15 Call The Midwife
10:10 Doctor Who
11:00 Doctors
11:30 Eastenders
12:00 Father Brown
12:45 Call The Midwife
13:40 Doctor Who
14:30 Doctors
15:00 Eastenders
15:30 Father Brown
16:15 Call The Midwife
17:10 Doctor Who
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:05 Father Brown
20:00 Holly City
21:00 Mr Stink
21:55 Moone Boy
22:15 Moone Boy
22:40 Benidorm
23:30 The Detectoists

crime
& investigation
network

00:00 The Haunting Of...
01:00 Stalked By A Ghost
02:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
03:00 My Crazy Ex
04:00 The Haunting Of...
05:00 Stalked By A Ghost
06:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
07:00 The First 48
08:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
09:00 Homicide Hunter
10:00 It Takes A Killer
11:00 It Takes A Killer
12:00 Killers
13:00 Killers
14:00 Killers
15:00 The First 48
16:00 Gangs Of Britain...
17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
18:00 I Killed My BFF
19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 It Takes A Killer
22:00 The First 48
23:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos

COMEDY
CENTRAL

00:00 South Park
00:25 Inside Amy Schumer
00:50 Tosh.0
01:15 Tosh.0
01:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
02:05 Hannibal Bureess: Live In Chicago
03:00 Workaholics
03:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
04:15 Key And Peele
04:40 Impractical Jokers
05:05 Ridiculousness
05:30 Lip Sync Battle
05:55 Lip Sync Battle
06:20 Tattoo Disasters
06:50 Tattoo Disasters

07:15 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
08:05 Impractical Jokers
08:30 Ridiculousness
08:55 Tosh.0
09:20 Key And Peele
09:45 Workaholics
10:10 The It Crowd
10:35 Ridiculousness
11:00 Lip Sync Battle
11:25 Lip Sync Battle
11:50 I Live With Models
12:15 Workaholics
12:40 The It Crowd
13:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
13:55 Ridiculousness
14:20 Lip Sync Battle
14:45 Lip Sync Battle
15:10 I Live With Models
15:35 Ridiculousness
16:00 Impractical Jokers
16:30 Workaholics
16:55 Tosh.0
17:25 Workaholics
17:50 Urban Tarzan
18:15 Urban Tarzan
18:39 The It Crowd
19:03 Lip Sync Battle
19:27 Lip Sync Battle
19:50 I Live With Models
20:13 Impractical Jokers
20:37 Ridiculousness
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 South Park
21:54 Ugly Americans
22:18 The Roast Of James Franco
23:28 The Roast Of Donald Trump

Discovery
Family

00:30 Prototype This
01:20 Buggin' With Ruud
02:10 The Lion Queen
03:00 Untamed & Uncut
03:50 Ultimate Survival
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 Awesome Adventures
07:50 Bad Dog
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Prototype This
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 Dirty Jobs
12:00 Bad Dog
12:50 Ultimate Survival
13:40 How It's Made
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15:20 Mythbusters

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10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 Dirty Jobs
12:00 Bad Dog
12:50 Ultimate Survival
13:40 How It's Made
14:05 How It's Made
14:30 Dirty Jobs
15:20 Mythbusters

ID
X

00:40 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen
01:30 Deadly Women
02:20 Suspicion
03:10 Murder Among Friends
04:00 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen
04:48 I Almost Got Away With It
05:36 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
06:24 Love The Way You Lie
07:12 Blood Relatives
08:00 Id Kill For You
08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
09:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
10:30 Love The Way You Lie
11:20 Blood Relatives
12:10 Disappeared
13:00 Id Kill For You
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
15:30 Love The Way You Lie
16:20 Blood Relatives
17:10 A Crime To Remember
18:00 Id Kill For You
18:50 I Almost Got Away With It
19:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
20:30 Love The Way You Lie
21:20 Blood Relatives
22:10 I Am Homicide
23:00 Six Degrees Of Murder
23:50 Nowhere To Hide

Disney
CHANNEL
HD

00:10 Hank Zipzer
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Violetta
01:45 The Hive
01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Hank Zipzer
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Violetta
04:15 The Hive
04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:10 Hank Zipzer
05:35 Binny And The Ghost
06:00 Violetta
06:45 The Hive
06:50 Mouk
07:00 Dog With A Blog
07:25 Dog With A Blog
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir

08:20 Elena Of Avalor
08:45 Star Darlings
08:50 Liv And Maddie
09:15 Jessie
09:40 Jessie
10:05 Jessie
10:30 The Incredibles
12:35 Austin & Ally
13:00 Liv And Maddie
13:25 Liv And Maddie
13:50 Shake It Up
14:15 Shake It Up
14:40 Dog With A Blog
15:05 Dog With A Blog
15:30 Good Luck Charlie
15:55 Good Luck Charlie
16:20 Girl Meets World
16:45 Girl Meets World
17:10 Elena Of Avalor
17:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
18:25 Descendants Wicked World
18:30 Liv And Maddie
18:55 Star Darlings
19:00 Liv And Maddie
19:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
19:30 Austin & Ally
19:55 Descendants Wicked World
20:00 Backstage
20:25 Tsum Tsum Shorts
20:50 Elena Of Avalor
20:55 Best Friends Whenever
21:20 Jessie
21:45 Jessie
22:10 Jessie
22:35 H2O: Just Add Water
23:00 Binny And The Ghost
23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

Disney
JUNIOR

00:00 Doc McStuffins
00:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
00:35 Zou
00:50 Loopydoo
01:05 Art Attack
01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
01:45 Calimero
02:00 Zou
02:15 Loopydoo
02:30 Art Attack
03:00 Calimero
03:15 Zou
03:30 Loopydoo
03:45 Art Attack
04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
04:25 Calimero
04:45 Loopydoo
05:00 Art Attack
05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 Calimero

00:00 Doc McStuffins
00:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
00:35 Zou
00:50 Loopydoo
01:05 Art Attack
01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
01:45 Calimero
02:00 Zou
02:15 Loopydoo
02:30 Art Attack
03:00 Calimero
03:15 Zou
03:30 Loopydoo
03:45 Art Attack
04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
04:25 Calimero
04:45 Loopydoo
05:00 Art Attack
05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 Calimero

00:00 Doc McStuffins
00:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
00:35 Zou
00:50 Loopydoo
01:05 Art Attack
01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
01:45 Calimero
02:00 Zou
02:15 Loopydoo
02:30 Art Attack
03:00 Calimero
03:15 Zou
03:30 Loopydoo
03:45 Art Attack
04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
04:25 Calimero
04:45 Loopydoo
05:00 Art Attack
05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 Calimero

00:00 Doc McStuffins
00:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
00:35 Zou
00:50 Loopydoo
01:05 Art Attack
01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
01:45 Calimero
02:00 Zou
02:15 Loopydoo
02:30 Art Attack
03:00 Calimero
03:15 Zou
03:30 Loopydoo
03:45 Art Attack
04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
04:25 Calimero
04:45 Loopydoo
05:00 Art Attack
05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 Calimero

Discovery
CHANNEL
HDI

00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:10 Blue Collar Backers
02:00 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
02:50 World's Top 5
03:40 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
04:30 The Liquidator
05:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars
05:30 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Deadliest Catch
06:50 Wheeler Dealers
07:40 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
08:30 Gold Divers
09:20 The Liquidator
09:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars
10:10 How Do They Do It?
10:35 Blue Collar Backers
11:25 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
12:15 World's Top 5
13:05 How It's Made: Dream Cars
13:30 Storage Hunters UK
13:55 The Liquidator
14:20 Edge Of Alaska
15:10 Gold Divers
16:00 Deadliest Catch
16:50 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
17:40 Wheeler Dealers
18:30 How It's Made: Dream Cars
18:55 How Do They Do It?
19:20 Gold Divers

20:10 Storage Hunters UK
20:35 The Liquidator
21:00 Salvage Hunters
21:50 Marooned With Ed Stafford
22:40 Sharks Among Us
23:30 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder

Disney
XD

06:00 Supa Strikas
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Counterfeit Cat
07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
07:15 K.C. Undercover
07:40 Atomic Puppet
08:10 Lab Rats Elite Force
08:35 Danger Mouse
09:00 Finding Nemo
10:45 Gravity Falls
11:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
11:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
12:00 Counterfeit Cat
12:30 K.C. Undercover
12:55 K.C. Undercover
13:20 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
13:45 Lab Rats
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Lab Rats
14:40 Counterfeit Cat
14:50 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
15:05 K.C. Undercover
15:30 Atomic Puppet
15:55 Lab Rats
16:25 Danger Mouse
16:50 Future-Worm!
17:15 Lab Rats: Crush, Chop & Burn
18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:10 Supa Strikas
18:35 Supa Strikas
19:00 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
19:55 K.C. Undercover
20:20 Counterfeit Cat
20:45 Mighty Med
21:10 Pickle And Peanut
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
22:35 Boyster
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

food
network

00:00 Chopped South Africa
01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:30 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 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
07:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
08:00 The Kitchen
09:00 Cooking For Real
09:30 Cooking For Real
10:00 Chopped
11:00 Guy's Big Bite
11:30 Guy's Big Bite
12:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
12:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
13:00 Man Fire Food
13:30 Man Fire Food
14:00 Chopped
15:00 The Kitchen
16:00 Anna Olson: Bake
16:30 Anna Olson: Bake
17:00 Chopped
18:00 Iron Chef America
19:00 Siba's Table
19:30 Siba's Table
20:00 Private Chef
20:30 Private Chef
21:00 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera
21:30 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera
22:00 Iron Chef America
23:00 Siba's Table
23:30 Siba's Table

H2
HD

00:00 America's Book Of Secrets
01:00 Ancient Aliens
02:00 Missing In Alaska
03:00 Ancient Impossible
03:50 Patton 360
04:40 Last Days Of The Nazis
05:30 America's Book Of Secrets
06:20 America's Book Of Secrets
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Ancient Aliens
09:00 Missing In Alaska
10:00 Ancient Impossible
11:00 Patton 360
12:00 Heroes Of War
13:00 America's Book Of Secrets
14:00 Ancient Aliens
15:00 Missing In Alaska
16:00 Ancient Impossible
17:00 Patton 360
18:00 Heroes Of War
19:00 Ancient Aliens
20:00 Missing In Alaska
21:00 Ancient Impossible
22:00 Patton 360

00:00 America's Book Of Secrets
01:00 Ancient Aliens
02:00 Missing In Alaska
03:00 Ancient Impossible
03:50 Patton 360
04:40 Last Days Of The Nazis
05:30 America's Book Of Secrets
06:20 America's Book Of Secrets
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Ancient Aliens
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10:00 Ancient Impossible
11:00 Patton 360
12:00 Heroes Of War
13:00 America's Book Of Secrets
14:00 Ancient Aliens
15:00 Missing In Alaska
16:00 Ancient Impossible
17:00 Patton 360
18:00 Heroes Of War
19:00 Ancient Aliens
20:00 Missing In Alaska
21:00 Ancient Impossible
22:00 Patton 360

Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:10 Blue Collar Backers
02:00 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
02:50 World's Top 5
03:40 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
04:30 The Liquidator
05:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars
05:30 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Deadliest Catch
06:50 Wheeler Dealers
07:40 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
08:30 Gold Divers
09:20 The Liquidator
09:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars
10:10 How Do They Do It?
10:35 Blue Collar Backers
11:25 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
12:15 World's Top 5
13:05 How It's Made: Dream Cars
13:30 Storage Hunters UK
13:55 The Liquidator
14:20 Edge Of Alaska
15:10 Gold Divers
16:00 Deadliest Catch
16:50 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
17:40 Wheeler Dealers
18:30 How It's Made: Dream Cars
18:55 How Do They Do It?
19:20 Gold Divers

BIG GAME ON OSN MOVIES HD

23:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain

H
HD
HISTORY

00:20 Fifth Gear
01:10 American Pickers
02:00 Storage Wars
02:25 Storage Wars
02:50 Fifth Gear
03:40 Fifth Gear
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Time Team
06:00 Shipping Wars
06:25 Shipping Wars
06:50 American Pickers
07:40 Pawn Stars
08:05 Pawn Stars
08:30 Storage Wars Texas
08:55 Banger Boys
09:45 Shipping Wars
11:00 Shipping Wars
11:25 Time Team
12:15 Shark Wranglers
13:05 Ice Road Truckers
13:55 Counting Cars
14:20 Counting Cars
14:45 Fifth Gear
15:35 Pawn Stars
16:00 American Pickers
16:50 Storage Wars
17:15 Storage Wars
17:40 Swamp People
18:30 Time Team
19:20 American Pickers
20:10 Pawn Stars
20:35 Pawn Stars
21:00 Forged In Fire
21:50 Billion Dollar Wreck
22:40 Time Team
23:30 Forged In Fire

NAT GEO
people HD

00:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
00:35 My Dubai
01:00 Cool Spaces
01:50 The Best Job In The World
02:15 Food School
02:40 Mega Food
03:30 Wineroads
03:55 Places We Go
04:20 Places We Go
04:45 Croatia's Finest
05:10 Croatia's Finest
05:35 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
06:00 Around The World In 80 Dishes
06:50 Cool Spaces
07:40 The Best Job In The World
08:05 Food School
08:30 Mega Food
09:20 Wineroads
09:45 Places We Go
10:10 Places We Go
10:35 Croatia's Finest
11:00 Croatia's Finest
11:25 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
12:40 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
13:05 A Is For Apple
13:35 The Best Job In The World
14:00 Food School
14:30 Mega Food
15:25 Wineroads
15:50 Places We Go
16:20 Lucky Chow
16:45 Croatia's Finest
17:15 Croatia's Finest
17:40 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
18:10 Around The World In 80 Dishes
19:05 A Is For Apple
19:30 Wineroads
20:00 Places We Go
20:25 Lucky Chow
20:50 Croatia's Finest
21:15 Croatia's Finest
21:40 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
22:05 Around The World In 80 Dishes
22:55 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
23:20 A Is For Apple
23:45 The Best Job In The World

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
CHANNEL HD

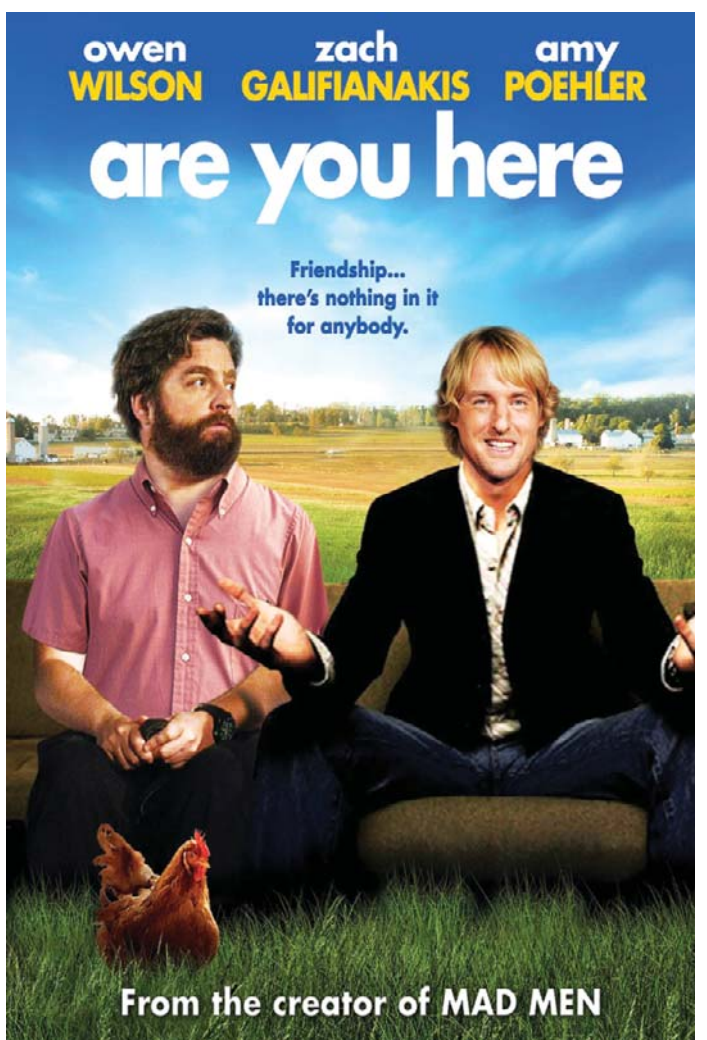
00:10 Science Of Stupid Sports
00:35 Science Of Stupid Sports
01:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
02:00 Mars
02:55 Startalk
03:50 Science Of Stupid Sports
04:15 Science Of Stupid Sports
04:45 Chasing UFOs
05:40 Strippers: Cars For Cash
06:35 Brain Games S3 Compilations
07:30 Megasturctures
08:25 Mega Factories
09:20 Chasing UFOs
10:15 Explorer
11:10 Classified: Secret Service Files
12:05 Locked Up Abroad
13:00 Mega Factories
14:00 The Raising Of The Costa Concordia
15:00 Brain Games Compilation
16:00 Fidel Castro: The Lost Tapes
17:00 Classified: Secret Service Files
18:00 Locked Up Abroad - Short
19:00 Locked Up Abroad - Short
20:00 Taboo

