

Russia new tourist hotspot for Kuwaitis



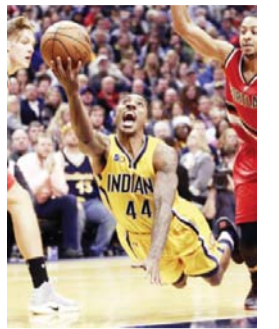
Syrian army advances in Aleppo, loses Palmyra to IS



At least 160 killed as Nigeria church collapses



Kuwait Times infographic: NBA Power Rankings



## AMIR TELLS NEW ASSEMBLY SPENDING CUTS INEVITABLE

GHANEM REELECTED SPEAKER, KANDARI DEPUTY • OPPOSITION SHUT OUT

150 FILS  
NO: 17078  
40 PAGES



Min 06°  
Max 17°  
High Tide 10:55 & 22:01  
Low Tide 04:25 & 16:18



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah pose for a group photo with members of the new National Assembly yesterday. — Amiri Diwan



Newly-elected Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem speaks after his election during the opening session of the Assembly. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah told the new National Assembly's inaugural session that cuts in public spending are "inevitable" and require sacrifices to face the sharp slide in oil revenues. Meanwhile, former pro-government speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem was reelected in a stunning fashion by secur-

Islamist MP Jamaan Al-Harbash, by a single vote. All the three losing opposition MPs strongly lashed out at the government for siding with their opponents.

In his speech, the Amir said that the sharp fall in oil revenues has created a huge deficit in the state budget and that there is no other option but to take effective measures to rectify the shortfall. "I am confident that the Assembly and all citizens are aware that cutting public

SEE PAGES 2 & 3

ing 48 votes against a combined 17 votes for his two opposition competitors - MPs Abdullah Al-Roumi and Shuaib Al-Muwaizri.

Surprisingly, Ghanem obtained more votes in this Assembly with a strong opposition presence compared to the 38 votes he obtained in the previous Assembly, which was described as a rubberstamp of the government. The government also scored another win when Essa Al-Kandari was elected deputy speaker, defeating his opposition rival,

spending has become inevitable through well-studied measures," the Amir said.

A majority of the lawmakers who won in the Nov 26 election have vowed to reject any government austerity measures that could impose new financial burdens on Kuwaiti citizens. The previous Assembly was dissolved over a dispute between the government and the Assembly for raising petrol prices. As a result, the Assembly was dissolved and snap elections were called.

Continued on Page 13



Mr Bader Al-Kharafi (second right), Mr Ali Thunayan Al-Ghanem (center) and Sheikh Meshary Al-Afasy (second left) applaud the election of Marzouq Al-Ghanem as speaker.



ISTANBUL: Turkish police officers carry the coffins of comrades during a funeral ceremony at Istanbul's police headquarters yesterday, a day after twin bombings killed 38 people near a football stadium. — AFP

## CAIRO CHURCH BOMBING KILLS 25

KUWAIT, AMIR CONDEMN ATTACK

### GULF STATES TAKE SHINE OFF CUSHY GOVERNMENT JOBS

DOHA: Ahmed, a Qatari civil servant, used to arrive at his office at a government ministry in Doha late in the morning and leave for home after lunch, collecting a monthly salary of 40,000 rials (\$11,000) and a generous housing and travel allowance. But last month a government official made a surprise spot check on the ministry's offices and found dozens of employees absent. "Punctuality is a duty," said a letter Ahmed received from the minister's office. "Qatar expects the best of its citizens."

For a country whose tiny population is the world's wealthiest per capita and which sits upon its largest natural gas reserves, increasing the productivity of its 90,000 public employees might seem like a needless task. But it is part of a trend across the Gulf as economies there try to lessen the burden of costly public sectors. Gulf states have for decades used their energy wealth to provide millions of citizens with cushy government jobs, part of a social contract that rewards educational attainment with employment for life.

Continued on Page 13

CAIRO: A bomb blast tore through a church near Cairo's Coptic cathedral during a service yesterday, killing at least 25 people in the deadliest attack in recent memory on Egypt's Christian minority. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing but Coptic Christians, who make up about 10 percent

of Egypt's population, have been previously targeted in attacks. At least 31 people were also wounded in the blast, the health ministry said, as the attack drew condemnation from political and religious leaders and led President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi to declare three days of national mourning.

Continued on Page 13



CAIRO: Protesters shout slogans as they gather outside the Saint Peter and Saint Paul Coptic Orthodox Church in the Abbasiya neighborhood after it was targeted by an explosion yesterday. — AFP

## TURKEY DEFIANT AS KURDISH GROUP CLAIMS TWIN BLASTS

KUWAIT, AMIR CONDEMN BOMBINGS

ISTANBUL: A defiant President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday vowed to fight terror "to the end" as a Kurdish militant group claimed twin attacks that ripped through Istanbul, killing 38 people, mostly police. The bloodshed, which took place late on Saturday, saw a car bomb exploding outside the home stadium of football giants Besiktas and less than a minute later, a suicide attacker blew himself up by a group of police at a nearby park.

Most of the dead were police officers, who accounted for 30 of the victims. Seven civilians also died, along with one person whose identity was unclear, officials said. Around 150 people were wounded in the blasts. The carnage prompted a sharp response from Erdogan, who vowed Ankara would "fight the scourge of terrorism right to the end".