00:10 Science Of Stupid Sports
00:35 Science Of Stupid Sports
01:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
02:00 Mars
02:55 Startalk
03:50 Science Of Stupid Sports
04:15 Science Of Stupid Sports
04:45 Chasing UFOs
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15:00 Brain Games Compilation
16:00 Fidel Castro: The Lost Tapes
17:00 Classified: Secret Service Files
18:00 Locked Up Abroad - Short
19:00 Locked Up Abroad - Short
20:00 Taboo

The Grinder

00:30 Cougar Town
01:00 Cougar Town
01:30 Family Guy
02:00 Family Guy
02:30 Insecure
03:00 Last Man Standing
03:30 The Simpsons
04:00 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 George Lopez
06:00 The Grinder
06:30 Men At Work
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:00 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
08:30 George Lopez
09:00 Last Man Standing
09:30 Angie Tribeca
10:00 Young & Hungry
10:30 Men At Work
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 The Grinder
12:30 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
13:00 George Lopez
13:30 Men At Work
14:00 The Simpsons
14:30 Angie Tribeca
15:00 Young & Hungry
15:30 Cougar Town
16:00 Cougar Town
16:30 The Grinder
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 Last Man Standing
18:30 The Last Man On Earth
19:00 The Last Man On Earth
19:30 Young & Hungry
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Cougar Town
21:30 Cougar Town
22:00 Family Guy
22:30 Family Guy
23:00 Insecure
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

BIG GAME ON OSN MOVIES HD



ARE YOU HERE ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

20:00 Explorer
20:50 Classified: Secret Service Files
21:40 Locked Up Abroad - Short
22:05 Locked Up Abroad - Short
22:30 Taboo
23:20 Strippers: Cars For Cash

NAT GEO
WILD HD

00:20 Dark Side Of Crows
01:10 Animals Gone Wild
02:00 Sumatra's Last Tiger
02:50 Bear Nomad
03:45 The Invaders
04:40 Make You Laugh Out Loud
05:35 Sumatra's Last Tiger
06:30 Bear Nomad
07:25 The Invaders
08:20 Make You Laugh Out Loud
09:15 Unlikely Animal Friends
Compilations
10:10 Extreme Animal Babies
11:05 World's Weirdest
12:00 Manta Mystery
12:55 Mother Croc
13:50 Hollywood Bear Tragedy
14:45 The Invaders
15:40 Make You Laugh Out Loud
16:35 Unlikely Animal Friends
Compilations
17:30 Extreme Animal Babies
18:25 Madagascar's Fantastic Creatures
19:20 The Invaders
20:10 Make You Laugh Out Loud
21:00 Unlikely Animal Friends
Compilations
21:50 Extreme Animal Babies
22:40 Madagascar's Fantastic Creatures
23:30 Manta Mystery

OSN MOVIES
DRAMA

01:30 Boychoir
03:30 The Patrol
05:00 Every Thing Will Be Fine
07:00 Stolen From Suburbia
09:00 Abandoned
11:00 Boychoir
13:00 Invasion Day
15:00 Love Under The Stars
17:00 Abandoned
19:00 Landmine Goes Click
21:00 Touched With Fire
23:00 Addicted

OSN FIRST HD
COMEDY

00:30 Cougar Town
01:00 Cougar Town
01:30 Family Guy
02:00 Family Guy
02:30 Insecure
03:00 Last Man Standing
03:30 The Simpsons
04:00 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 George Lopez
06:00 The Grinder
06:30 Men At Work
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:00 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
08:30 George Lopez
09:00 Last Man Standing
09:30 Angie Tribeca
10:00 Young & Hungry
10:30 Men At Work
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 The Grinder
12:30 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
13:00 George Lopez
13:30 Men At Work
14:00 The Simpsons
14:30 Angie Tribeca
15:00 Young & Hungry
15:30 Cougar Town
16:00 Cougar Town
16:30 The Grinder
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 Last Man Standing
18:30 The Last Man On Earth
19:00 The Last Man On Earth
19:30 Young & Hungry
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Cougar Town
21:30 Cougar Town
22:00 Family Guy
22:30 Family Guy
23:00 Insecure
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

OSN FIRST HD
COMEDY

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18:30 The Last Man On Earth
19:00 The Last Man On Earth
19:30 Young & Hungry
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Cougar Town
21:30 Cougar Town
22:00 Family Guy
22:30 Family Guy
23:00 Insecure
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

OSN FIRST HD
COMEDY

00:00 The X-Files
01:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
02:00 Scream Queens
03:00 American Horror Story: Roanoke
04:00 Live Good Morning America
06:00 Lie To Me
07:00 Drop Dead Diva
08:00 Castle
09:00 The Voice
10:00 Lie To Me
11:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
12:00 Shark Tank

13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
14:00

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Sabah Hospital | 24812000 |
| Amiri Hospital | 22450005 |
| Maternity Hospital | 24843100 |
| Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital | 25312700 |
| Chest Hospital | 24849400 |
| Farwaniya Hospital | 24892010 |
| Adan Hospital | 23940620 |
| Ibn Sina Hospital | 24840300 |
| Al-Razi Hospital | 24846000 |
| Physiotherapy Hospital | 24874330/9 |

Clinics

| | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Kaizen center | 25716707 |
| Rawda | 22517733 |
| Adaliya | 22517144 |
| Khaldiya | 24848075 |
| Kaifan | 24849807 |
| Shamiya | 24848913 |
| Shuwaikh | 24814507 |
| Abdullah Salem | 22549134 |
| Nuzha | 22526804 |
| Industrial Shuwaikh | 24814764 |
| Qadsiya | 22515088 |
| Dasmah | 22532265 |
| Bneid Al-Gar | 22531908 |
| Shaab | 22518752 |
| Qibla | 22459381 |
| Ayoun Al-Qibla | 22451082 |
| Mirqab | 22456536 |
| Sharq | 22465401 |
| Salmiya | 25746401 |
| Jabriya | 25316254 |
| Maidan Hawally | 25623444 |
| Bayan | 25388462 |
| Mishref | 25381200 |
| W Hawally | 22630786 |
| Sabah | 24810221 |
| Jahra | 24770319 |
| New Jahra | 24575755 |
| West Jahra | 24772608 |
| South Jahra | 24775066 |
| North Jahra | 24775992 |
| North Jleeb | 24311795 |
| Ardhiya | 24884079 |
| Firdous | 24892674 |
| Omariya | 24719048 |
| N Khaitan | 24710044 |
| Fintas | 23900322 |



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

| GOVERNORATE | PHARMACY | ADDRESS | PHONE |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| Ahmadi | Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan | Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd | 23915883 23715414 23726558 |
| Jahra | Modern Jahra Madina Munawara | Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92 | 24575518 24566622 |
| Capital | Ahlam Khaldiya Coop | Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop | 22436184 24833967 |
| Farwaniya | New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan | Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11 | 24734000 24881201 24726638 |
| Hawally | Tariq Hana Ikhlis Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop | Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop | 25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241 |

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



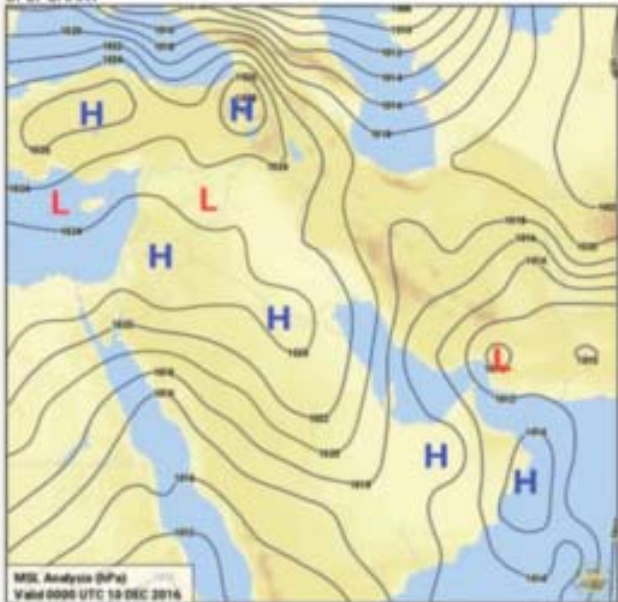
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 10/12/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 16 °C

By Day : Cool with light to moderate freshening gradually at times specially over coastal areas north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h
By Night : Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 35 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast:

| | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| | | | | |
| Expected Weather | Cool | Sunny | Mostly Sunny | partly cloudy + scattered rain |
| Min Temp °C | 08 | 09 | 11 | 13 |
| Max Temp °C | 17 | 19 | 21 | 23 |
| Wind Direction | north westerly | north westerly to light variable | variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly | south easterly to light variable |
| Wind Speed km/h | 10 - 35 | 08 - 30 | 06 - 28 | 08 - 32 |

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

| Station | MIN °C | REC | Max °C |
|----------------|--------|-----|--------|
| KUWAIT CITY | 08 | | 17 |
| KUWAIT AIRPORT | 06 | | 16 |
| ABDaly | 02 | | 16 |
| BUBYAN | 03 | | 18 |
| JAHRa | 06 | | 17 |
| FAILAKA ISLAND | 06 | | 16 |
| SALMIYAH | 09 | | 16 |
| AHMADI | 08 | | 17 |
| JAL ALTYAH | 02 | | 16 |
| QAROH ISLAND | 12 | | 18 |
| UMH AL-MARADEH | 12 | | 17 |
| NUWAISIB | 05 | | 18 |
| WAFRA | 05 | | 17 |
| MANAGISH | 03 | | 16 |
| SALMY | 01 | | 15 |
| MUTRIBA | 01 | | 17 |

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Max Temp (°C) | 18 |
| Min Temp (°C) | 10 |
| Max Rel Hum (%) | 56 |
| Min Rel Hum (%) | 23 |
| Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction | 46 N |
| TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR | 0 mm |

| | | |
|--|---------|-------|
| | Sunrise | 06:31 |
| | Sunset | 16:50 |

Prayer Times

| | |
|---------|-------|
| Fajr | 05:07 |
| Sunrise | 06:31 |
| Zuhr | 11:41 |
| Aer | 14:31 |
| Sunset | 16:50 |
| Isha | 18:12 |

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|----------------------|--------|
| Afghanistan | 0093 | Lithuania | 00370 |
| Albania | 00355 | Luxembourg | 00352 |
| Algeria | 00213 | Macau | 00853 |
| Andorra | 00376 | Macedonia | 00389 |
| Angola | 00244 | Madagascar | 00261 |
| Anguilla | 001264 | Majorca | 0034 |
| Antiga | 001268 | Malawi | 00265 |
| Argentina | 0054 | Malaysia | 0060 |
| Armenia | 00374 | Maldives | 00960 |
| Australia | 0061 | Mali | 00223 |
| Austria | 0043 | Malta | 00356 |
| Azerbaijan | 00994 | Marshall Islands | 00692 |
| Bahamas | 001242 | Martinique | 00596 |
| Bahrain | 00973 | Mauritania | 00222 |
| Bangladesh | 00880 | Mauritius | 00230 |
| Barbados | 001246 | Mayotte | 00269 |
| Belarus | 00375 | Mexico | 0052 |
| Belgium | 0032 | Micronesia | 00691 |
| Belize | 00501 | Moldova | 00373 |
| Benin | 00229 | Monaco | 00377 |
| Bermuda | 001441 | Mongolia | 00976 |
| Bhutan | 00975 | Montserrat | 001664 |
| Bolivia | 00591 | Morocco | 00212 |
| Bosnia | 00387 | Mozambique | 00258 |
| Botswana | 00267 | Myanmar (Burma) | 0095 |
| Brazil | 0055 | Namibia | 00264 |
| Brunei | 00673 | Nepal | 00977 |
| Bulgaria | 00359 | Netherlands | 0031 |
| Burkina | 00226 | Netherlands Antilles | 00599 |
| Burundi | 00257 | New Caledonia | 00687 |
| Cambodia | 00855 | New Zealand | 0064 |
| Cameroon | 00237 | Nicaragua | 00505 |
| Canada | 001 | Nigar | 00227 |
| Cape Verde | 00238 | Nigeria | 00234 |
| Cayman Islands | 001345 | Niue | 00683 |
| Central African | 00236 | Norfolk Island | 00672 |
| Chad | 00235 | N. Ireland (UK) | 0044 |
| Chile | 0056 | North Korea | 00850 |
| China | 0086 | Norway | 0047 |
| Colombia | 0057 | Oman | 00968 |
| Comoros | 00269 | Pakistan | 0092 |
| Congo | 00242 | Palau | 00680 |
| Cook Islands | 00682 | Panama | 00507 |
| Costa Rica | 00506 | Papua New Guinea | 00675 |
| Croatia | 00385 | Paraguay | 00595 |
| Cuba | 0053 | Peru | 0051 |
| Cyprus | 00357 | Philippines | 0063 |
| Cyprus (Northern) | 0090392 | Poland | 0048 |
| Czech Republic | 00420 | Portugal | 00351 |
| Denmark | 0045 | Puerto Rico | 001787 |
| Diego Garcia | 00246 | Qatar | 00974 |
| Djibouti | 00253 | Romania | 0040 |
| Dominica | 001767 | Russian Federation | 007 |
| Dominican Republic | 001809 | Rwanda | 00250 |
| Ecuador | 00593 | Saint Helena | 00290 |
| Egypt | 0020 | Saint Kitts | 001869 |
| El Salvador | 00503 | Saint Lucia | 001758 |
| England (UK) | 0044 | Saint Pierre | 00508 |
| Equatorial Guinea | 00240 | Saint Vincent | 001784 |
| Eritrea | 00291 | Samoa US | 00684 |
| Estonia | 00372 | Samoa West | 00685 |
| Ethiopia | 00251 | San Marino | 00378 |
| Falkland Islands | 00500 | Sao Tome | 00239 |
| Faroe Islands | 00298 | Saudi Arabia | 00966 |
| Fiji | 00679 | Scotland (UK) | 0044 |
| Finland | 00358 | Senegal | 00221 |
| France | 0033 | Seychelles | 00284 |
| French Guiana | 00594 | Sierra Leone | 00232 |
| French Polynesia | 00689 | Singapore | 0065 |
| Gabon | 00241 | Slovakia | 00421 |
| Gambia | 00220 | Slovenia | 00386 |
| Georgia | 00995 | Solomon Islands | 00677 |
| Germany | 0049 | Somalia | 00252 |
| Ghana | 00233 | South Africa | 0027 |
| Gibraltar | 00350 | South Korea | 0082 |
| Greece | 0030 | Spain | 0034 |
| Greenland | 00299 | Sri Lanka | 0094 |
| Grenada | 001473 | Sudan | 00249 |
| Guadeloupe | 00590 | Suriname | 00597 |
| Guam | 001671 | Swaziland | 00268 |
| Guatemala | 00502 | Sweden | 0046 |
| Guinea | 00224 | Switzerland | 0041 |
| Guyana | 00592 | Syria | 00963 |
| Haiti | 00509 | Serbia | 00381 |
| Holland (Netherlands) | 0031 | Taiwan | 00886 |
| Honduras | 00504 | Tanzania | 00255 |
| Hong Kong | 00852 | Thailand | 0066 |
| Hungary | 0036 | Togo | 00228 |
| Ibiza (Spain) | 0034 | Tonga | 00676 |
| Iceland | 00354 | Tokelau | 00690 |
| India | 0091 | Trinidad | 001868 |
| Indian Ocean | 00873 | Tunisia | 00216 |
| Indonesia | 0062 | Turkey | 0090 |
| Iran | 0098 | Tuvalu | 00688 |
| Iraq | 00964 | Uganda | 00256 |
| Ireland | 00353 | Ukraine | 00380 |
| Italy | 0039 | United Arab Emirates | 00976 |
| Ivory Coast | 00225 | United Kingdom | 0044 |
| Jamaica | 001876 | Uruguay | 00598 |
| Japan | 0081 | USA | 001 |
| Jordan | 00962 | Uzbekistan | 00998 |
| Kazakhstan | 007 | Vanuatu | 00678 |
| Kenya | 00254 | Venezuela | 00582 |
| Kiribati | 00686 | Vietnam | 0084 |
| Kuwait | 00965 | Virgin Islands UK | 001284 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 00996 | Virgin Islands US | 001340 |
| Laos | 00856 | Wales (UK) | 0044 |
| Latvia | 00371 | Yemen | 00967 |
| Lebanon | 00961 | Yugoslavia | 00381 |
| Liberia | 00231 | Zambia | 00260 |
| Libya | 00218 | Zimbabwe | 00263 |
| Lesotho | 00266 | | |



PRIVATE CLINICS

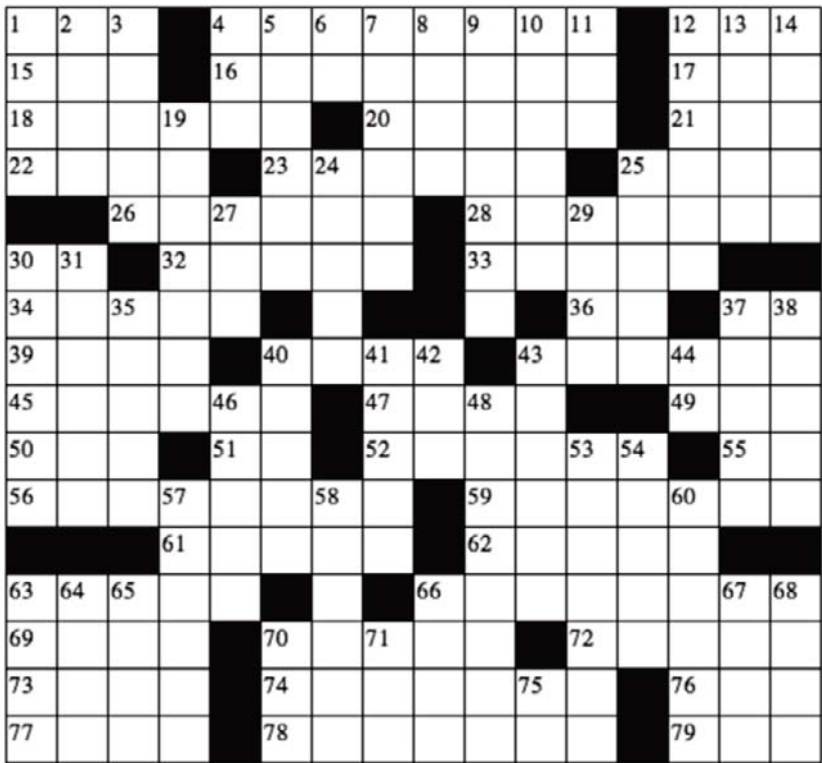
| Ophthalmologists | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor | 25622444 |
| Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea | 25752222 |
| Dr. Masoma Habeeb | 25321171 |
| Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy | 25739999 |
| Dr. Mohsen Abel | 25757700 |
| Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl | 25732223 |
| Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly | 25732223 |
| Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) | |
| Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner | 24555050 Ext 510 |
| Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali | 25644660 |
| Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel | 25646478 |
| Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah | 25311996 |
| Dr. Mohammad Al-Daaory | 25731988 |
| Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary | 22620166 |
| Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz | 25651426 |
| General Practitioners | |
| Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi | 24555050 Ext 123 |
| Dr. Yousef Al-Omar | 24719312 |
| Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem | 23926920 |
| Dr. Kathem Maarafi | 25730465 |
| Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadad | 25655528 |
| Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi | 24577781 |
| Dr. Dina Abidallah Al-Refae | 25333501 |
| Urologists | |
| Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy | 22641534 |
| Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul | 22639955 |
| Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi | 22616660 |
| Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C) | 25313120 |
| Dr. Leons Joseph | 66703427 |

| Plastic Surgeons | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf | 22547272 |
| Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari | 22617700 |
| Dr. Abdel Quttainah | 25625030/60 |
| Family Doctor | |
| Dr Divya Damodar | 23729596/23729581 |
| Psychiatrists | |
| Dr. Esam Al-Ansari | 22635047 |
| Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan | 22613623/0 |
| Gynaecologists & Obstetricians | |
| DrAdrian arbe | 23729596/23729581 |
| Dr. Verginia s.Marin | 2572-6666 ext 8321 |
| Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan | 22655539 |
| Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami | 25343406 |
| Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly | 25739272 |
| Dr. Salem soso | 22618787 |
| General Surgeons | |
| Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer | 22610044 |
| Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher | 25327148 |
| Internists, Chest & Heart | |
| Dr. Adnan Ebil | 22639939 |
| Dr. Mousa Khadada | 22666300 |
| Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan | 25728004 |
| Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra | 25355515 |
| Dr. Mobarak Aldoub | 24726446 |
| Dr Nasser Behbehani | 25654300/3 |

| Paediatricians | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Dr. Khaled Hamadi | 25665898 |
| Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed | 25340300 |
| Dr. Zahra Qabazard | 25710444 |
| Dr. Sohail Qamar | 22621099 |
| Dr. Snaa Maarroof | 25713514 |
| Dr. Pradip Gujare | 23713100 |
| Dr. Zacharias Mathew | 24334282 |
| Dermatology | |
| Dr. Mohammed Salam | |
| Bern University | 23845955 |
| Dentists | |
| Dr Anil Thomas | 3729596/3729581 |
| Dr. Shamah Al-Matar | 22641071/2 |
| Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed | 22562226 |
| Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer | 22561444 |
| Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan | 22619557 |
| Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash | 22525888 |
| Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan | 25653755 |
| Dr. Bader Al-Ansari | 25620111 |
| Neurologists | |
| Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri | 25633324 |
| Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan | 25345875 |
| Gastrologists | |
| Dr. Sami Aman | 22636464 |
| Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly | 25322030 |
| Dr. Foad Abidallah Al-Ali | 22633135 |

| Endocrinologist | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman | 25339330 |
| Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari | 25658888 |
| Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr | 25329924 |
| Physiotherapists & VD | |
| Dr. Deyaa Shehab | 25722291 |
| Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees | 22666288 |
| Rheumatologists: | |
| Dr. Adel Al-Awadi | 25330060 |
| Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah | 25722290 |
| Internist, Chest & Heart | |
| DR.Mohammes Akkad | 24555050 Ext 210 |
| Dr. Mohammad Zubaid | |
| MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC | |
| Assistant Professor Of Medicine | |
| Head, Division of Cardiology | |
| Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital | 25339667 |
| Consultant Cardiologist | |
| Dr. Farida Al-Habib | 2611555-2622555 |
| MD, PH.D, FACC | |
| Inaya German Medical Center | |
| Te: 2575077 | |
| Fax: 25723123 | |

CROSSWORD 1457



ACROSS

- 1. White crystalline compound used as a food additive to enhance flavor.
- 4. Any of various strong liquors especially a Dutch spirit distilled from potatoes.
- 12. A fluorocarbon with chlorine.
- 15. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- 16. A long slender cigar.
- 17. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- 18. Soviet physicist who worked on low temperature physics (1908-1968).
- 20. A woman of refinement.
- 21. A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served over a counter.
- 22. 100 lwei equal 1 kwanza.
- 23. The vital principle or animating force within living things.
- 26. A proteolytic enzyme obtained from the unripe papaya.
- 28. Relating to or used in making cabinets.
- 30. A public promotion of some product or service.
- 32. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
- 33. (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
- 34. The hair growing on the lower part of a man's face.
- 36. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- 39. A city in northern India.
- 45. Covered with paving material.
- 47. Wading birds of warm regions having long slender down-curved bills.
- 49. A vacuum tube in which a hot cathode emits a beam of electrons that pass through a high voltage anode and are focused or deflected before hitting a phosphorescent screen.
- 50. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- 51. An informal term for a father.
- 52. The act of ceding.
- 55. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- 56. Coextensive with the order Cestida.
- 59. The science of mountains.
- 61. Follower of Rastafarianism.
- 62. A metric unit of capacity equal to the volume of 1 kilogram of pure water at 4 degrees centigrade and 760 mm of mercury (or approximately 1.76 pints).
- 63. Free from dirt or impurities.
- 69. A pilgrimage to Mecca.
- 72. Lake in northwestern Russia near the border with Finland.
- 73. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- 74. Desk or stand with a slanted top used to hold a text at the proper height for a lecturer.
- 76. Strong liquor flavored with juniper berries.
- 77. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- 78. Type genus of the family Ascaridae.
- 79. Inquire about.

DOWN

- 1. A public area set aside as a pedestrian walk.
- 2. Basically shredded cabbage.
- 3. Tropical American tree bearing a small edible fruit with green leathery skin and sweet juicy translucent pulp.
- 4. A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
- 5. Involving or constituting a cause.
- 6. A colorless explosive liquid that is volatile and poisonous and foul-smelling.
- 7. Inclined to or serving for the giving of names.
- 8. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- 9. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- 10. Any of several trees of the genus Platanus having thin pale bark that scales off in small plates and lobed leaves and ball-shaped heads of fruits.
- 11. A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.
- 12. A small tent used as a dressing room beside the sea or a swimming pool.
- 13. A structure supporting or containing something.
- 14. A unit of weight for precious stones = 200 mg.
- 19. A drawing intended to explain how something works.
- 24. Used chiefly as a direction or description in music.
- 25. A genus of Limacidae.
- 27. (British) The dessert course of a meal ('pudding' is used informally).
- 29. The capital and chief port of Qatar.
- 31. Free and relaxed in manner.
- 35. A wall hanging of heavy handwoven fabric with pictorial designs.
- 37. Lean end of the neck.
- 38. Informal or slang terms for mentally irregular.
- 40. A large number or amount.
- 41. A genus of temperate and arctic evergreen trees (see spruce).
- 42. The compass point that is one point east of due south.
- 43. God of the underworld and judge of the dead.
- 44. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- 46. Relating to or having the characteristics of bees.
- 48. A lover blind with admiration and devotion.
- 53. Small personal or clothing or sewing items.
- 54. Made the first orbital rocket-powered flight by a United States astronaut in 1962.
- 57. Roman emperor and adoptive son of Nerva.
- 58. Spider monkeys.
- 60. Nicaraguan statesman (born in 1945).
- 64. Remove with or as if with a ladle.
- 65. Edible starchy tuberous root of taro plants.
- 66. A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
- 67. Armor plate that protects the chest.
- 68. Very fertile.
- 70. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- 71. A federal agency that supervises carriers that transport goods and people between states.
- 75. A state in New England.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your independence will be showing today. You may find yourself drooling over anything new, unusual or different. Your routine may be wearing a bit thin and you look for ways to change some things in your life. You want anything that is different. Although you are a bit restless, you seem to have enough common sense to create for yourself a timetable within which you can complete all the changes you are wanting: a new apartment or home, perhaps new furniture or somewhere you can have a fireplace or a time-share place in which to vacation. You are tempted to charge your purchases, but instead will hold fast to the reality that anything is possible in time-perhaps not overnight with the flash of a card. You set a good example as you remain in control.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Being calm, cool and collected may take some effort today. You might take a step back to see a particular situation from a different perspective. Perhaps you will see an opportunity to relax in a different environment for a short while. After a break, sensitivities are eased and life returns to some sort of sanity. Perhaps more rest, perhaps clearer conversation, a pause in time is certainly a wise idea. Serious conversations might be better served another day. Being on the go and keeping an ear to the ground help you to feel that you are keeping in touch. Learning and communicating with others delight you. This is a time when you may decide to express your creative side. You might share a joke, a puzzle or a poetry book.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

A greater regard for things of value and even the idea of value itself is the order of this day. You may find yourself really getting into the spirit of the season. You shop, lunch with friends and shop some more-do you have a list you may find an interest in antiques or some type of artwork. This is a very enjoyable time-one of high energy and high hopes. Perhaps the mall you are visiting has gained more customers than usual. Local talent gains the attention of much of the community. You and your friends enjoy the local talent as you weave in and out of the stores. You may be thinking that you could be a singer next year. Make sure to make periodic trips to your car so that you can store your packages in the trunk of your car. Dinner out is fun tonight.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You realize now, it is time to make some long-needed changes in old habit patterns that you have kept for way too long. Variety can be the spice of life. Keeping busy with new and positive activities is essential to making positive changes in your life. Becoming complacent is conducive to staying in one place too long and requires that your position be rethought. Accruing new information and expanding your way of doing things will be like a breath of fresh air, once you become acclimated to the changes you make. Now is a good time to get in touch with your inner self and understand how you feel about who you are. All those times you held back comments become less and less of a problem-you are learning about a new positive you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There may be someone around you who does not appreciate or possibly understand your rather eccentric behavior; a close friend or relative will be supportive. Young people learn from your actions today. Anything uncommon or extraordinary will be what captures your interest. Allowing your creative and intuitive nature to come forth will pay you back in big rewards and dividends. New solutions to long-held problems may be among the benefits. Something very inventive may surface. Allowing variety into your life will help to keep you from feeling bored with your everyday life. Change is inevitable. In your case, change is necessary for self-preservation. Do not allow yourself to become out of touch.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You might like to socialize today-fun will come soon enough. For this morning, responsibilities that you set for yourself are knocking at your door. You will see things through and then be free to enjoy the fun stuff! You may find that you can accomplish quite a lot if you take one project at a time. Understanding your friends and understanding people in general brings about an understanding of yourself. You enjoy the new friends as well as the old ones and you seem to choose the most positive-thinking people that come into your awareness. You are comfortable in being a friendly person. This evening you allow yourself to enjoy a fun social opportunity that is available to you. Among your friends, you find opportunities to let your light shine!



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may find that there is some important personal business that requires your attention this morning and then you will have the day to do with as you please. An ethnic poet, storyteller or educator that you have been curious about is performing in town. You and perhaps a friend or two should be able to enjoy this endeavor. You may decide to take a neighbor's child with you. Perhaps this is a way you have of enjoying and sharing with the people around you but sometimes your generosity is just simply enjoying the simple, uncomplicated happiness that comes with youth. A brother or sister, or perhaps your own children, all combine to make a merry little band. This evening you change hats, so to speak, to be with your friends, creating good camaraderie.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You should find this a good day for just about anything that your heart desires. Those around you should find you very natural and vital. Communicating with others and getting your message across is at a high. This is a great time to be in the company of other people both personally and in a work situation. Your ability to manage and direct other people puts you in a good position to assume the responsibility for a special job. Perhaps today is more of a volunteer day to help at the local hospital, nursing home, etc. A truly earnest effort, along with your hand and eye coordination, makes just about any task run well. This is a great day for getting things accomplished and for doing good deeds. Emotions are well within your control.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Thinking back over the years, you can see that small achievements are to the credit of the influences and mentors that you have had in the past. The efforts made by others in your youth to set an example or expand your cultural awareness made you wise beyond your years. You are grateful and may seek to acknowledge those that you admire. Idealists, politicians and business executives influence you. You reaffirm your personal morals, ethics and ideals. You begin to work to educate or support people and projects that create that feeling of pride in yourself, your family and your community. Love, money and charitable causes get your adrenaline flowing. You are proud of the influential position that you establish.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

To feel cared for and needed is a comforting thing. You will find that those relationships you hold closest are more powerful and important. Being alone and lonely is just not your favorite thing to be-you like people around you to help reinforce the feeling of caring and sharing. You could easily find yourself looking for something in the romance department, or at least finding enjoyment from some emotional release. Feelings and movement are appreciated. You could find a great deal of satisfaction from just getting out and about and walking or exercising. Your ability to communicate well with others is a positive, particularly at this time. It is your turn to reach out and touch someone. Plan a get-together with friends soon.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Singing about happy days may be part of a song, but the words present the feelings of this day. This may be because you feel all of the love and affection that surrounds you. There is a big chance for you to understand those around you and to have a special time with someone you love. This is a happy time. You place value on that which is principled and forthright and you have a particular dislike of what is secret, intense or private. People are listening when you talk because of your persuasiveness and eloquent way with words. Self-expression works well for you just now, lending itself to your ideas and thoughts. Today you look for gifts that fit the needs of the special people in your life. Tonight is a time for visiting.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may feel that you are caught up in a situation where you must choose a path without knowing any details or circumstances. If you are in a vehicle, you can have a bit of comfort in knowing that one is never really lost-just perhaps on an adventure. Though you would love to be out and among friends socially, your timing could be off just enough to cause you some problems. Why not stop and consider a change of plans-it could be a very positive thing. Let others know what you have decided and then enjoy the rest of the afternoon-perhaps a movie or a bit of shopping. Laugh a little! You have done well this year where finances are involved. This year you did not necessarily make more money, but you were wise with financial decisions.

WORD SEARCH

Computer Jargon 2

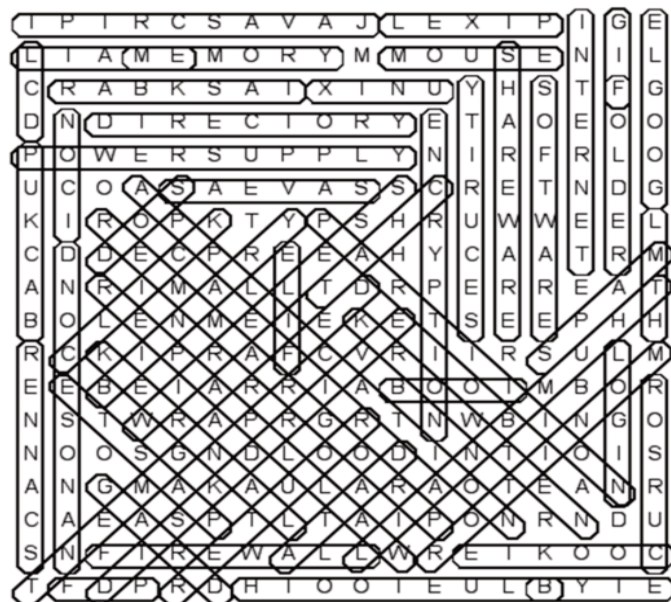
Find and circle all of the computer words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional computer word.