Continued on Page 13

Colours of Australia

12 December 2016 to 26 January 2017

Sponsored by CROWNE PLAZA, ACK, VIVA

SEE PAGE 7



**KUWAIT:** Marzouq Al-Ghanem is congratulated after being elected Speaker of the National Assembly. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Marzouq Al-Ghanem shakes his father Ali Thunaiyan Al-Ghanem's hand after being elected as speaker.



A general view of the first regular session of the National Assembly's 15th Legislative Term.



Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Dr Ziad Al-Alyan (center) attends the session.



MP Shuwaib Al-Muwaizri speaks during the session.



MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari reacts during the session.



US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman (center) attends the opening session.



MP Safaa Al-Hashem arrives to attend the opening session.



Deputy Speaker Essa Al-Kandari (left) and MP Talal Al-Sahli attend the session.



MP Abdullah Al-Roumi (top right) gestures during the session.



Top police and army officials attend the session.

# AMIR CONGRATULATES GHANEM, KANDARI

## HARSHANI CALLS FOR APPLYING CONSTITUTION

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem for being elected Parliament Speaker, wishing him all the best. 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 sent similar cables.

Born in 1968, Ghanem earned a BA in mechanical engineering and held the post of Boubyan Petrochemicals chairman. He was also a board member at the Egypt Kuwait Holding Company, the Building Materials Company and Global Telecom. Elected MP in 2006, 2008

and 2009, and also in 2012, Ghanem was Speaker of the 2013 parliament.

His Highness the Amir also sent a congratulatory cable Sunday to MP Essa Al-Kandari. In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed his most congratulations to Kandari for being elected as Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.

His Highness also wished the new Deputy Speaker all the best of luck on his mission to contribute to serving the country and boosting its status on regional and international levels. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar

cables to the Deputy Speaker.

### Fighting corruption

In a speech before the speaker's election, the National Assembly's senior MP Hamad Al-Harshani said that applying the laws and terms of the Kuwaiti constitution and punishing those who violate the law are vital to create stability in the country.

Fighting corruption is a must to overcome the current unstable economic conditions in Kuwait, said Harshani in a speech at the National Assembly's first ordinary session of the 15th legislative term. He also stressed the need for

immediate economic reforms to achieve development, and the importance of full cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities to provide better conditions for citizens and protect the law.

Harshani affirmed the important role played by the two authorities in determining Kuwait's international policy and develop cooperation with the Gulf countries. He noted that the current assembly will exert huge efforts to face the regional economic and security challenges that may affect Kuwait. Meanwhile, he spoke of unresolved issues facing Kuwaitis including health services, developing education and housing requests. — KUNA

# PROFILES OF THE NEW CABINET'S MEMBERS

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah has formed the 34th government of the State of Kuwait since 1962 and the sixth since he has occupied the premiership post in December 2011. The following are profiles of the newly-formed cabinet including the premier.

- Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, born in 1942, has occupied a number of positions since 1968, serving as supervisor of administrative and financial affairs at the Amiri Diwan, director of a State department and assistant undersecretary for financial and administrative affairs.

On March 19, 1979, he was appointed Hawally Governor. Later, he was named Al-Ahmedi Governor, before serving as minister of social affairs and labor and minister of information as well as advisor at His Highness the Amir Bureau.

On February 9, 2006, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak was named first deputy premier, minister of interior and defense. He retained the same posts in two cabinets, formed on July 11, 2006, and March 25, 2007.

Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, in a cabinet reshuffle on October 28, 2007, became the first deputy premier and minister of defense. He served in the same positions in the subsequent governments formed in May 2008, January 2009, May 2009 and May 2011. In November 2011, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak was selected to serve as premier. He was re-appointed to the premiership post in February 2012, July 2012, December 2012, July 2013 and January 2014.

- Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, born in 1953. He joined the foreign ministry in 1978 as a diplomatic attache, serving in the Arab affairs department (1978-1983) and with the permanent Kuwaiti mission at the UN (1983-1989). He worked as the deputy director of the Arab homeland department at the foreign ministry (1989-1992), in addition to several other senior posts till assuming the foreign minister's post in 2011. He retained the position in the years later.

- Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, the deputy premier and interior minister, was named chief of staff on March 4, 2012, deputy premier and minister of defense in July 2013 and remained in the same service as of January 2014.

- Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the deputy premier and minister of



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah casts his vote during the speaker's election yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

defense, was named Hawally Governor in 1991, minister of interior in 1996, as well as in the cabinets of 1998, 1999 and 2001. He was re-named for the same service in 2012 and 2014.

- Anas Al-Saleh, the deputy premier and finance minister, born in 1972, had served in key positions in several private business companies before he was named in 2012 as minister of commerce and industry. He retained the post in the cabinets of December 2012 and July 2013. He was chosen to serve as the deputy premier and finance minister in January 2014 and acting oil minister in November 2015.

- Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the minister of state for cabinet affairs, born in 1971, started his career as a political researcher at the cabinet general secretariat. Later, he occupied a number of ranking positions until he was picked as the minister of information in February 2012. In the cabinet of December

2012, he served as the minister of state for cabinet affairs. He kept the same jobs in 2013 and 2014.

- Dr Hind Subaih Al-Subaih, the minister of social affairs and labor, began climbing the echelon in 2007 as the assistance undersecretary at the civil service commission. She was chosen as the minister of social affairs and labor in January 2014.

- Yasser Abul, the minister of state for housing affairs, born in 1973. He was named to the key post in January 2014.

- Jamal Al-Harbi, the minister of health, born in 1961, was named as the assistant undersecretary for medical services in June 2013.