- | | | | | |
|------------|----------|------------|------------|--------------|
| ASCII | DISK | HARDWARE | PASSWORD | SOUNDCARD |
| BANDWIDTH | DOCUMENT | INPUT | SPYWARE | |
| BIOS | DOWNLOAD | JAVA | PERIPHERAL | TERAFLOP |
| BUG | DRIVER | JPEG | PORT | TROJAN HORSE |
| CACHE | EMOTICON | KEYBOARD | PRINTER | UPLOAD |
| CHIP | ETHERNET | LINUX | REBOOT | USB |
| COPY | FAQ | MENU | RESOLUTION | USERNAME |
| CPU | FIREWIRE | MODEM | SAVE | VIRUS |
| CRASH | FONT | MULTIMEDIA | SCROLL | WEB BROWSER |
| CYBERSPACE | FREEWARE | NETIQUETTE | SERVER | WINDOWS |
| DATABASE | GIGABYTE | OPEN | SMILEY | ZIP FILE |
| DESKTOP | HACKER | | | |

Yesterday Solution

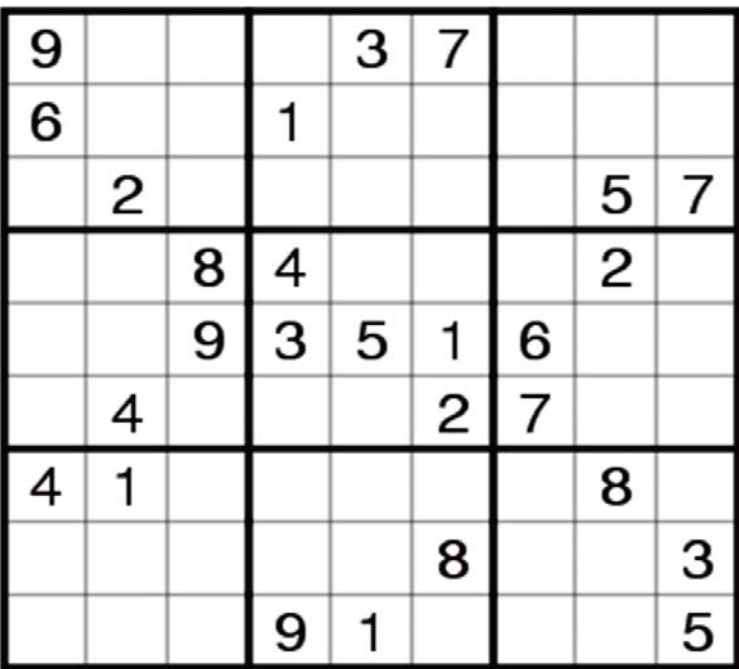
Computer Jargon 1



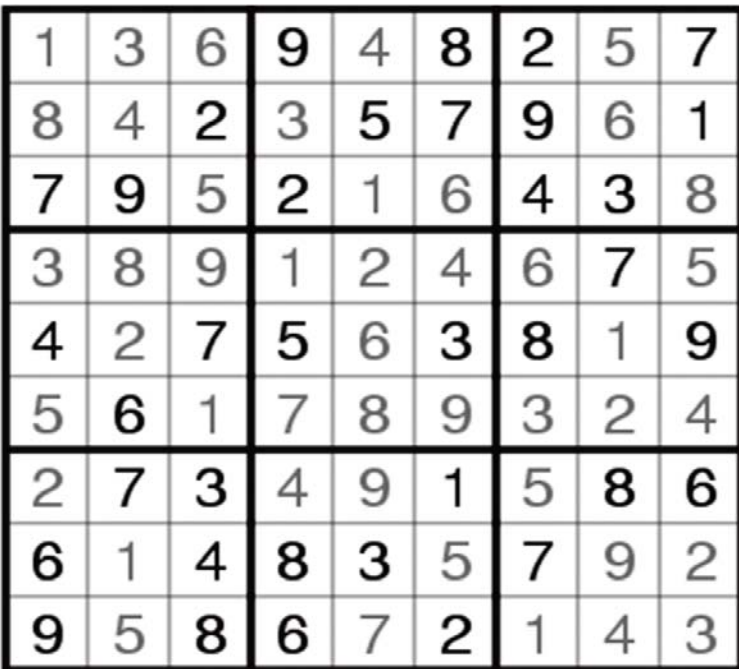
- | | | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| APPLICATION | DEFRAGMENT | GOOGLE | NANOSECOND | SCANNER |
| BACKUP | DIRECTORY | HTML | NETWORK | SECURITY |
| BINARY | DISK DRIVE | ICON | PARTITION | SHAREWARE |
| BLUETOOTH | DOS | INTERNET | PASTE | SOFTWARE |
| 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 | | |

The hidden word is: MOTHERBOARD

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Martin Scorsese's 'Silence'

Only in the real world do humans possess free will, whereas any film about the nature of belief effectively requires the director to play god, forcing them to answer the very questions they often set out to raise. Despite this paradox, in the history of cinema, there have been many great films about Christian faith - though not nearly enough: Carl Theodor Dreyer's "Ordet," Robert Bresson's "The Diary of a Country Priest," Jean-Pierre Melville's "Leon Morin, Priest." Now, add to that Martin Scorsese's "Silence," which marks the culmination of a nearly 30-year journey to adapt Japanese novelist Shusaku Endo's tale of a 17th-century Jesuit missionary faced with the dilemma of whether to apostatize.

And yet, judged in broadly cinematic terms, "Silence" is not a great movie, despite having been directed by one of the medium's greatest masters at a point of great maturity (this is the last film one might expect to immediately follow the bacchanalian excess of "The Wolf of Wall Street"). Though undeniably gorgeous, it is punishingly long, frequently boring, and woefully unengaging at some of its most critical moments. It is too subdued for Scorsese-philies, too violent for the most devout, and too abstruse for the great many moviegoers who such an expensive undertaking hopes to attract (which no doubt explains why Scorsese was compelled to cast "The Amazing Spider-Man" actor Andrew Garfield and two "Star Wars" stars).

Still, viewed through the narrow prism of films about faith, "Silence" is a remarkable achievement, tackling as it does a number of Big Questions in a medium that, owing to its commercial nature, so often shies away from Christianity altogether. Considering the dominant role religious belief plays in the lives of so many, it's surprising, even scandalous, that so few films face the subject head-on. "Silence" is the largest, most serious-minded examination of faith since Terrence Malick's "The Tree of Life," rounding out a trilogy on the subject from the director of "Kundun" and "The Last Temptation of Christ."

At the core of "Silence" lies the dilemma: What does it mean to apostatize? Though the screenplay (which Scorsese adapted with Jay Cocks, his collaborator on "The Age of Innocence" and "Gangs of New York") intends for us to consider this question on some deep teleological level, the film would do well to engage with it first in more literal terms.

For those not already versed in the finer points of Christian dogma, "apostasy" is the act by which someone renounces his faith, represented in the particular context of this film by placing one's foot upon a fumi-e. Here, apostasy is the weapon by which 17th-century Japanese officials, threatened by European colonial powers and the missionary faith they brought with them, sought to combat the spread of Christianity among peasants receptive to the notion that their suffering might be lifted in heaven.

Insight

In Scorsese's comparably low-key "Kundun," the future Dalai Lama learns the Four Noble Truths of Buddhist teaching. "What are the causes of suffering?" his teacher asks, to which his pupil responds, "Pride. Pride causes suffering." This is a priceless insight, and one that Garfield's character, a presumptuous young "padre" named Sebastiao Rodrigues, might do well to learn. Though Rodrigues imagines his greatest obstacle to be God's silence (he prays constantly, and yet He never responds), the story hinges on the character's seemingly unbreakable arrogance - a dimension significantly downplayed in Garfield's self-effacing performance. Instead, the actor focuses on Rodrigues' doubt, as reflected in the dense clouds of fog and mist that permeate much of the film.

If "Apocalypse Now" was a modern twist on "Heart of

Darkness," then "Silence" could fairly be viewed as Scorsese's own take on that paradigm. Call it "Soul of Murkiness." Together with another Portuguese priest, Francisco Garpe (Driver, who looks the part, his lean, angular face reflecting the severity of classic religious icons), Rodrigues petitions his Jesuit superior (Ciaran Hinds) to let them travel to Japan to investigate the fate of their mentor, father Cristovao Ferreira (Liam Neeson) - who's effectively the film's AWOL Kurtz. Their only clue is a long-delayed letter, which tells of unspeakable torture practices visited upon Christian priests and converts alike in an attempt to discourage the spread of the religion, coupled with rumors that Ferreira ultimately apostatized and now lives with a wife as a Japanese.



For the sincerely devout Rodrigues, the mission represents an opportunity to do good, offering salvation to the savages, but also a shot at glory. He makes the journey - which, in a two-hour-and-41-minute movie, passes in the blink of an eye - in full awareness that he could be martyred for his actions. With martyrdom comes divine reward (including the possibility of special visions, a privileged place in heaven, and eventual sainthood), and in Endo's novel at least, he yearns for the opportunity.

The reality that awaits Rodrigues and Garpe is every bit as hellish as they had imagined, and then some, and Scorsese renders these scenes of torture - boiling water drizzled over exposed flesh, women wrapped in straw and set on fire - with the same unflinching detachment Pier Paolo Pasolini did the sadism of his infamous, incendiary final film, "Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom." And yet, Rodrigues persists, consciously risking his safety in order to locate and serve the "Kakure Kirishitan" (or "hidden Christians"), who have been forced underground by these terrible punishments, inquiring as to Ferreira's whereabouts with each fresh encounter.

The first Japanese the missionaries encounter is a wily ex-Christian named Kichijiro (Yosuke Kubozuka), whose sneaky, social-outcast behavior suggests the way Toshiro Mifune might play the role of Gollum. Kichijiro has apostatized once already, and he will again before the movie ends, repeatedly betraying his faith and returning to beg forgiveness. Generally speaking, the casting of the Japanese characters favors actors who look like ghoulish exaggerations - like the rude caricatures found in

Tintin comics, their teeth and fingernails smeared in grime. Compared with the humanely depicted natives of Roland Joffe's more conventionally accessible/satisfying "The Mission," the Japanese here come across as frighteningly "other," almost animalistic. An unnerving inquisitor named Inoue (Issey Ogata) has a wheedling voice and faux-gracious manner that suggests the Japanese equivalent of Christoph Waltz's Nazi colonel in "Inglourious Basterds."

This style of representation marks a troubling, but no

doubt deliberate choice on Scorsese's part - especially compared with Garfield's bare-chested, fabulously coiffed Rodrigues. Underscoring where our sympathies are expected to lie, the missionary outsiders all speak English (with wildly varied Portuguese accents), while the comparably heathen locals communicate in subtitled Japanese. Unlike Endo's own big-screen adaptation of his novel, filmed by Japanese director Masahiro Shinoda in 1971, here, the local becomes the "other" - especially since the second half of the film concerns the two priests' captivity and the sadistic attempts to convince them that Japan is a "swamp" where their religion "does not take root".

Rodrigues is prepared for martyrdom, but not for the Japanese inquisitor's more diabolical scheme, which involves torturing other Christians until he apostatizes. Worse still, Rodrigues watches as his cohort achieves the martyrdom he seeks (in a horrific beachfront scene that rings strangely hollow). Through it all, Rodrigues continues his appeal to God, praying for guidance, but receiving only ... silence. Until he doesn't.

Challenging

The film's last hour is by far its most challenging, as Scorsese goes out of his way to avoid some of the sweeping, free-associative techniques Malick has innovated for spiritual cinema, turning instead to the austere model of Bresson, Dreyer, and others that "Last Temptation" screenwriter Paul Schrader once described as "transcendental cinema," in which powerless protagonists struggle against forces beyond their control. Whereas Endo's novel allows omniscient access to Rodrigues' deep internal conflict, the film leaves audiences at arm's length, forcing us to scrutinize Garfield's face for psychological insights that, for most, are too complex to expect us to interpret on our own.

For non-believers in particular, when Neeson resurfaces, his arguments, intended as the cruelest temptation, will instead sound perfectly logical. What Ferreira describes as "the most powerful act of love that has ever been performed" feels like a no-brainer, with no catharsis to ease the anti-climax. From the Crusades to the Spanish Inquisition, when one considers all the cruelty that religion has exerted on the world, it seems almost unfair to focus on this footnote in world history, where priests were punished for their beliefs, the way early Christians were thrown to the lions.

And yet, these paradoxes surely aren't lost on Scorsese, who has created a taxing film that will not only hold up to multiple viewings, but practically demands them. Here, as ever, he brings an arresting visual sense to the project, reteaming with production designer Dante Ferretti and DP Rodrigo Prieto to create evocative widescreen tableaux, shot on celluloid and shrouded in mist and shadow, while relaxing some of his flashier techniques (with its Peter Gabriel score and aggressive cutting, "Last Temptation" feels dated today in a way that the director clearly intends to avoid here).

What little music "Silence" does contain is featured so faintly as to be almost subliminal, leaving ample room for engaged audiences to personalize the viewing experience, while frustrating those grasping for clues as to the precise emotional reaction Scorsese intends. That's a risky move, as is the dramatic way he breaks the silence in the end. Those who put their faith in Scorsese may find it challenged as never before by his long-gestating passion project. — Reuters



Pandora

By Maggie Lee

Clearly influenced by the Fukushima nuclear meltdown in March 2011, South Korean disaster blockbuster "Pandora" is the film no mainstream Japanese director dares to make. Imagining, with harrowing realism, a man-made disaster gone catastrophic, writer-director Park Jung-woo's uncensored depiction of political incompetence taps right into his compatriots' current mood of anger and mistrust toward their government in the midst of President Park Geun-hye's impeachment. Resisting the temptation to entertain or offer pat optimism, Park's commitment to a cause is what gives the yarn its stark power. The first Korean picture acquired by Netflix, it's sure to go gangbusters locally, as well as heat up niche overseas markets.

A genre that makes ample use of Korean cinema's leading edge in visual and special effects, disaster movies have always been safe bets at the domestic box office. While the first wave of such films, like "Haeundae" or "The Tower," have been pure action-entertainment, the genre has recently taken on an increasingly political edge with hits like "Train to Busan" and "The Tunnel" lambasting government indifference to citizens' suffering, in response to botched crisis management of the Sewol Ferry Accident.

South Korea is one of the world's major utilizers of nuclear power (24 plants in nine cities across 28 counties, according to closing titles), with most plants located in the southern part of the country, which has been prone to earthquakes. The fact that the government has announced no back-up measures post-Fukushima, and instead is pushing to build 10 more reactors, has sparked a strong anti-nuke movement. Due to the project's controversial nature, the production was in development for four years, and failed to gain access from any plant to shoot on site. Though set in an unnamed town in the southern province of Gyeongsangnam-do, domestic audiences will easily relate the action to Wolsong and Kori power plants in Gyeongju and Busan, respectively.

The film starts with a heavy allegorical ring as a couple of tykes gaze at a nearby nuclear reactor, calling it by turns a rice cooker, something that will make the country rich, and "a box that when opened will bring big trouble" - referring to the title's Greek origin. Opposing views about nuclear power are presented by a stand-off between anti-nuke protesters and workers at Hanbyul nuclear plant.

One of the workers is mechanic Kang Jae-hyuk (Kim Nam-gil), whose father and brother were employed at the plant and died due to accidents there. Neither his mother, Ms Seok (Kim Young-ae), who runs a diner with her widowed daughter-in-law Jung-hye (Moon Jeong-hee), nor his g.f., Yeon-ju (Kim Joo-hyeon), who's a PR officer for nuclear energy, want him to venture outside the city, yet job prospects are limited; according to one local's remarks, since the reactor has been built, the city has seen "no fishing, no farming, no tourists".

Soon enough, a 6.1 earthquake strikes, causing radiation to leak from a cracked cooling valve. As the workers, fearing for their own safety, hesitate to fix it, other valves burst, spraying radiated water everywhere and overheating to the point of explosion in parts of the plant. Every troubleshooting endeavor by maintenance engineer Chief Park (Jung Jin-young) is vetoed by the boss, for fear of the plant being decommissioned.

Unlike standard Korean disaster movies that pad out almost half the film with comic bantering among minor characters, "Pandora" gets straight to the point about the underlying risks of nuclear power. With thorough technical exposition, the film tracks how facilities can easily malfunction and inexorably devolve. Also atypical of Korean blockbusters, visual effects here are not employed to create pyrotechnics that are of tangential importance to the story. Instead, leading VFX company Digital Idea visualizes the full-metal anatomy of the nuclear reactor, from its looming outer form to the steampunk-like machinery inside with a grim realism that makes the meltdown so galvanizing to watch.

Also certain to stoke emotions are scenes of staggering government inefficiency, especially the prime minister's overbearing control over president Kang Seok-ho (Kim Myung-min), which seem to have real life parallels. The cabinet's ploys to cover up the disaster by refusing to evacuate citizens in the vicinity and even locking them up to stop mass panic recall the captain and crew's self-preserving crimes in the Sewol Ferry tragedy.

Park's pandemic thriller "Deranged" already fused corporate conspiracy with government ineptitude, but "Pandora" goes further than any Korean film in disparaging a government or leader so thoroughly, and expressing such devastating collective helplessness. Not only does every move to contain the danger worsen it, the turning point culminates in a lame-duck speech by Kang begging for volunteers to "sacrifice themselves on behalf of this weak government." Comparing the scene with recent official apologies president Park made, Korean audiences will surely wonder how the lines between parody, fiction, and reality are blurred.

While reports of health issues caused by the Fukushima fallout have not publicly surfaced in Japan, the film almost revels in the grisly portrayal of suffering caused by radiation, at times risking descent into Gothic horror with close-ups of charred skin, pus-oozing boils, and spewing blood. While Jae-hyuk's romance and family drama are subsumed under the wider events, the final scenes indulge in a round of breast-beating, hysterical wailing, and thundering patriotism. Still, given the intense seriousness sustained earlier on, the film somehow must cater to the need of local audiences for cathartic melodrama. — Reuters

Sugar Mountain

Billed as a wilderness survival thriller, "Sugar Mountain" is in fact more of a potboiler involving a romantic triangle and ill-conceived fraud scheme. None of those elements grow very compelling over the course of Aussie director Richard Gray's Alaska-set feature, which is polished without ever achieving much in the realm of suspense or emotional involvement. The moderate marquee value of Jason Momoa and Cary Elwes (though the former has only a few scenes) should help smooth access to home markets. But in any format there's unlikely to be great excitement over this middling drama, which opened on 10 US screens (as well as in Toronto) on Dec. 9.

The West brothers have lost their mother to lung cancer, but inherited her business catering to sporty visitors in the titular resort town. (The film was primarily shot in and around Seward, a fishing port and tourist destination in southwestern Alaska's Kenai Peninsula region.) Unfortunately, they're going under, with the bank impounding the boat their charter trade depends on for overdue payments.

It's blustery, short-attention-spanned Miles' (Drew Roy) brief idea that they solve these financial woes by staging a disappearance in the nearby frozen mountains, then sell the "miraculous survival" story to the media for big bucks. Nice-guy sibling Liam (Shane Coffey) is not at all thrilled by this plan, especially since it requires him to express covetous jealousy over Miles' loyal girlfriend/co-conspirator Lauren (Haley Webb) for whom he has secretly pined since childhood. This play-acted fraternal conflict will up the publicity stakes when Miles allegedly "vanishes" during a hike, raising the possibility of foul play.

Everybody falls for the ruse at first, including Lauren's police-chief father (Elwes), who orchestrates search parties to roam the sub-zero wilderness. But of course, best-laid-plans soon unravel in part due to the discovery that Miles has significant gambling debts owed to a menacing local character (Momoa), but also because his absence opens a space which the long-repressed attraction between Liam and Laura rushes to fill (via a somewhat ludicrously overblown sex scene).

Meanwhile, it begins to look like Miles' faked mortal-peril scenario might well have turned into the real thing. Originally set in his and the director's native Australia, Abe Pogos' screenplay is compli-

cated enough. But Gray's execution arrives at a middle-of-the-road tenor that lacks (among other things) the tragic sense of inexorable cruel fate seen in "A Simple Plan" or grotesque black comedy in "Fargo," to name a couple better films about ordinary people whose seemingly harmless criminal-fraud schemes turn very harmful indeed. Despite a fairly eventful narrative, the proceedings feel a bit turgid, as the character dynamics seldom surprise, and not much tension accrues, with disappointingly scant screen time given over to Miles' wilderness sojourn. (John Garrett's widescreen lensing of the spectacular local scenery is handsome, but despite its hook, this is a movie largely driven by indoor arguments.)

Even a brief, panicked encounter with a bear is oddly tepid as staged here. By the time "Sugar Mountain" springs a belated burst of action - including a car chase and one subsidiary figure's not-dead-after-all revival the effect feels more desperate than exciting, with a soap-operatic plot revelation heightening the strain. It's all meant to be bitterly ironic in the end, but "Mountain" simply doesn't have the depth to pull that off. Though ultimately frustrated in creating fully dimensionalized figures, the actors do decent work. Those who tune in for "Aquaman" star Momoa, however, will be irked to realize his bad guy (while key to the story) only appears in three or four scenes. — Reuters



The Bounce Back

There's good-looking in the way that regular folks are, there's good-looking in the way that movie stars are, and then there's good-looking in the way the two lead actors of "The Bounce Back" are - too model-perfect luscious for their own good (or, at least, for the good of a movie). They're prefab human jewels without flaws, easy on the eyes in a distracting Platonic-ideal-of-Beverly Hills way. Shemar Moore, who co-produced the movie and stars in it, is a former fashion model and daytime-soap stud - he spent 10 years on "The Young and the Restless" - who with his dreamboat eyes, ladies'-man smile, and awesome cover-dude abs is so handsome and sexy that even playing someone who's supposed to be handsome and sexy, he's a bit too hunktastic.

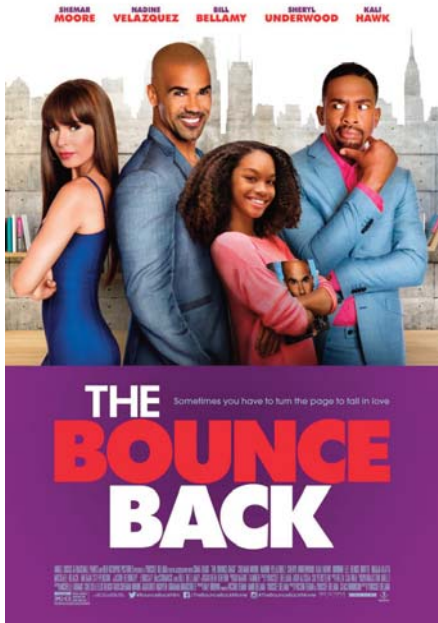
His character, Matthew Taylor, is a self-help author with an ardent following of lovelorn women. He has written a book, "The Bounce Back", that's climbing the bestseller charts, and it's about taking control of your romantic life by leaving the past behind. The pain, the self-doubt, the hidden trauma that made you who you are - Matthew's advice is to throw all that pesky stuff into the trash. Invent yourself anew, he says. Believe!

"The Bounce Back" is an example of just how L A an indie film can be. The reason I draw attention to Moore's look is that even though he isn't a bad actor, his Chippendale's single's-bar Lothario sheen is far too present. Matthew is supposed to be a writer hawking a hard-won philosophy, and he talks about it with mellow and thoughtful conviction, but the vibe Moore puts out is: "Follow my lead! If you can look like the personal-workout trainer of the year (or become romantically involved with him), you'll achieve success."

Matthew's opposite number - is Kristin Peralta, a therapist played by Nadine Velazquez (best known for her role on "My Name Is Earl"), who with her Barbie bangs and Valkyrie cheekbones looks like the world's first shrink who also offers makeovers. (Come to think of it: That could be an industry.)

Appearing on a talk show with Matthew, she has a bone to pick with his book, because she thinks it's a fraud. That makes sense: Her job isn't to bury the past but to excavate it. Their on-air verbal tussle strikes sparks, and so they begin to get invited onto other shows as a dueling duo. It's Team Freud (Kristin) vs Team You Are Whoever You Say You Are (Matthew). The movie itself is like "Adam's Rib" crossed with the now-defunct Jerry Springer dating game show "Baggage."

"The Bounce Back" was co-written, directed, and edited by Youseff Delara, and for a while he creates some lively screwball tension. Moore and Velazquez are sharp enough



performers to bring off that time-honored romcom thing: They convince you they truly dislike each other. Which, of course, only makes their attraction more necessary to deny, and therefore hotter. Matthew does tell Kristin she has beautiful eyes (which is sort of like informing a starfish that it has five points), but his real love lyric comes a little later on when he says, "If someone's going to rip me to shreds on national television, I'd like it to be you."

They go on TV, and rip each other to shreds, but they also hang out (the love montage is the two of them on tour, sipping champagne in first class and shopping at street vendors), until, of course, there's a hopeless misunderstanding that pits them against each other. And then there's the hurt they're concealing. Matthew, despite the fact that he's a relationship guru, has never gotten over his divorce; Kristin is still smarting from a romantic betrayal six years before.

What the two need is each other's therapy: She has to read his book and stop living in the past, and he requires a little psychiatric soul massage to realize that he is living in the past. "The Bounce Back" parses on a moist sensitive "human" level, but you watch it thinking: There's a reason why Tracy and Hepburn movies never hinged on therapy, and didn't feature actors whose exteriors looked a lot more exciting than their inner lives. — Reuters

Liam Payne and Zayn Malik have reached out to Louis Tomlinson following the death of his mother



Louis' One Direction bandmate Liam took to Twitter to share a touching message after it was revealed that Louis' mother Hannah Deakin had passed away on Wednesday (07.12.16) following a secret battle with leukaemia. He wrote: "Louis, I'm so sorry for you my brother my heart aches for you, just know I love you the same from a million miles away as I do right next to you. I'm always here for you through everything as you have been for me. "My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this incredibly sad time I can't begin to imagine what you are all going through. Rip Hannah you are forever in my thoughts (sic)." And their former bandmate Zayn, who publicly feuded with Louis on Twitter after he quit the group, also took to the micro-blogging site to pay his condolences. He said: "@Louis_Tomlinson love you bro! All of your family is in my prayers. proud of your strength and know your mum is too x (sic)." Cheryl Fernandez Versini, who is believed to be pregnant with

her and Liam's first child, also tweeted: "@Louis_Tomlinson my heart breaks for you. I am so sorry. My thoughts are with you and your loved ones at this incredibly tragic time (sic)." As well as 24-year-old Louis - who has 11-month-old son Freddie with Briana Jungwirth - Hannah was also mother to Lottie, 18, Felicie, 16, twins Daisy and Phoebe, 12, and two-year-old twins Ernest and Doris. Hannah was married to Dan Deakin and her family said in a statement: "It is with immeasurable sadness that Hannah Deakin's family said goodbye to Hannah in the early hours of Wednesday 7th December 2016. "Earlier this year Hannah was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of leukaemia that required immediate and continuous treatment. We respectfully request that the family are given time and space to grieve in private."

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE GAVE A SURPRISE MASTERCLASS TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The singer-and-actor stunned pupils at Newtown High School of the Performing Arts in Sydney when he turned out to be the "special guest" they were expecting in a tutorial late last month, and he enjoyed watching the students perform for him. Video footage posted on Justin's Facebook page showed the students screaming in shock when he entered the room, before he settled down on the floor to listen to the pupils' songs and give them feedback. At the end of the session, he advised them to "stay curious" and added: "You guys are really special, this was awesome for me. This was a real treat to get to hear you guys and see you guys, so thank you." The 'Trolls' star delighted Fergus Lipton with his reaction to his acoustic guitar-accompanied song 'Snow'. Justin told him: "Wow... that was awesome, like

truly awesome. That was beautiful, man and your voice is really special... I'd put that on the radio now." Fergus later told Australia's 'Today' show: "Justin said he would like to put (my song) on the radio which was a big compliment. "He was so genuine. Justin got into how much he like the lyrics and vulnerability is really important in music." The school's head of music, Christopher Miller, said the 35-year-old star - who has a son, Silas, 20 months, with wife Jessica Biel - quickly built a genuine rapport with the students. He said: "Justin wanted to give a little back, and work with some music students. "I was really blown away by his sincerity, he built an instant rapport with the students. Everything he said was genuine and really positive."



Kanye West reportedly wants 'nothing more' than to perform at the Grammy Awards in 2017

The 39-year-old rapper has thrown himself back into his work after spending eight days in UCLA Medical Centre recovering from sleep deprivation and exhaustion, and it has now been reported that Kanye is determined to put his health concerns behind him and wow audiences with "something new" at next year's glitzy award ceremony. A source said: "[Kanye] wants a spot on the Grammy stage, he is telling everyone that will listen that he wants nothing more than to be onstage at the show and perform something new." The report comes after the 'Bound 2' hitmaker claimed earlier this year that he would boycott the awards after Frank Ocean's albums 'Blonde' and 'Endless' were not considered for nominations because they missed the submission deadline. He said on stage at the time: "The album I listened to the most this year is Frank Ocean's album. "And I'll tell you this

right now: if his album's not nominated in no categories, I'm not showing up to the Grammys. As artists, we gotta come together to fight the bulls**t they been throwing us with." Now, an insider has claimed the 'Famous' rapper - who has been nominated for six gongs this year, including Best Rap Album for 'Life of Pablo' - always intended on showing up to the ceremony, and his previous comments were just "Kanye being Kanye". The source told HollywoodLife: "Kanye says things that are on his mind and then he thinks about it afterwards and decides what is actually the thing he wants to do. "He felt strongly about Frank's album and went grand with his thoughts about it. "But not showing up to the Grammys, that was a weak threat and Kanye was just being Kanye."



Cruz Beckham spent Thursday in London shooting his debut music video

The 11-year-old wannabe pop star - the son of David and Victoria Beckham - surprised the world this week when he unexpectedly dropped his first ever single, festive tune 'If Every Day Was Christmas' which has been released to raise money for Global's Make Some Noise, a charity which aims to help disadvantaged youngsters across the UK. The reaction to the Yule Tide song has been mainly positive and now Cruz has got his elder siblings, photographer aspiring photographer Brooklyn, 17, and Burberry model Romeo, 14, to help him make a promo for the track. The trio were shooting the video in the UK capital for most of Thursday and Cruz shared updates of the filming session on his Instagram account - which is run by his management company Scooter Braun Projects. One post showed Brooklyn standing on Albert Bridge in Chelsea along with the caption: "So much fun filming my Christmas video with my brothers in London." There was also a short video uploaded

showing Brooklyn and Romeo ready to start filming a scene when Cruz sneaked up behind them and tipped a jar of candy over their heads. The accompanying post read: "Shooting my Christmas video with @brooklynbeckham in London! (sic)" There was no sign of the boys' younger sister Harper, five, in any of the posts or the kids' parents David, 41, and Victoria, 42. Meanwhile, pop star Olly Murs has thrown his support behind Cruz's single. The 'Grow Up' hitmaker likes the song and can see a glittering career ahead for the youngster under the tutelage of his famous parents. Appearing on UK TV show 'This Morning', Olly, 32, said: "I love the Beckhams and it's Christmas! I saw Cruz at the Jingle Bell Ball at the weekend and he's such a great kid. He loves singing, and it's Christmas and it's all for charity. If you've got parents like David and Victoria, they'll look after him. He'll be absolutely fine."



RYAN REYNOLDS BELIEVES HE HAS A 'FUNCTIONING FAMILY' NOW THAT HE HAS TWO CHILDREN

The 40-year-old actor and his wife Blake Lively welcomed their second daughter - the younger sister to their 23-month-old daughter James - into the world in September, and Ryan has said it's "amazing" to watch their eldest daughter "taking care" of the new arrival. Speaking to 'Entertainment Tonight', the 'Deadpool' star said: "They look alike. You can see that she's sort of a little mini version of our older girl. "But, no, it's great. It's like an actually cohesive, working, functioning family. It's amazing to see my older daughter taking care of my younger one. 'The Lion King' was right! The circle of life exists." It isn't the first time the 'Green Lantern' actor has gushed over James' ability to take care of their youngest daughter - whose name has yet to be revealed to the public - as he previously described the sight as "profound". Ryan said: "It was kind of profound. I just love watching my older daughter take care of the newborn. That's been kind of neat to see." And 'The Proposal' actor - who married 29-year-old Blake in 2012 - also insisted that having a second child hasn't changed the "dynamic" of their household. He said: "It didn't change the dynamic. There's just

more. There's more love, there's more diapers. There's more of all that stuff, you know." Meanwhile, Ryan claimed that fatherhood was "the best thing" to ever happen to him, but confessed he isn't particularly strict with his daughters. He said: "It's the best thing. You know, it's the best thing that could ever happen to you. "It's really hard to have boundaries because you just do anything they say. Like, anything they'll say!"



Boy George spent years working out how to have a 'normal life' whilst also being a celebrity

The Culture Club star finally feels confident in his own skin, but admits there was a time when he struggled to "balance" having a flamboyant persona and androgynous look in the spotlight and fitting in to the "real world". In an interview with The Guardian newspaper, he explained: "It's all fun at the beginning because you're being carted everywhere in limousines and trucks and then when you start wanting to go out in the real world, it doesn't quite work. It takes years to get your head around how to have some sort of normal life whilst also enjoying the spoils of being Boy George. I think I've got that balance now. If someone comes up and wants a selfie, I'm not going to be rude or hostile or arsey. I just pull a silly face. If in doubt: pout." George struggles to escape questions about his past drug problems and legal issues, which include a 2005 conviction for falsely reporting a burglary in Manhattan which earned him a community service order. The 55-year-old 'Karma Chameleon' hitmaker wishes people would stop

bringing it up his past indiscretions because he's put them all behind him and has been sober for almost a decade. George - who this week was confirmed to be joining 'The Voice Australia' as a judge - said: "I'm nine years sober in February, just short of a decade, so there's got to be a point where it's like, 'Move on, I have.' "I unceremoniously f***ed things up myself. There was a point, nine years ago, where I said to myself, 'You really f***ed things up, and you've really got to fix it, and you can fix it.' I knew it would take time, but I really believed it." And when asked about his current positive outlook on life, George admits he's always been optimistic, otherwise he'd be dead. He answered: "No, I've always been positive. I wouldn't still be here if I wasn't. I think you're always who you are, but life distracts you, particularly because of fame - everybody treats you different, therefore you end up with a distorted idea of who you are."