- Abdul-Rahman Al-Mutawa, the minister of public works, had served as the deputy director general for construction at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

- Essam Al-Marzouq, the minister of oil, electricity and water. He had served as chairman of the Kuwaiti bourse, board member at

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and chief of operations at Kuwait Petroleum International.

- Faleh Al-Azb, the minister of justice, had served in the investigations department at the interior ministry and as an advisor at the ministry of foreign affairs.

- Mohammad Al-Fares, born in 1966, served in key posts at Kuwait University in

2002 and 2007 before occupying the university general secretariat post in 2016.

- Mohammad Al-Jabri, the minister of awqaf and Islamic affairs, born in 1974, served at Kuwait Airways, became parliament member in December 2012 and 2013. He is also a member of the current parliament (the National Assembly). — KUNA

## FULL LIST OF THE PARLIAMENT COMMITTEES' MEMBERS

### Financial and Economic Affairs Committee

Saleh Ashour  
Khalaf Dumaitheer  
Marzouq Al-Khalifa  
Ahmad Al-Fadhl  
Safaa Al-Hashem  
Mohammad Al-Mutair  
Abdulwahab Al-Babtain

### Legal and Legislative Committee

Mohammad Al-Dallal  
Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie  
Mubarak Al-Hajraf  
Mohammad Hayef  
Khaled Al-Shatti  
Abdulkareem Al-Kandari  
Waleed Al-Tabtabaei

### Interior and Defense Committee

Salah Khorshid  
Nasser Al-Dossari  
Askar Al-Enezi  
Saud Al-Shuwaier  
Majed Al-Mutairi

### Complaints Committee

Adel Al-Damkhi  
Mubarak Al-Hajraf  
Saadoun Hamad  
Saud Al-Shuwaier  
Hamdan Al-Azmi

### Budgets Committee

Riyadh Al-Adasani

Safaa Al-Hashem  
Adnan Abdulsamad  
Awdah Al-Awdah  
Adel Al-Damkhi  
Abdullah Al-Roumi  
Mohammad Al-Huwailah

### Public Utilities Committee

Mohammad Al-Hadiya  
Nasser Al-Dossari  
Abdullah Fahhad  
Khalil Al-Saleh  
Majed Al-Mutairi  
Rakan Al-Nasef  
Thamer Al-Dhafri

### Foreign Relations Committee

Hamad Al-Harashani  
Yousef Al-Fadhalah  
Ali Al-Deqbasi  
Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie  
Askar Al-Enezi

### Health and Labour Committee

Talal Al-Jallal  
Yousef Al-Fadhalah  
Humoud Al-Khudair  
Saad Al-Khanfour  
Khaled Al-Otaibi

### Educational Affairs Committee

Mohammad Al-Huwailah  
Omar Al-Tabtabaei  
Jamaan Al-Harbash  
Khalil Abul  
Awdah Al-Awdah

### Priority Issues Committee

Salah Khorshid  
Thamer Al-Dhafri  
Osama Al-Shahin



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers his speech after he inaugurated the first regular session of the National Assembly's 15th Legislative Term yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# AMIR URGES FURTHER CAUTION, VIGILANCE TO DEFEAT CHALLENGES

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday called for further caution and vigilance against endeavors targeting the nation's unity. His Highness the Amir inaugurated yesterday the first regular session of the National Assembly's 15th Legislative Term.

Addressing the parliament session, His Highness the Amir referred to the surrounding hazards, which he has repeatedly warned against, and the colossal challenges that hinder the efforts aiming to protect the nation and its security and stability, satisfy citizens and maintain their dignity, as well as securing a dignified future for them and the future generations.

#### Growing challenges

His Highness the Amir said it is worrying that the dangers have been escalating, and the challenges are growing, as "brutal terrorism has found its way to our peaceful and safe nation, seeking to ignite sedition and break the national unity". His Highness the Amir highlighted the remarkable efforts and the "watchful eyes" that have preserved the nation's security and have not allowed more terror crimes to take place.

However, caution and vigilance remain a public national duty, His Highness the Amir said, urging "citizens, my brothers and my sons" to assume their responsibility, namely rejecting the heinous attempts for and disunity. His Highness the Amir pointed to the huge decrease of state revenues resulting from the sharp falls of oil prices that have caused a considerable deficit in the budget, as another significant challenge. It is inevitable to initiate effective measures to remedy the deficit and alleviate its effects, His Highness the Amir said.

#### Inevitable change

His Highness the Amir voiced confidence that the venerable assembly realizes that reducing expenditure has come to be "inevitable" through well-studied arrangements to fix the imbalance of the state budget and to curb wasting and depletion of national resources, directing them toward their correct goals. In the meantime, His Highness the Amir stressed keenness on easing the burden on people with limited income, and caring for social justice through regular review of these measures, amending them in line with the state revenues.

This will be a part of a comprehensive economic reform program, in which the private sector plays a vital and effective role. All parties will be committed to the program, and the government will provide its tools and operational and timing details, His Highness the Amir said. Citizens will be apprised of their role in the program, and what it can achieve for them and the future generations, with their positive participation and the responsibilities they will have to assume. His Highness the Amir stressed that he is confident that Kuwaitis' love and allegiance to the nation, and their readiness for sacrifice, are by no means less than their ancestors.

His Highness the Amir underscored the significance of identifying state priorities, amid the current regional and international conditions, fateful risks and the potential and unthinkable sudden developments, in light of the fact that million becoming homeless, and the ongoing plans of tampering and sabotage.