Carrie Fisher is sure Harrison Ford was annoyed with her for revealing they had an affair

The 60-year-old actress - who plays the iconic Princess Leia in the 'Star Wars' movies - recently revealed that she and the Hollywood legend had an "intense" relationship during the making of 'Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope' in 1977. Though she told Harrison he could let her know if he wasn't happy with any of the content of her autobiography, he didn't but Carrie still suspects her indiscretion will have "bugged" him. Carrie - who lifted the lid on their affair in her recently-published book 'The Princess Diarist' - said: "[Harrison] joked about sending for a lawyer, so he was aware of [the diaries] and I told him that if there was anything he didn't like he should let me know. "I sent them to him and waited for him to get back to me. He is incredibly private and I am sure the whole thing bugged him but he comes out of it well." Harrison was married to his first wife, Mary Marquardt, during the time of his affair with Carrie, and the actress claimed she has been surprised by the reaction to her confession. She also denied saying that Harrison - who starred as Han Solo in the 'Star Wars' movies - is bad between the sheets. The actress told 'The Graham Norton Show': "I had no idea it would cause such a sensation. 400,000 news sites picked up on it and it became a little embarrassing." Carrie also admitted she now feels guilty about taking her long-romoured romance with Harrison - who is married to 'Ally McBeal' actress Calista Flockhart - public. She commented: "I do feel guilty. I never thought about it before, but I guess he will be asked about the affair for the rest of his life!"



Madonna attends the 11th annual Billboard Women in Music honors at Pier 36 on Friday, Dec. 9, 2016, in New York. — AP photos



Kesha attends the 11th annual Billboard Women in Music honors at Pier 36 on Friday, Dec. 9, 2016, in New York.



Nick Jonas attends the 11th annual Billboard Women in Music honors at Pier 36 on Friday, Dec. 9, 2016, in New York.



Shania Twain attends the 11th annual Billboard Women in Music honors at Pier 36 on Friday, Dec. 9, 2016, in New York.



Charli XCX attends the 11th annual Billboard Women in Music honors at Pier 36 on Friday, Dec. 9, 2016, in New York.

MADONNA, KESHA GET EMOTIONAL WHEN ACCEPTING BILLBOARD HONORS

The annual Billboard Women In Music event featured emotional and heartfelt speeches about the uphill battles women face in the music industry, including personal stories from top honoree Madonna and pop singer Kesha.

The Material Girl, named woman of the year Friday, was passionate as she spoke onstage in New York about being raped at knifepoint, battling critics, and being called words like "whore," "witch" and "Satan" throughout her career. "I remember feeling paralyzed. It took me a while to pull myself together and get on with my creative life - to get on with my life. I took comfort in the poetry of Maya Angelou, and the writings of James Baldwin, and in the music of Nina Simone. I remember wishing that I had a female peer that I could look to for support," 58-year-old Madonna said at Pier 36, where the audience included fellow honoree Shania Twain, Nick Jonas, Anderson Cooper and dozens of music industry executives.

"I'm so controversial"

"People say that I'm so controversial, but I think the most controversial thing I have ever done is to stick around," Madonna said at another point. "Michael is gone. Tupac is gone. Prince is gone. Whitney is gone. Amy Winehouse is gone. David Bowie is gone. But I'm still standing."

Cooper introduced Madonna, his friend, with touching words. "For me as a gay teenager growing up, her music wasn't just a soundtrack to my life, her music and her outspokenness, her willingness to stand up, her courage - it showed me as a teenager a way forward, a pathway," he said.

The event also paid tribute to platinum-selling singer Kesha - who is currently in a legal battle with her former mentor and producer Dr. Luke - with its trailblazer award. "It's mind-blowing to be honored like this after the very public year I've had. I feel stuck, and I feel sad. And quite frankly today I feel bloated," she said, as the crowd laughed. "I didn't

really feel like standing up and getting an award - I didn't feel worthy of that. But I knew I had to drag myself out of my bed, put on my boots and walk up here (today) and say thank you to you guys."

The audience applauded loudly.

Then Kesha added in a serious tone: "Most importantly, do not let anyone else ever take your happiness. You are worth it, and thank you for reminding me that I'm worth it, too."

Twain was given the icon award, while other honorees included country singer Maren Morris and pop singers Halsey, Alessia Cara and Meghan Trainor, who didn't attend the event because she is on vocal rest. Fifth Harmony sang in honor of the "All About That Bass" performer.

"It's an honor - that's the only thing that comes to mind," said Grammy-nominated R&B singer Andra Day, who earned the powerhouse award. "It's humbling. It's fulfilling. I'm experiencing so much gratitude at the same time because these

women are part of the reason that I'm even able to be here."

The annual Billboard luncheon also honored 100 female music executives, including iTunes and Apple Music's head of global consumer marketing, Bozoma Saint John, who was ranked No.1. Before she spoke, she received warm words from Lady Gaga via video.

Madonna's successful year included her top-grossing Rebel Heart Tour, which sold more than one million tickets. "To the doubters, the naysayers, to everyone who gave me hell and said I could not, that I would not, that I must not, your resistance made me stronger, made me push harder, made me the fighter that I am today, made me the woman that I am today. So thank you," she said. — AP



In this Aug. 28, 2015 file photo, Deborah Cox attends the 2015 BMI R&B/Hip-Hop Awards in Beverly Hills. — AP

Deborah Cox says Whitney Houston role is 'in good hands'

There's one important person to thank for Deborah Cox stepping into Whitney Houston's shoes for the national tour of "The Bodyguard." That person would be Whitney Houston herself. Cox and Houston were label-mates and friends, with the late pop star mentoring the Canadian singer and often telling Cox to put family first. "I take pleasure in the fact that I did know her. I did have a relationship with her," Cox says. "There was a comradery there. She was a mentor. There was a sisterhood that we shared."

Cox treasures the pivotal time she and Houston shared a Miami studio to record the duet "Same Script, Different Cast" in 2000. Houston came in, kicked off her shoes and, after the song was done, the two chatted. "She'd always say to me, 'Girl, where them babies at? Where them babies at? When are you going to have some babies?' And it was really literally at the time where I was between albums, trying to figure out when I should start my family," Cox says. "That really helped to bring me to where I am today, where I have a family, I have a career, I have a wonderful husband, I have a team support system - and it's because of that advice."

Cox says she's honoring Houston's memory with the musical based on "The Bodyguard," the Oscar-nominated 1992 romantic thriller about a diva who falls for a former Secret Service agent. The stage version features songs from the movie such as "I Have Nothing," "Run to You" and "I Will Always Love You" and adds other Houston hits like "I Wanna Dance with Somebody," "Saving All My Love for You" and "How Will I Know." Houston died in 2012.

Singing those songs is both a responsibility and a pressure for Cox, who made her Broadway debut in Elton John and Tim Rice's musical "Aida" and most recently starred opposite Constantine Maroulis in a revival of "Jekyll & Hyde." "I know what the expectations are. I know what people want to hear. But also as an actor, as an artist, as a singer, as a performer, I want to be able to deliver as well," she says. "I want people to know that, for me, this role is in good hands. I really take it very, very serious."

Judson Mills, the actor playing the love-interest role played previously by Kevin Costner, says the addition of Cox was a key reason he signed up for the tour and that she has put her own mark on Houston's songs. "Her energy and her personality is so intoxicating. You can't help but like her, and I really think there's no one else I can think of who can play the role the way she does," says Mills. The tour kicked off at New Jersey's Paper Mill Playhouse this month. It will make stops in more than 20 US cities, including Chicago, Philadelphia, Nashville, Atlanta, Los Angeles, San Diego and Dallas. — AP

Judge finalizes Khloe Kardashian's divorce from Lamar Odom

Khloé Kardashian's divorce from former NBA player Lamar Odom, more than three years after the reality TV star first sought to end their marriage.

Kardashian filed for divorce in December 2013 after the pair had been married for four years, but rescinded the filing after Odom was found unconscious at a Nevada brothel last year. She cited Odom's medical condition as one reason to withdraw the divorce.

She re-filed for divorce citing irreconcilable differences in May. They have no children together. The couple started a company called Khloé, the nickname bestowed on their relationship after they started dating in 2009. The company will dissolve now that the divorce is complete, court documents state.

Neither Kardashian nor Odom will receive spousal support, their judgment states. While the judge signed off on it on Friday, the pair

won't be officially single until Dec 17. Odom last played for the Los Angeles Clippers during the 2012-13 season, averaging a career-low 4.0 points and 5.9 rebounds. He signed a contract with the New York Knicks in 2014, but was cut by the team before appearing in a game.

Kardashian's first divorce filing came days after Odom pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor drunken driving charge. The 6-foot-10-inch power forward had his best years with the Los Angeles Lakers between 2004 and 2011. The team won NBA championships in 2010 and 2011 and Odom won the NBA's sixth man award during that second championship run.

In addition to appearing on several reality series chronicling her family, Kardashian helps operate clothing stores and other businesses with her sisters, Kim and Kourtney Kardashian. — AP



In this April 30, 2012, file photo, Khloe Kardashian Odom and Lamar Odom from the show "Keeping Up With The Kardashians" attend an E! Network upfront event at Gotham Hall in New York. — AP

Cue the music, cue the drama! Lee Daniels introduces 'Star'

The title of Lee Daniels' latest venture, "Star," might very well identify this celebrated producer-director-writer. His films include "Monster's Ball," "Precious" and "The Butler," while two seasons ago he roared into series TV with Fox's smash music drama "Empire."

But "Star," a sort of "Empire" encore, refers instead to the lure of stardom on an ambitious singing trio, and, more specifically, to the fiery young woman calling the shots. Her name happens to be Star.

Star is played by Jude Demorest, who joins real-life fellow newcomers Brittany O'Grady (as Star's sister Simone) and Ryan Destiny (as Alexandra) in portraying this defiant three-some out to beat the odds in the show-biz sweepstakes and make a fresh start in their lives. "Star," which premieres Wednesday at 9 p.m. EST on Fox, also features Queen Latifah as the girls' surrogate mother and Benjamin Bratt as a down-on-his-luck talent agent. It was co-created by Daniels, who directed the first two episodes and has been heavily involved in all the subsequent writing and editing. "We want to get it off the ground in the right way," he says, copping to a bit of

weariness from his heavy involvement. "It's a delicate time. You really have to get people hooked into the characters."

Differences with 'Empire'

While "Empire" depicts the glitzy but cut-throat world of music at its pinnacle, "Star" is planted at the gritty entry level. But how did the series come about?

Daniels explains that, after feasting on movie success, he resolved a while back to give TV a try. "I did a pilot. I thought, 'OK, I can check THAT off my bucket list.' I assumed it wouldn't get picked up. Then it got picked up." It was "Empire." "Then Fox said, 'You want to do another one?' I said, 'OK.'"

He stewed over what that new series should be, and gathered what he calls "a hodgepodge of things that inspired me: 'Dreamgirls,' 'Valley of the Dolls,' 'Sex and the City,' a girls' show with music and a little bit of edge."

Plus original vocal-and-dance numbers. "It's hard enough telling a story," he declares with a roll of his eyes. "I must be a masochist to want to add music! It has to be seamless - you can't just bust out into a musical number."

But I enjoyed it so much with 'Empire' we did it again. "And I wanted to talk about race, about where we are racially in America. So the lead girl (Star) is white, her sister's half-black, and, just to turn things upside down, the third girl, who is black, is the rich girl."

That was the show as envisioned.

"Then HE became president," says Daniels, perhaps getting a little ahead of himself. But his point is clear: With half of its 13 episodes completed, Daniels worries that the ground has shifted under his series as it has with so much else. "This show is a little bit about what's going on today, but now it's more of an escape. Because I think people just can't bear what's going on now. The show is for those of us who can't bear it."

But for Daniels - a gay black man who, growing up, felt like an outsider in his "West Philly" neighborhood - escape isn't really what he aims to give his audience. Actually, he wants to share a bit of what he's learned living what he calls, sardonically, his "zany life."

"When I was 7, I watched somebody killed," he says. "And also when I was 10."

"I'm 57 (on Christmas Eve) and I'm alive, without HIV, and that's a miracle: I watched so many friends die in my arms, many of whom I had slept with. So when you've got a foundation of bullets whizzing by you or somebody dying in front of you, and parents who didn't embrace you, you have a wealth of stuff at your command. I only just now started going to therapy. But before that, all my therapy was my work. I just spilled it out."

"My work is all about from whence I cometh," says the man who found his way to Los Angeles and landed his first job as a receptionist at a nursing agency. "I'm living a dream today. I'm blessed. And I'm here to give you what you're craving, which is a story that you can identify with; voices that you don't hear and faces you don't see. At least, not onscreen every day." — AP



This June 22, 2014 file photo shows actor Joseph Mascolo at the 41st annual Daytime Emmy Awards in Beverly Hills. — AP

'DAYS OF OUR LIVES' BAD GUY JOSEPH MASCOLO DIES AT 87

Joseph Mascolo, who played bad guy Stefano DiMera on NBC's daytime serial "Days of Our Lives," has died. He was 87.

Mascolo, who had Alzheimer's disease for a number of years, died Wednesday, according to a statement released by NBC on behalf of his wife, Patricia Schultz-Mascolo.

Although he was best known for his role as crime boss and mogul DiMera, Mascolo was a classically trained musician and appeared on Broadway in plays including "Dinner at Eight" and "That Championship Season."

His wide-ranging TV credits included the prime-time series "Kojak," "Hill Street Blues" and "It's Garry Shandling's Show." He began on "Days of Our Lives" in 1982 and, despite taking breaks from the show, spent a total of more than two decades with it. Mascolo also appeared in the daytime serials "The Bold and the Beautiful," "General Hospital" and "Santa Barbara." A native of West Hartford, Connecticut, he began studying music as a youngster and attended the University of Miami before deciding to pursue acting. To support himself while he studied with famed acting coach Stella Adler in New York, Mascolo played clarinet with the Metropolitan Opera, according to his family. — AP



This image released by Fox shows Ryan Destiny, from left, Jude Demorest and Brittany O'Grady from "Star," the latest series by Lee Daniels, premiering Wednesday at 9p.m. EST on Fox. — AP

ABC NEWS, MEGYN KELLY DISCUSSED 'GOOD MORNING AMERICA' ANCHOR JOB

Megyn Kelly, who has anchored Fox News Channel in the afternoon and at night, may have considered trying her hand at mornings - at another network. Kelly and ABC News discussed the idea of bringing the Fox News anchor over to co-host the Disney network's "Good Morning America," according to two people familiar with the talks, which at this point are not believed to be likely to come to fruition. Other ideas to bring Kelly to ABC News were also broached during these conversations, these people said.

ABC and Kelly held "a handful of exploratory talks" in 2016, according to one of these people, with the latest taking place as recently as a few weeks ago. However, ABC's interest in the scenario has "cooled," this person said. The conversations made clear to Kelly that she would be added to the on-air team at "GMA," but not take a spot away from Robin Roberts, who co-anchors the morning program with George Stephanopoulos and Michael Strahan.

"There has never been an offer of any job," ABC said in a statement. "End of story." Vanity Fair previously reported that Kelly and ABC News had held discussions. A spokeswoman for Kelly said the anchor was presented with many opportunities and is taking time to mull her decision.

Entertaining offers

Kelly, who hosts the popular "Kelly File" on Fox News' primetime schedule, is entertaining offers from a handful of rival outlets, according to people familiar with the matter-part of an agreement with her employer that gives her a window to hear outreach from other networks. Most of the talks remain preliminary in nature, and none are guaranteed to result in her leaving the 21st Century Fox-owned network, where she is believed to be under contract to work through July. Kelly, who has three young children, is said to be concerned most about what's best for her family. She could well stay at Fox News, where she is believed to be seeking approximately \$20 million a year-a top-level salary in the TV-news business that would be hard to match elsewhere.

ABC may have thought Kelly might lend "GMA" a boost in its never-ending morning news battle with NBC's "Today." In recent weeks, that fight has become even more intense, with "Today" beating "Good Morning America" in total viewers for the week ended November 28. "Today" already regularly wins more viewers between 25 and 54, the demographic most coveted by advertisers, but a defeat in the total-audience category would strip "GMA" of its ability to tout itself as America's most-watched morning program.

To be sure, "GMA" leads "Today" this season, but

by a narrow margin of just 129,000 viewers. ABC has made significant tweaks to "GMA" in recent weeks. On September 6, the network added popular host Michael Strahan to the program on a full-time basis, adding him to the show's opening with Roberts and Stephanopoulos. Producers have also tweaked the last half hour, adding a live audience to the proceedings.

CNN last week was cited by The Drudge Report as making an attempt to woo Kelly to its fold. A spokeswoman for the Time Warner network declined to comment at the time.

At 21st Century Fox, parent of Fox News, Kelly's continued presence has been seen as a nod to a rising generation of audience that is interested in a greater diversity of viewpoints. Her willingness to grill Republican guests and push back on conventional wisdom has won plaudits. That view could have a time frame attached to it: Rupert Murdoch, executive chairman of 21st Century Fox, told The Wall Street Journal in October that Kelly was important to the network, but that he hoped to come to terms with her "very soon." He also noted that Fox News has "a deep bench of talent, many of whom would give their right arm for her spot." — Reuters



Journalist Megyn Kelly poses at The Hollywood Reporter's 25th Annual Women in Entertainment Breakfast at MILK Studios on Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2016, in Los Angeles. — AP

'Celebrity Apprentice' Press Conference: Schwarzenegger Defends Trump's Producer Role, Mark Burnett Ducks Questions

"The New Celebrity Apprentice" host Arnold Schwarzenegger indicated Friday that president-elect Donald Trump could have had close involvement with the show's producers or NBC on production of its upcoming season, which was shot during the presidential campaign.