All have to realize that this is no time for political luxury, or making gains at the expense of Kuwait's higher interests, His Highness the Amir said. "If it is our destiny to bear national responsibility amidst the critical conditions the region is experiencing, we remain on our fixed constants on dealing with our (regional) sphere and the world, with the Arab and Islamic dimensions of these (constants), as well as their regional and international frameworks," His Highness the Amir said. This will proceed with commitment to the usual moderate approach for the progress and good of humanity.

#### GCC unity

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir said that it is high time for a new phase of ties among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which rises to the level of the challenges, and that embodies the common goals and destiny of the "brothers." This new phase will also see enhancing the GCC unity to achieve comprehensive development for the people and to maintain the sovereignty, security and stability of the member states.

His Highness the Amir expressed great pleasure over the recent visit by Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and an accompanying delegation, to Kuwait, which reflected the deep-rooted, time-tested bilateral ties, on the level of the leadership and the people. His Highness the Amir recalled with high



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah waves as he arrives to the parliament's main hall along with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

appreciation the historical role that Saudi Arabia has been playing in support of Kuwait's rights, reiterating the remarkable role by King Salman to consolidate the GCC march to reinforce security, peace, prosperity in the region.

His Highness the Amir told the first session of the parliament's 15th Legislative Term that sustainable development would remain a chief goal for the present and the future, as it is the "everlasting challenge that determines the fate of the society and the nation."

The fact that issues of security and the economic and financial reform as well as the unrelenting confrontation against corruption, does not at all mean overlooking the ills the nation is suffering from or the chronic diseases weakening the society, His Highness the Amir said. This prompts drawing up well-studied long-term scientific plans to overcome the ills and diseases, and to save the nation and the society from their vicious impact.

Such plans will have to be capped with

paying more attention and showing further care to youth, listening to them, bringing them up on moderation, immunizing them against extremism and deviant thinking, educating them on how to accept others' views and enhancing their spirit of cooperation and collective work, His Highness the Amir pointed out.

#### Creating jobs

His Highness the Amir called for opening the doors of the future wide for youth, as well as creating new job opportunities for the dozens of thousands of them who join the labor market annually. His Highness the Amir also stressed the need to improve public services, health, housing and the infrastructure, and above all reviewing and modernizing school curricula and teaching methods to cope with the developments worldwide.

Earlier in the speech, His Highness the Amir congratulated the new MPs for gaining the confidence of the Kuwaiti people, voicing sat-

isfaction with the outcome of the November 26 elections that brought into the parliament young ambitious lawmakers who prompt feelings of hope and optimism and consolidate the energy to "build our dear nation."

His Highness the Amir highlighted the constructive role by the media, both official and private, which highlighted the democratic practice and encourages people to fulfill their national duty. His Highness the Amir told the MPs that the Kuwaiti people have put their trust in them, urging the legislators to be eager not to break the trust and to rise to the level of people's confidence. His Highness the Amir urged the MPs to hold Kuwait's interests above all other personal family, sectorial, tribal and class considerations.

Concluding his speech, His Highness the Amir emphasized confidence that Kuwait, which has overcome tribulations and hardships through history, will be able to counter all challenges and dangers, with help of Allah, and its loyal people. —KUNA

## PM SETS FORTH GUIDELINES FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

### LABOR CITY, AIRPORT EXPANSION, NEW HOSPITALS AMONG KEY PPP PROJECTS



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah delivers his speech during yesterday's parliament session. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday briefed the newly-elected MPs on the guidelines on the second economic development plan (2016-20). In his speech to the first regular session of the 15th legislative term of the National Assembly in the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak said the plan includes measures to revitalize the economic growth, promote the role of the private sector and attract more foreign investment.

"Some of the mega projects, listed in the economic development plan, will be implemented solely by government institutions and others that will be implemented through public-private partnerships (PPP)," he said.

"These include the Khairan power station, the waste treatment plants, the labor city in south Jahra, the south Mutlaa' city, the expansions of Kuwait International Airport, the new university, and a number of hospitals. "The planned projects in the oil industry include Al-Zour Refinery and the subsidiary plants, and the environment-friendly fuel project," His Highness the Prime Minister said.

#### Competitive edge

"Besides these high-value-added projects that will enhance the country's competitive edge in the petrochemical industry, the govern-

ment is working on a range of draft economic legislations and is looking forward to cooperating with your honorable Assembly to pass them as early as possible," he went on.

His Highness the Prime Minister thanked His Highness the Amir for renewing his mandate and the trust placed in him and in the new members of his cabinet at this important juncture in the history of Kuwait. He congratulated the new MPs on winning the confidence of the people who entrusted them with the responsibility to serve the national interests to realize the aspirations of the citizens.

"The government has always been keen on maintaining a positive relationship with the National Assembly so as to reach the desired targets in all fields in the framework of the relevant provisions of the Constitution, the Assembly's statutes, and the sound parliamentary practices," he affirmed.

"In keeping with Article 98 of the Constitution, the government is bound to present to your honorable Assembly its detailed agenda for the coming years soon after finalizing the document. The envisaged agenda aims to address the main challenges and the issues of common concern for the public through a radical approach. We now face the big challenges of putting Kuwait on par with the advanced economies on international rating indices, restructuring the state budget, diversifying the productive base, and activating the

financial and economic reforms," he went on.

#### Human development

His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak also highlighted the need to focus on human development through modernization of education in keeping with the needs of economic development and leveraging the e-government applications which will impact positively on cutting the red tape and enhancing transparency.

Recalling his oath of office before His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Prime Minister renewed the vow to translate into action the vision of His Highness the Amir for reviving the economy, meeting the needs of the citizens in such areas as education, health and housing, and caring for the youth.

He noted that all these issues are a top priority for both executive and legislative authorities. He voiced hope that the Assembly will assume its supervisory role, fair accountability and absolute transparency in backing the government to reach the common goal of serving "our dear homeland."

On the regional political, security and economic developments, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak said the complicated changes require that the government and the Assembly combine forces to implement the wise instructions of His Highness the Amir, who warned against such serious threats, in order to maintain the security and stability of the country. —KUNA

## In Brief

AMIR OFFERS CONDOLENCES  
TO UAE'S PRESIDENT

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences yesterday to President of the UAE Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, expressing his deepest sympathies over the death of Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid bin Hamdan bin Mohammad Al-Nahyan. 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 similar sentiments to the President of the UAE. — KUNA

AMIR EXPRESSES SORROW  
ON PAKISTAN'S PLANE CRASH

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has cabled Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain expressing condolences over deadly crash of the Pakistani airlines plane that was flying to Islamabad. 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 addressed a cable containing identical sentiments of solace to the Pakistani president. — KUNA

FM RECEIVES SPANISH  
COUNTERPART'S LETTER

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received a letter from Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Alfonso Dastis Quecedo. The letter is related to close relations between Kuwait and Spain in all fields and the latest regional and international developments. — KUNA



## Photo

of the day



**KUWAIT:** The Central Bank of Kuwait's building in Sharq overlooking the Gulf. — KUNA photo

KUWAIT TO PARTAKE IN  
HARVARD TRAINING  
PROGRAM NEXT MONTH

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait will partake in Harvard University's "Leading Strategy Execution in Financial services" training program for bank executives in the Gulf countries, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), Mohammad Al-Hashel has announced.

Improving the performance of the national banking and financial sector cadres is a top priority for the CBK and Kuwaiti banks, Hashel, also Chairman of Kuwait Institute for Banking Studies (KIBS), said in a press statement Saturday.

He underscored that these cadres are playing an instrumental role in achieving sustainable development for the banking and financial sectors in Kuwait and other Gulf countries.

For the eighth year in a row KIBS and Harvard present this executive development program for banking and finance executives in the GCC region and some Middle East countries, he said, adding that this year's edition would be held in Muscat during the period January 28 to February 2, 2017. He stated that this program is designed for upper middle executives of levels such as department heads.

The first program was organized in 2009-10 in Kuwait exclusively for the KIBS member banks. After the success of that program, and with Harvard Business School and GCC banking institutes showing interest in a GCC level event, the program was extended to cover all GCC countries and several Middle Eastern countries, he pointed out.

The program is held every year in one of the GCC countries. The 2016's edition was held in Qatar and the coming would be held in Oman. He estimated that the number of banking executives who partook in the previous seven editions at 311.

Harvard Business School Executive Education programs adhere to the school's high standards, thus ensuring that participants and their organizations receive the same quality of learning experience for which the school is so well known, he stressed.

He added that participants will receive a Harvard Business School certificate, verifying that they have completed the program. He underlined eagerness to continue fruitful cooperation between Kuwaiti and GCC banking institutions to make the best use of similar programs and initiatives for training and expertise exchange.

He expressed appreciation of the Kuwaiti and Gulf banks and financial institutions for their keenness to effectively participate in this distinguished program, and wished them all success to materialize the objectives of their participation. — KUNA



**Mohammad Al-Hashel**

RUSSIA: NEW TOURIST  
HOTSPOT FOR KUWAITIS

**MOSCOW:** Russia has emerged as a new tourist destination for Kuwaiti and Gulf citizens, after the ninth most populous nation attracted some 32 million visitors in 2015. In March, Russia opened a national tourist office in Kuwait, an endeavor intended to lure Arab and Gulf tourists to a country whose tourism industry has grown exponentially and is home to 22 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites, in addition to a diverse landscape. Speaking yesterday, Deputy President of the Russian Tourism Agency Sergei Korneev underscored his country as a new global tourist hotspot, citing substantial growth in Moscow's tourism industry, adding that the country has managed to earn around \$13-20 billion in tourism revenue.

Moreover, he noted that Russia is keen on welcoming Gulf and Arab tourists in the near future, amid expectations of a 25 percent growth in the tourism industry by the year 2025. He also added that the tourism industry accounts for three percent of total investments in the country and has managed to provide some four million jobs.

Meanwhile, head of the Russian national tourist office in Kuwait Basel Al-Osoud said that Russia possesses all of the qualities and attributes needed to transform the nation into a full-fledged tourist destination, noting that the Kremlin has undertaken a series of infrastructure reforms to usher in an influx of tourists.

On tourist locations, he said that the country is home to religious and cultural sites, in addition to gardens and other locations that will beguile visitors, noting that around half a million Kuwaiti tourists venture into new parts of the world every year.

Speaking on touristic ties between Russia and Kuwait, he foreboded that relations will ameliorate, saying that Russia is a suitable destination for Kuwaitis during summer season, given the fact that temperatures remain moderate at around 25 degrees Celsius.