Taking questions from a small group of reporters following a press conference Friday at Universal Studios, Schwarzenegger was asked whether Trump, who will retain an executive-producer credit on the upcoming season, was involved with production on the rebooted show. "Not with me," he answered. "It could easily be that he was involved with NBC or with Mark Burnett, but not with me."

Schwarzenegger indicated that Trump's level of involvement in the franchise going forward is yet to be decided. "I think that he has to work it out how much he wants to participate or not," he said. "I think this a question that you should ask him, because he could just be sitting back, being a silent partner or whatever."

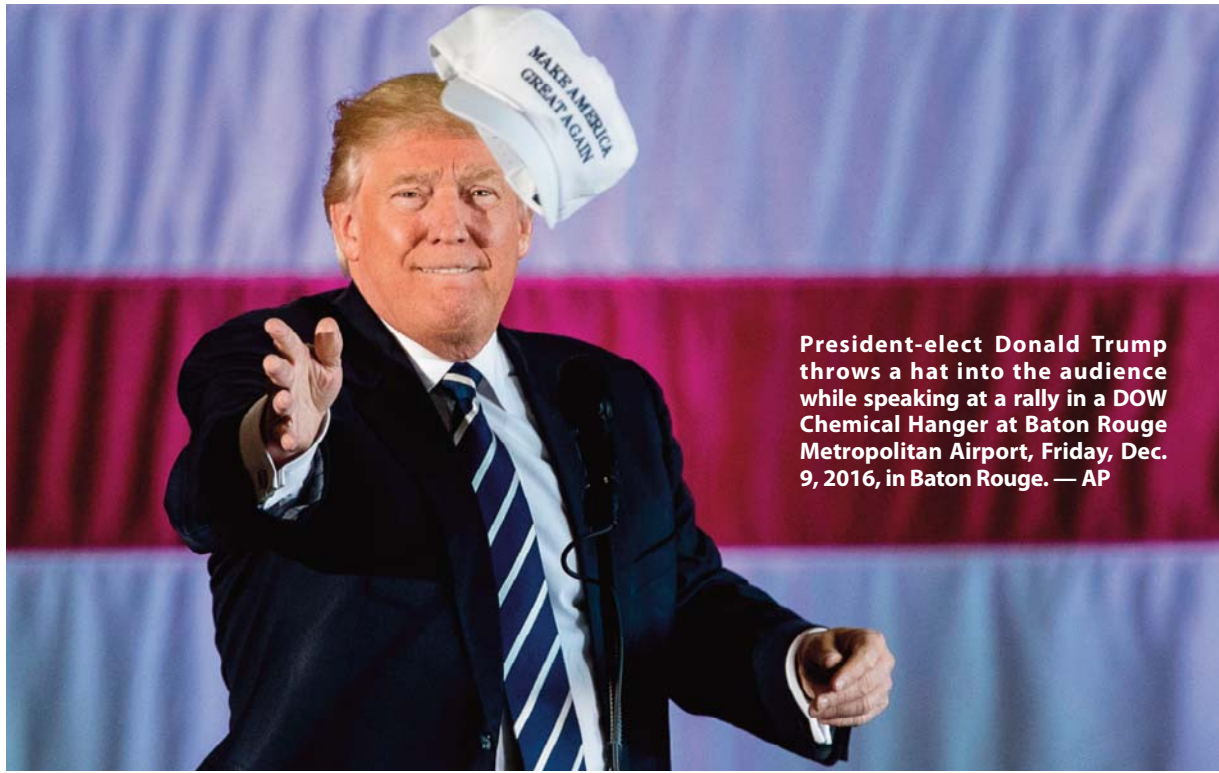
During the press conference, Schwarzenegger compared Trump's continued involvement in the NBC reality-competition series to his own transition from film actor to governor of California more than a decade ago. "It's no different than when I was running for governor and I was governor," Schwarzenegger said. "My credit on 'Terminator' stays the same." He added that he continued to collect royalties from his film work while serving as governor.

No appearances

Not appearing at the press conference Friday was executive producer and series creator Mark Burnett. An invite sent to press one week ago noted that Burnett would appear alongside Schwarzenegger and the show's contestants. As Variety reported exclusively Thursday, Trump will retain an executive producer credit on "The New Celebrity Apprentice." It remains unclear how much Trump will profit from the series, but his per-episode rate is expected to be, at minimum, in the low five figures.

Trump will receive payments through MGM, which produces the reality-competition series and where Burnett is television chief. "Mr. Trump has a big stake in the show and conceived of it with Mark Burnett," Trump spokesperson Hope Hicks said in a statement Thursday.

Schwarzenegger said that he knew when he agreed to take over the role as host of the series after Trump vacated it to launch his presidential campaign last year that the



President-elect Donald Trump throws a hat into the audience while speaking at a rally in a DOW Chemical Hanger at Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport, Friday, Dec. 9, 2016, in Baton Rouge. — AP

now-president-elect would continue to serve as executive producer. "I knew that from the beginning that he's executive producer on the show," said Schwarzenegger. "That was on the credit when you watched the show."

Asked Friday about Trump's prospects for success in the White House, Schwarzenegger, a fellow Republican, pleaded for patience. "I think you have to give him a chance," he said. "I don't think you can judge anything after one month. Let us watch him go and get started before we start to judge him." Schwarzenegger also refused to address questions about whether he would use his involvement in the show as leverage to influence Trump politically, or whether Trump would try to use his own involvement in the show-the new season of which has already been shot-to try to influence its content from the White House. "I don't get into hypotheticals of 'what is if Trump calls?' or 'what is if Trump says this?'" he said.

'Duck Dynasty' Producers Committed Massive Fraud and Self-Dealing, Lawsuit Contends

Deirdre and Scott Gurney, the producers of "Duck Dynasty," have officially been terminated by ITV following a fraud investigation, and a claim has been filed in California Superior Court. "Following a meeting with Scott and Deirdre Gurney, the Board of Gurney Productions has been left with no alternative but to terminate their employment and file a lawsuit in the Superior Court of California on the grounds of self-dealing, fraudulent concealment and breach of contract," according to a statement from a Gurney Productions spokesperson.

"As announced on Monday, Emmy-winning producer Craig Armstrong has been appointed interim CEO of Gurney Productions and has the full ground support of ITV America's senior team. Under his leadership, all Gurney Productions shows and development will continue to be produced by the company's strong team of producers. Armstrong, along with his producing partner Rick Ringbakk, is co-founder and co-CEO of 5x5 Media, which continues to operate as before." "It's very much business as usual and our brilliant production team remains focused on making and delivering great shows."

The Gurneys sold a 61.5% stake in the company to ITV in 2012 for \$40 million, but remained co-CEOs of the firm. The suit alleges that in August, the Gurneys secretly set up a new company, Snake River Productions. In September, the new company bought distribution rights to "Northern Territory," a reality show, from Gurney Productions, according to the lawsuit. That transaction-for \$3.6 million-inflated Gurney Productions' EBITDA, which

had the effect of artificially boosting the value of the Gurneys' remaining minority stake in the company, the suit alleges.

"Every dollar that the Gurneys spent to purchase rights from the Company through Snake River would have been paid directly back to the Gurneys several times over through distributions and under the terms of the Operating Agreement's buyout provisions," the suit claims.

Distribution

In October, the Gurneys took a distribution from the old company in the amount of \$1.4 million, which the lawsuit alleges was the

direct result of self-dealing. At the September board meeting, the suit claims that Deirdre Gurney disclosed a higher-than-expected EBITDA. The board queried her, focusing in on the "Northern Territory" rights sale. The suit alleges that she pretended not to remember the name of the company that had acquired the rights. It was only after the meeting that ITV discovered that the rights had been sold to Snake River, and that the Gurneys were the owners of Snake River, the suit alleges.

This discovery prompted ITV to launch an investigation. ITV discovered that two employees-Josh Puga and Tara Delaney, who is Deirdre Gurney's sister-had been trans-

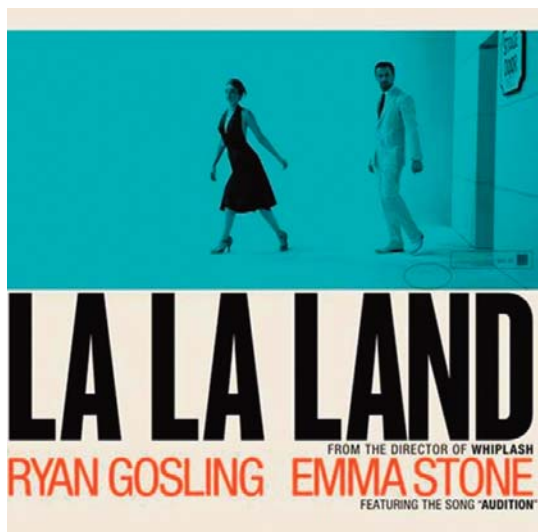
ferred to the payroll of Snake River, even though they still worked for Gurney Productions. That also had the effect of increasing Gurney Productions' EBITDA, enhancing the value of the Gurneys' minority stake, according to the suit.

The lawsuit also claims that the investigation found that the Gurneys had charged hundreds of thousands of dollars in personal expenses to the company, including travel costs, mortgage payments, childcare payments, groceries, dues at the Manhattan Country Club, helicopter rides, boat expenses and pet supplies. The suit alleges that the Gurneys charged \$542,000 in personal expenses to the company as of September 2013. Despite promises to repay the personal expenses in 2014, the company was not reimbursed, according to the suit. The suit alleges that the Gurneys repeatedly told the board that the expenses had been repaid, and that the board only discovered that the expenses remained unpaid in September 2016.

The suit also alleges that Scott Gurney took an improper \$350,000 distribution from the company in January 2016, and the board only learned of it in September. The Gurneys could not be reached immediately for comment. — Reuters



Cast members of Duck Dynasty in a promotional photograph in Los Angeles. — AFP



'LA LA LAND' EXPECTED TO LEAD GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the Golden Globes will be unveiled Monday with critics expecting musical "La La Land" to lead the pack ahead of "Moonlight," "Manchester by the Sea" and "Lion." In a departure from last year's awards calendar, the announcements come before the influential Screen Actors Guild nominations, making them the first major bellwether of momentum going into the Oscars race.

The Globe nominations, set to be made at the crack of dawn in Beverly Hills, are decided by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), a group of entertainment journalists who are wined and dined by publicists.

There has been controversy in the past over the category placement of films, with last year's inclusion of "The Martian" and "Joy" in comedy/musical raising eyebrows. But awards prediction site Gold Derby has Damien Chazelle's "La La Land" uncontroversial both a musical and a romantic comedy-comfortably in the lead in several races. "Normally the Globe voters like to spread the wealth among a lot of different films, but I could honestly see it winning the film award and for Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone," managing director Chris Beachum told AFP. "It's got a very good shot at 'directing' and maybe the score or song categories-it could do really well."

Experts say Kenneth Lonergan's unflinching "Manchester by the Sea," which has won acclaim for its central performance by Casey Affleck, has been getting the most recent attention on the drama side. Another frontrunner is Barry Jenkins's coming-of-age story "Moonlight," with cast members Naomie Harris and Mahershala Ali in with a shout for acting nominations.

Tolerance of scandal

"Lion," Garth Davis's drama about a teenager adopted by an Australian family who searches for his long-lost blood relatives using Google Earth, is also expected to earn several nominations, including in acting for Dev Patel and Nicole Kidman.

The Globes will be the year's first big test of Hollywood's tolerance of scandal, with Nate Parker's "The Birth of a Nation" seen as firm awards material until news emerged of a historical acquittal over rape allegations by a woman who ended up committing suicide. "Will they separate the art from the artist? Will the film be able to stand on its own or will the very mixed reviews of it sink its chances?" writes Eric Anderson of the AwardsWatch.com blog.

Denzel Washington, nominated on seven occasions, looks a good bet to earn a first directing nomination for "Fences" but faces competition from "Silence" director Martin Scorsese who won in 2012 for "Hugo."

Emily Blunt could get a sixth acting nomination for "The Girl on the Train" while French screen siren Isabelle Huppert has turned heads with her commanding lead in Paul Verhoeven's "Elle."

Viola Davis ("Fences"), Ruth Negga ("Loving") and Natalie Portman ("Jackie") are all strong contenders for this category, however. Among the television prizes, FX's "Atlanta," about two cousins trying to make it big in hip hop, looks a good bet for best musical/comedy after earning acclaim for its ten-episode debut season in the fall.

HBO black comedy "Divorce," should also be in the running, as should its star Sarah Jessica Parker, who already has four Golden Globes for "Sex in the City." The 74th Golden Globe Awards will air on NBC live coast-to-coast from the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills on Sunday, January 8 from 5:00-8:00 pm PT (0100-0400 GMT Monday), with talk show host Jimmy Fallon presenting. — AFP

Marrakech: Europa International, Cinando Ready Launch of Festival Submission Applet

Europa International, the European sales agents' organization, is advancing on the creation of a common entry form for sales agents aimed at streamlining festival submissions - achieved via an applet integrated on the Cannes Film Market's Cinando platform.

Tested at the Tribeca Film Festival and Luxembourg City Film Festival, the common entry form simplifies the workflow between sales agents and festivals. Up until now, the applet has worked as a closed system, only available to sales agents from Europa International, which has 45 members. The new common entry form includes all submission details, as well as items for a catalogue entry if a film is selected.

After Tribeca and Luxembourg City Fest trials, a second stage will be to test the digital entry form with ten festivals, which will be contacted in mid-December. The aim is to complete this test stage before Berlin in 2017. "Once we have all the feedback, we will improve the second version and then, in a third stage, contact more festivals," Be For Films' Claire Battistoni said at a Europa International one-day event at the Marrakech Film Festival that brought

together 16 sales agent members.

Participants at the Europa International work session emphasized that the aim isn't to replace personal contact between sales agents and festivals but rather make back-office work easier, so freeing up more time for other tasks. "Personal contact with the festivals is essential," EastWest's Octavia Peyrou said in Marrakech. She went on: "They explain what they are looking for, and that way when I get a new film I know who is looking for it. Festivals play a key role in discovering new talent. Without personal contact, our work would be impossible."

Vital role

Talking to Variety, Battistoni, Peyrou and Autlook Film Sales' Youn Ji underscored that festivals increasingly play a vital role as a window for many films that otherwise would never be screened theatrically. A more streamlined entry system will make it easier to reach a wider number of events. "It's often the smaller festivals, that aren't so famous but are getting more important, that enable you to go deeper into each country," Youn Ji noted.

Festival's industry initiatives are also increasing in importance, with ever more events inviting more representatives from sales companies to connect with local distributors and film producers. "By standardizing film submission information, we will have more time to focus on new festivals, and promoting and working on our films. From the festival side, there are only advantages since the system is provided for free," Battistoni added.

This was the third year that Europa International, founded in 2011 and managed by Daphne Kapfer, has held a work session at Marrakech. Other issues discussed included the Festival Box Office, a CineConductor delivery system and a new subtitling project. Attendees included Cinando project manager Camille Rousselet, Alexis Juncosa, programming head of the Luxembourg City Film Festival, plus execs at sales agencies taking in Belgium's Be For Films, Poland's New Europe Film Sales, Serbia-based Soul Food, TrustNordisk in Denmark, Austria's Outlook Filmsales and EastWest Film Distribution and Germany's Pluto Films.

The work session, which functions as an annual meeting for Europa International, also saw a large French contin-

gent, reflecting France's predominance in Europe's sales sector, including representatives from Doc & Film Intl., Films Distribution, Les Films du Losange, Luxbox, Premium Films, Pyramide Intl., Reel Suspects, UDI and Wide Management.

El members said they were particularly interested in seeing films and meeting filmmakers from Morocco, since Marrakech is one of biggest festivals in Africa and the Arab world. Youn Ji, at Autlook, which specializes in documentaries, is currently representing a Tunisian feature, "Zineb Hates the Snow," by Kaouthar Ben Hania ("Challat of Tunis"), which premiered in Locarno.

"I'm very interested in upcoming talent from this region," she enthused. "I also loved the Tunisian film 'As I Open My Eyes,' by Leyla Bouzid. There is definitely something fresh and original growing here. And we don't have contact with this region on a daily basis. That's why these events are so important." — Reuters

21ST CENTURY FOX SETS \$23.2 BILLION PACT TO ACQUIRE ALL OF EUROPEAN PAY TV GIANT SKY

21st Century Fox has clinched a preliminary agreement to take over European pay-TV giant Sky in a cash deal valued at about \$23.2 billion. The acquisition has been a long time coming for the Murdoch clan, which has long sought full control of the platform in which it already holds a 39.1% stake.

Fox's effort to bring Sky into the fold reflects the newly ignited market for mega media mergers. AT&T in October set an \$85.4 billion takeover of Time Warner that is now wending its way through the federal approval process. Lionsgate this week closed on its \$4.4 billion acquisition of the Starz pay TV channels.