On efforts to cater to Arab and Muslim visitors, he revealed that a number of touristic companies have provided a wide range of 'Halal' food, adding that they have also incorporated the use of Arabic language into their programs to make visitors from that region feel more at home. — KUNA



Legalese

## PASSPORT ISSUES

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

**L**egally, we don't own our passports - they are not our property, but are actually the property of the countries that issued them. Passports are extremely important because they are official documents issued by governments to certify our identity and entitle us to the right to travel.

Unfortunately, some employers in Kuwait and the region continue to hold their employees' passports. Why do companies still do this? There are regulations that impose fines on companies that do not adhere to the law and hold employees' passports, yet the issue continues to grow in Kuwait. I have written extensively about the matter, but I continue to get emails on a daily basis about the issue, so I decided to write about the importance of keeping your passport with you as an employee and what games companies play in order to keep the passports.

### Complaint

**Question:** My employer has my passport - what can I do? I heard I need to file a complaint at the Shuoon (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor). Is this true? Where do I go?

**Fajer:** Yes, you need to file a complaint at the Shuoon. It has one office in every governorate in Kuwait. Every employee has a file in a certain governorate, so you need to find out which Shuoon office your file is under. Your best option would be to go to the Shuoon in your workplace's area or where your company's head office is located. So for example, let's say you work in an oil company, so you should probably go to Ahmadi's Shuoon.

Once you get there, you need to file a complaint stating that your passport has been taken and not returned. The Shuoon does take this issue seriously and although the procedure may be complicated and may take a long time, at least the people that work at the Shuoon have been very compassionate and caring towards employees. If you are finding it difficult to file a complaint, I suggest you hire a lawyer. They are very efficient at doing the job, because unfortunately from experience, I can tell you that some companies play games stating that they do not have the passport or accuse the employee of lying.

If you file a complaint, expect that this may cause the HR department or your employer to be aggressive towards you. I am saying this from experience. I have seen employees go through a rough time and be treated badly because they asked for their right to keep their passports. It's really sad to see that employers still treat their staff this way, even though the Kuwaiti government has rewritten many resolutions in order to give the employees more rights.

### Residency

**Question:** Is it true that if my passport is with my employer, they can cancel my residency?

**Fajer:** Yes, they can cancel your residency at the Shuoon if they have your passport. They can also extend your residency if they wish to do so. This has also caused many problems for my clients - some of them were looking forward to leaving the company, yet their employers renewed their residency for another year.

I know it is very difficult for you to refuse to give your employer your passport and it is a very tough situation to be in, but I highly advise that should you have to give your passport to your employer, get a signed document stating that they have your passport. Also, do the same when they give it back. If they ask for your passport because they want to renew your residency, for example, get them to give you that in writing as well. I hope the above has helped, and my apologies for repeating certain topics, but there are many concerns regarding these topics. If you have any topic suggestions, please do forward them to me.

For any legal questions, queries or if you need legal assistance, email ask@fajerthelawyer.com

# BY-ELECTIONS TO FILL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL'S VACANT SEATS SOON

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** By-elections to fill the Municipal Council's five seats that became vacant when members resigned to run for parliament will take place soon, Chairman Muhalhel Al-Khaled said yesterday. He further urged members of the Cabinet and parliament to amend the elections laws in order to add new areas to their corresponding constituencies before the by-elections.

### 15 offers

The finance ministry's general debt committee received 15 offers from international banks and financial establishments to take part in issuing government bonds to cover the budget deficit of \$ 10 billion during the first quarter of 2017. The committee will study the offers to select the most suitable ones though the

interest rates on these bonds were not set so far. Notably, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh has given the green light to the process by issuing a decision that Kuwait will borrow through issuing international bonds in foreign currencies to cover the deficit and diversify the sources of national income. According to the decision, the total value of the debts will not exceed KD 2.9 billion during the fiscal year 2016-2017. According to IMF statistics, Kuwait ranks seventh worldwide in terms of its general debt ratio compared to its GDP which was below 10.6 percent in 2015 while it was 19.4 percent in UAE, 20.6 percent in Oman, 35.8 percent in Qatar, 63.3 percent in Bahrain and only 5.8 percent in Saudi Arabia.

### Governance

The Capital Market Authority (CMA) yesterday

warned some companies listed on the stock exchange for not filing their reports on governance requirements, said informed sources, noting that the concerned companies had made some inquiries about governance.

### Transport authority

The Public Authority for Roads and Transportation's Chairman Soud Al-Nakki stressed that future projects will only be offered through the authority, adding that it will be responsible for qualifying bidders and offering tenders without referring to the Central Tender Committee (CTC). Nakki explained that the process will not be done randomly and that it is coordinated with the Fatwa and Legislation Department in order to be subjected to both internal monitoring and external one through the State Audit Bureau.

## CHALLENGES AGAINST ELECTION RESULTS INCREASE

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The total number of contests against the election results rose to 30 yesterday, the last day of the window granted to candidates to file complaints at the constitutional court. Former MPs Bader Al-Dahoum and Fares Al-Otaibi were among those who filed the contests. On his Twitter account, Otaibi stressed that he filed a plea motivated by the persistence of his constituents and

campaign staff members, and claimed that the results were miscounted.

### Car on fire

Four Arab expats escaped death when their vehicle burst into flames yesterday on the Fifth Ring Road. Security sources said firemen rushed to the scene and controlled the blaze. No injuries were reported. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire.

## KUWAIT LAUDS NON-OPEC OUTPUT CUT DECISION

**VIENNA:** Kuwait Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Delegate to the UN Office in Vienna Sadeq Maarafi welcomed the decision of the non-OPEC countries to cut their oil output by 558,000 barrels per day (bpd).

"This historic decision will have a positive impact on the global market as it will help end the glut in oil supplies," he said in statements Saturday night following the OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting. "The decision, to take effect on January 1 for a renewable six-month period, will ensure fair prices for both producers and consumers. "The implementation of today's decision and the OPEC decision on November 30 to cut its output by 1.2 million bpd will be overseen by a ministerial committee chaired by Kuwait and including Algeria, Oman, Russia and Venezuela."

"Today's decision opened a new chapter in the fruitful cooperation between OPEC and non-OPEC countries in the short and long run," Marrafi said, expecting the global market to respond soon to such decisions by the marker oil producers.

On the OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting, the Kuwaiti diplomat said the meeting was co-chaired by Dr Mohammed Bin Saleh Al-Sada - President of the OPEC Conference and Minister of Energy and Industry of Qatar, and Alexander Novak - Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation. It gathered representatives of 11 non-OPEC countries and agreed to add Russia and Oman to the membership of the OPEC ministerial committee. The committee is expected to meet soon under the chairmanship of Kuwait's newly-appointed Minister of Oil Essam Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq, he added.



Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah

Suleiman Al-Fahad

## POLICE BANNED FROM GIVING UNAUTHORIZED MEDIA STATEMENTS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** A decision to ban Interior Ministry officers from making unauthorized publication and to maintain the secrecy of work was issued under the instructions of the Deputy Prime Minister Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad yesterday. The decision stipulates that members of the police force, whether uniformed or civil, are not allowed to:

- Write, give statements, publish any opinions, research or columns, give interviews or publish anything on social media until after obtaining permission.
- Give any information related to crimes to any media outlet until obtaining special permission from the relations and security information department.
- Providing the media with any pictures, papers or data about their work, except through the relations and security information department.
- Inviting media members to accompany them while carrying out security missions, which should maintain complete secrecy.

## Find all what you need... here

Widest range of choices for your online shopping needs

**SHOP NOW**

GET IT ON Google Play
 Download on the App Store

[www.shopu.com](http://www.shopu.com)

Follow us: shopU.com

Al-Anbaa

PAGE 158

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

**S**ouls Exchange Kisses' by novelist Mohammad Bassam Al-Husseini ends with page 158, which is partially incomplete. The reader can either end the story assuming the main character's death or leave it to one's imagination. The novel revolves around our main character, a highly educated girl who suffers leukemia, and during her treatment, she platonically falls in love with her doctor who does not know about her feelings for him.

As the story progresses, the doctor realizes his patient's love for reading and suggests her to write about self-recovery. During the treatment, three females suffering from cancer are murdered while being under treatment. These crimes attract the attention of our main character and she starts working towards identifying the culprit with the help of the media. Soon, the culprit is identified. The culprit had become a nurse after her daughter died of cancer. She assumes that killing cancer patients is a way

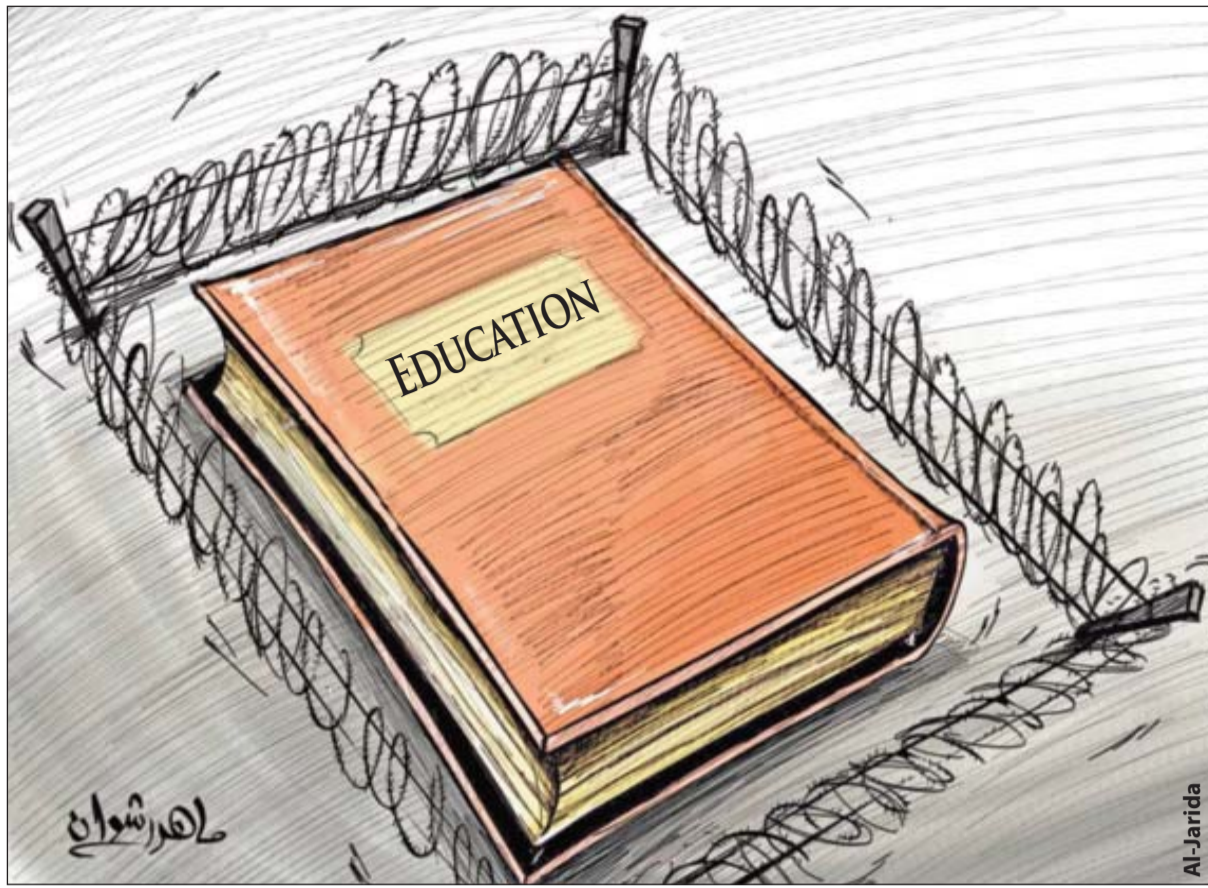
*Through the novel, Husseini gave a scientific cultural and literal dose to the readers*