Sky is Europe's leading pay TV platform with 22 million subscribers across five countries: Italy, Germany, Austria, the UK and Ireland. The sat-caster is an MVPD that also offers its own proprietary news, sports and entertainment channels. It offers broadband and mobile service in the UK and Ireland. "In the past several years, 21st Century Fox has consistently stated that its existing 39.1% stake in Sky is not a natural end position," Fox said in a statement. "A proposed transaction between 21st Century Fox and Sky would bring together 21st Century Fox's global content business with Sky's world-class direct-to-consumer capabilities, which have made it the number one premium pay-TV provider in all its markets. It would also enhance Sky's leading position in entertainment and sport, and reinforce the UK's standing as a top global hub for content generation and technological innovation."

Sky first revealed the negotiations in a statement issued Friday. Sky said its independent directors have been in negotiations with Fox execs and accepted the offer price of \$13.51 per share, which represents a roughly 40% premium over the closing price of Sky shares on Dec. 6.

Appeal not clear

Sky's appeal to 21st Century Fox is clear. The company has solid growth prospects, and the consolidation Sky's earnings with 21st Century Fox would provide a boost to Fox's earnings. Moreover, focusing cash and resources on acquiring Sky will ease any lingering investor concerns about Fox mounting a run at costly acquisitions that might be more risky bets in technology or media. News of the deal sent Fox shares up by as much as \$1 in midday trading but the stock was down 2% to \$27.92 as the close of trading, despite the generally warm reception on Wall Street.

"We think investors were concerned that (Fox) would splash out into growthier/techier/riskier areas. Sky is well known to investors, generally liked, possibly highly synergistic and likely accretive to (earnings). This should help investors gain comfort in (Fox) longer-term," RBC Capital Markets Steven Cahall wrote in a research note Friday.

Sky's statement warned that deal terms are not complete and that there's no certainty of Fox making a formal binding offer. But the media biz has been waiting for years for Fox to pounce again on Sky after its previous effort to acquire the outstanding 59.9% founded five years ago amid Britain's phone-hacking scandal. The timing of the new bid is no surprise given the decline in Sky's share price in recent months and the steep fall in the value of the pound following June's Brexit vote, which has made the deal much cheaper in dollar terms for Fox.

The hacking scandal, in which some Murdoch-owned tabloids were found to have illegally intercepted voicemail messages on the cell phones of celebrities and even of a murdered teenager, badly damaged the Murdochs' standing in Britain and torpedoed their attempted takeover of Sky just as a deal was on the cusp of being done. Fox CEO James Murdoch was in the thick of the controversy as he was the exec in charge of the newspaper division at the time. Murdoch is also a former CEO of Sky and has made no secret of his interest in controlling the business.

"It's inevitable. You have AT&T buying Time Warner, you have Comcast-NBCUniversal. [And now] you have Fox combining itself with Sky. It's all these content companies making a bid as it relates to pay-TV assets," said Mary Ann Halford, media specialist and senior managing director with FTI Consulting in London.

Given that Fox has maintained a war-chest ever since the aborted 2011 takeover, media biz watchers have known that it was a matter of when, not if, Fox would make another run at Sky after the political smoke cleared. As of the most recent quarter, Fox has about \$4.7 billion in cash on its books.

"It's no longer as immediately toxic as it would've been had they tried to proceed at the time" of the hacking scandal, said Mathew Horsman, a media analyst in London and the author of "Sky High: The Inside Story of BSkyB." "The desire to do it and possibly the logic in doing so was always there."

Different corporate configuration

21st Century Fox has a different corporate configuration than its predecessor, News Corp., when the last run at buyout Sky was made. In 2012, in part because of the hacking scandal, chairman Rupert Murdoch decided to split his operations into two companies, 21st Century Fox for the media and entertainment assets and News Corp. for the newspaper and publishing assets including the Wall Street Journal, New York Post and UK newspapers.

That split should help smooth the regulatory approval process for the deal in the UK. Last time around in 2011, there were some hiccups regarding News Corp.'s cross-ownership of major TV and newspaper assets. But that conflict does not exist with 21st Century Fox as the acquiring vehicle. Horsman said that he sees no regulatory problems in Europe that would sink the deal.

Sky said it has formed a committee of independent directors to hammer out the acquisition deal. The committee comprises Sky's CEO Jeremy Darroch, Martin Gilbert, Andrew Sukawaty, Andrew Griffith, Tracy Clarke, Adine Grate, Matthieu Pigasse, and Katrin Wehr-Seiter.

Rupert Murdoch launched Sky, which had an initial four channels, including Sky News, as a UK satellite service in 1989. It added its sports service two years later, and exclusive sports rights become a primary means to enlist new subscribers. Sky was seen as a long-shot bid to inject new competition into the UK TV market. The success of the company against those odds, after enormous investment from News Corp. amid investor skepticism, greatly enhanced Murdoch's reputation as a visionary media mogul.—Reuters



A screenshot from Jung-woo's 'Pandora' movie. — AFP

Film Review: 'Pandora'

Movie's plot

The film starts with a heavy allegorical ring as a couple of tykes gaze at a nearby nuclear reactor, calling it by turns a rice cooker, something that will make the country rich, and "a box that when opened will bring big trouble"—referring to the title's Greek origin. Opposing views about nuclear power are presented by a stand-off between anti-nuke protesters and workers at Hanbyul nuclear plant.

One of the workers is mechanic Kang Jae-hyuk (Kim Nam-gil), whose father and brother were employed at the plant and died due to accidents there. Neither his mother, Ms Seok (Kim Young-ae), who runs a diner with her widowed daughter-in-law Jung-hye (Moon Jeong-hee), nor his g.f., Yeon-ju (Kim Joo-hyeon), who's a PR officer for nuclear energy, want him to venture outside the city, yet job prospects are limited; according to one local's remarks, since the reactor has been built, the city has seen "no fishing, no farming, no tourists."

Soon enough, a 6.1 earthquake strikes, causing radiation to leak from a cracked cooling valve. As the workers, fearing for their own safety, hesitate to fix it, other valves burst, spraying radiated water everywhere and overheating to the point of explosion in parts of the plant. Every troubleshooting endeavor by maintenance engineer Chief Park (Jung Jin-young) is vetoed by the boss, for fear of the plant being decommissioned.

Unlike standard Korean disaster movies that pad out almost half the film with comic bantering among minor characters, "Pandora" gets straight to the point about the underlying risks of nuclear power. With thorough technical exposition, the film tracks how facilities can easily malfunction and inexorably devolve. Also atypical of Korean blockbusters, visual effects here are not employed to create pyrotechnics that are of tangential importance to the story. Instead, leading VFX company Digital Idea visualizes the full-metal anatomy of the nuclear reactor, from its looming outer form to the steampunk-like machinery inside with a grim real-

ism that makes the meltdown so galvanizing to watch.

Also certain to stoke emotions are scenes of staggering government inefficiency, especially the prime minister's overbearing control over president Kang Seok-ho (Kim Myung-min), which seem to have real life parallels. The cabinet's ploys to cover up the disaster by refusing to evacuate citizens in the vicinity and even locking them up to stop mass panic recall the captain and crew's self-preserving crimes in the Sewol Ferry tragedy.

Park's pandemic thriller "Deranged" already fused corporate conspiracy with government ineptitude, but "Pandora" goes further than any Korean film in disparaging a government or leader so thoroughly, and expressing such devastating collective helplessness. Not only does every move to contain the danger worsen it, the turning point culminates in a lame-duck speech by Kang begging for volunteers to "sacrifice themselves on behalf of this weak government." Comparing the scene with recent official apologies president Park made, Korean audiences will surely wonder how the lines between parody, fiction, and reality are blurred.

While reports of health issues caused by the Fukushima fallout have not publicly surfaced in Japan, the film almost revels in the grisly portrayal of suffering caused by radiation, at times risking descent into Gothic horror with close-ups of charred skin, pus-oozing boils, and spewing blood. While Jae-hyuk's romance and family drama are subsumed under the wider events, the final scenes indulge in a round of breast-beating, hysterical wailing, and thundering patriotism. Still, given the intense seriousness sustained earlier on, the film somehow must cater to the need of local audiences for cathartic melodrama. — Reuters



Actress Emmy Rossum. — AFP

EMMY ROSSUM HAS BEEN OFFERED PARITY WITH 'SHAMELESS' CO-STAR WILLIAM H MACY - BUT SHE WANTS MORE

The future of Showtime's long-running series "Shameless" is being held up, due to ongoing negotiations with star Emmy Rossum. Rossum, who's been a lead on "Shameless" since it debuted in 2011, is in the midst of re-negotiating her contract for a potential eighth season. Sources close to the show tell Variety that months ago, the actress was offered pay parity with her co-star William H. Macy-but she is asking to be paid more.

An insider says Showtime wants to renew the show for Season 8, but won't proceed until resolving Rossum's salary. The creative forces behind the dramedy have not even considered a plan for the show to continue without her, our source explains, as all parties involved are hopeful to close negotiations with the actress.

Rossum is demanding equal pay with Macy, after seven seasons of being paid less than him, according to a report published earlier today by the Hollywood Reporter. A source tells Variety she has in fact been offered equal pay. But she is holding out for a bigger salary than Macy to make up for the previous

seasons where she was making significantly less than him. Both Showtime and Warner Bros. TV, the studio behind "Shameless," declined to comment. Reps for Rossum didn't immediately respond to Variety's calls.

A source close to "Shameless" tells Variety that the network and studio take the income disparity very seriously, but insist that the offer for parity has been on the table for a while and is not being accepted by Rossum's team. By offering her the same salary as Macy, this person says the network and studio are "clearly acknowledging her importance to the show" and how her role has evolved into a crucial part over the years. "It hasn't even been contemplated doing the show without her," adds the source.

Rossum's salary dispute comes at a time when equal pay has become a prominent conversation in the industry, led by actresses like Patricia Arquette and Jennifer Lawrence. At the time "Shameless" premiered, Macy, 66, was arguably more well-known than Rossum, 30. Though the actress was coming off of films like

"The Day After Tomorrow" and "Phantom of the Opera" for which she was nominated for a Golden Globe, Macy had already won multiple Emmys, plus had an Oscar nomination, Golden Globe and SAG nominations.

For his work on "Shameless," Macy has been nominated for three Emmys, a Golden Globe, and won a SAG Award. Rossum has been nominated for two Critics Choice Awards, but never an Emmy, SAG Award or Golden Globe. Awards recognition typically helps actors to negotiate a pay raise.

Rossum has renegotiated her salary since "Shameless" debuted. An insider says she got a significant increase from her original deal several seasons ago, as did Macy. Macy recently closed a new deal for the potential eighth season-the same deal that is now being offered to Rossum. — Reuters

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2016

Judge finalizes
Khloe Kardashian's
divorce from Lamar Odom

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Actor Kirk Douglas, left, looks on as his daughter-in-law Catherine Zeta-Jones lights the candles on his birthday cake during his 100th birthday party at the Beverly Hills Hotel on Friday, Dec 9, 2016, in Beverly Hills. — AP

INSIDE KIRK DOUGLAS' INTIMATE 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Kirk Douglas knows how to make an entrance. With boxing gloves in every centerpiece and the theme from "Rocky" blaring over the speakers, Douglas, one of the golden age of Hollywood's last living legends, walked confidently into the Sunset Room at the Beverly Hills Hotel Friday afternoon to celebrate his 100th birthday at an intimate gathering of friends and family.

Flanked by Anne Douglas, his wife of over 62 years, his son Michael Douglas, his daughter-in-law Catherine Zeta-Jones and his grandchildren, Kirk Douglas looked out over the crowd of about 150 people, including Don Rickles, Jeffrey Katzenberg, his Rabbi and many of his closest friends and smiled. Not only was he surrounded by friendly faces, he knew, as promised by his doctor years ago, that if he lived to 100, he would get to have a glass of vodka.

But before the vodka was presented in a comically large martini glass, Kirk Douglas got to sit and listen to words from his loved ones as images from his many classic film credits such as "Spartacus," "Lust for Life," "Paths of Glory" and others played on a screen behind him.

Michael Douglas kicked off the proceedings, saying that it's not just about age, but about the life he's lived and what he's accomplished. "One of the things that I find most incredible about dad is the third act of his life," said Michael Douglas. "After all he accomplished in his professional career and what he's given for his country, at the point in his life where he's faced adversity, losing a son, having a helicopter crash, having a stroke, and what he's accomplished in this third act in his life, I find quite extraordinary."

Kirk Douglas kept his remarks brief

"I wonder who he was talking about? He said some nice things about someone I don't know," Kirk Douglas said, joking that Michael Douglas was chosen to organize the proceedings because "he has the most money."

Kirk Douglas also thanked everyone for coming and marveled at seeing most of his family in the crowd. Zeta-Jones then lit the 12 candles on the cake. "I'm so glad there's not 100!" she exclaimed, before leading the room to sing "Happy Birthday" with a string quartet accompaniment.

It was only the start of the afternoon, which included remarks from a few of his seven grandchildren, his Rabbi and his doctor. Charley King's Bluebell Events oversaw the afternoon tea where each table was designated not by numbers but by Kirk Douglas's films. The birthday boy was seated at the "Lonely Are the Brave" table, which is his favorite film.

Don Rickles lightened the reverent and respectful mood, quipping to the crowd from his seat that he wanted to go

you'll be in charge." Off to the side, actress and dancer Neile Adams, who was Steve McQueen's first wife, recalled Douglas's mischievous side. "Kirk was terrible when he was a young man! You could not sit beside him without his hand crawling up your leg. When Steve would leave the room suddenly he'd be on me," she said with a hearty laugh. "But he was cute."

She recalled his resilience, when a few years ago he had both of his knees replaced. Michael Douglas, she said, tried to

'you haven't learned how to live until you learn how to give.'"

Steven Spielberg, who arrived late, and on crutches having recently broken his foot on set came with a very specific message. "I wanted to come here and say I've been shooting movies and television shows for now 47 years and I've worked with the best of them and you're the only movie star I ever met," Spielberg said. "There is something that you have that no one else ever had ... When you watch Kirk's performance in



Actor Kirk Douglas arrives at his 100th birthday party as his daughter-in-law Catherine Zeta-Jones, second from right, and her daughter Carys applaud at the Beverly Hills Hotel on Friday.



Actor Kirk Douglas, center, applauds along with the crowd during his 100th birthday party at the Beverly Hills Hotel on Friday, Dec. 9, 2016, in Beverly Hills, Calif. At right is Douglas's son Michael.

home. He poked fun at Kirk Douglas's good looks and physique saying that he had to hear the "I'm Spartacus crap" every day, and how Burt Lancaster used to advise him that Kirk Douglas "doesn't know what he's talking about."

Rickles did get a bit choked up by the end. "You are an outstanding man because you've been blessed with warmth and love and class, and ... ah, forget it, you're all of that and more," He said. "May god give you strength and may you be with us for 100 more. If that's his wish, so be it, if not, I know in heaven

encourage him to just do one and get a chair. Kirk Douglas, however, had a different idea and it didn't involve a wheelchair. "You'll never see Spartacus in a (expletive) chair!" Adams remembered him saying.

Later in the afternoon, Katzenberg reflected on the generosity of the Douglas's, who are famous for their charitable giving. "You have remained and will always remain my hero," Katzenberg said. "I will remind you of your words that you gave to me and I try to give to other people all the time which is

anything, in anything he's ever done, you cannot take your eyes off of him. It's not possible to look away from him."

He called it an optimistic ferocity and it's something he challenges all his actors to achieve in his films. "You're a miracle man," he said. And, even after 100 years to show for it, he's still fighting. — AP

Climate change film 'An Inconvenient Truth' gets a sequel

Al Gore's climate change documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," is getting a sequel. Paramount Pictures said Friday the follow-up to the Oscar-winning original will premiere at next January's Sundance Film Festival. In the new documentary, former Vice President Gore examines global warming's escalation and the solutions at hand, Paramount said. In a statement, Gore called for a re-dedication to solving what he called the climate crisis and said there are reasons to be hopeful. He met this week with President-elect Donald Trump to discuss the topic and termed the meeting productive. Several days later, Trump picked Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, a climate-change denier, as head of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Sundance festival said it will feature other films and events about environmental change and conservation. — AP



In this Jan 15, 2007 file photo, former Vice President Al Gore acknowledges spectators in front of a poster of his starring documentary film "An Inconvenient Truth" on global warming before its screening during the Japan Premier at a theater in Tokyo. — AP

Gospel singer Shirley Caesar sues Georgia artist over song

Grammy-winning gospel singer Shirley Caesar, whose sermon-song "Hold My Mule" went viral a few years ago, is suing a Georgia rapper over a remix of her song. The lawsuit, filed this week in Gwinnett County, accuses Keenan Webb - known as DJ Suede - of releasing an unauthorized version. The clerk's office says the court file does not yet list an attorney for Webb.

Caesar's attorney, James Walker, said the only official version authorized by her has been performed by Snoop Dogg. Walker said Suede's video of the song includes references to alcohol, which is objectionable to the gospel singer.

Caesar said she originally recorded the song in 1988. Caesar's singing the words "you name it" sparked the #UNameIt Challenge online, which features people doing dances to the song. — AP



In this Nov 9, 2008, file photo, Dr. Shirley Caesar-Williams prays for President-elect Barack Obama during a church service at Mt. Calvary Word of God Church in Raleigh. — AP