to aid them by ending their suffering. Later, the condition of our main character worsens, and she discovers that the doctor is married and has a family, but believes that love is the meeting of souls without the body knowing about it.

Through the novel, Husseini gave a scientific cultural and literal dose to the readers as he explained every detail very innovatively. For example, Racin, which was used in the killing, was explained through the characters as part of their conversation. Husseini also used things such as palm reading, through which he wanted to prove that no matter how advanced a man gets, when he loses hope, he seeks for mysterious ways to revive that lost hope.

Novelist Mohammad Al-Husseini made a clear change in the art of writing, through the maturity of the characters. His writing definitely made the reader experience the events in the novel in a realistic way. Husseini created a process of coalescence between the reader and the words 'souls exchange kisses'. "Our mother is our life's main asset, if she goes away, our lives turn into a city of asylums," said Husseini.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Jarida

Al-Anbaa

MUNICIPALITY DONKEYS

Al-Anbaa

By Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi

**T**he Municipality Department was established in 1930 and the services it provided included garbage collection and transporting it using locally made wooden carts drawn by donkeys. Each cart was operated by a garbage collector.

During those days, the municipal donkeys were very spoiled and lived a 'comfortable' life at special ranches, where workers cleaned and fed them. They also had limited working hours. I still remember reading the municipality's statement of annual expenses and revenues issued in 1936. The statement included the cost of feeding donkeys, purchasing fodder and paying donkey attendants' salaries.

Some other spoiled donkeys used to be ridden by well-off people, and each of them had a special worker to take care of it and lead it while carrying the master and

shading the master under the soaring sun or rain. Such spoiled donkeys, namely those of the municipality, used to bray a lot, making very loud noises. They also used to kick each other all the time. They used to be restless because of the 'luxury', comfort and abundant food they enjoyed.

*They used to be restless because of the 'luxury', comfort and abundant food they enjoyed*

On the other hand, other donkeys used in transporting heavy loads such as gypsum, clay, mud and water were very 'underprivileged' and were hungry most of the time. They were less fortunate. They had scarred backs resulting from their heavy loads and worked monotonously and constantly without breaks, except on Eid days when they were dyed with henna and rented out to children who wanted to ride them for fun, paying the owner a baiza per ride!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

WALKING WOMAN ARRESTED

**KUWAIT:** Traffic department sent a woman who was walking on Taawon Road, telling motorists she can predict the future. The woman who was stopping cars was approached by a patrol, she told them she has a message from Allah and knows all what is being planned for the coming years including earthquakes and calamities in 2017. She was sent to criminal detectives for questioning.

Bedoon mows down Egyptians

A bedoon rammed three Egyptians with his car following a dispute between them over a financial matter. All three Egyptian men were taken to hospital for treatment. The suspect fled the scene. Police are investigating.

Reckless drivers busted

Police raided an empty lot in Sulaibiya area where youth were 'drifting'. Upon arriving at the lot, several youth in various vehicles dispersed and those remaining were arrested. Drifting, or driving cars in a reckless manner to demonstrate skills or daring is a common practice among youth in the Arabian Peninsula and is a regular cause of youth deaths in the region.

Armed man in chalets area

Ahmadi police responded to a call from a woman who reported that a man was threatening her with a firearm in the chalets' areas in southern Kuwait. Police found the woman in a hysterical state as the suspect escaped. Detectives are investigating.

Drugs found

An Egyptian man who works as a medical representative was sent to the Drugs Control General Department for possessing illicit pills, heroin and shabu. A security source said when a patrol stopped the suspect, he immediately said "I am a representative and the pills with me are not illicit." The man was searched and drugs were found along with drug paraphernalia. In another case, an Indian man was arrested in Farwaniya in possession of 10 grams of heroin.

Sorceress busted

An Ethiopian woman admitted that she attempted to prevent the marriage of her sponsor's daughter because she hates her. A security source said a citizen went to Abdallah Al-Mubarak police station and told them she caught her maid shredding her daughters clothes, then as she turned the mattress in the room, she found strange objects. The maid said she hates the girl and attempted to prevent her marriage through sorcery. —Translated from the Arabic press



VIVA SPONSORS CAN'S MARATHON

**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced its sponsorship of the Marathon organized by Cancer Aware Nation, under the slogan "Our steps are prevention", to foster the awareness about the cancer disease. The Marathon was held on Saturday 10 December 2016 which started from Yacht Club and ended at the Green Island.

On this occasion, Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Senior Corporate Communications at VIVA commented: "This event that combines between health and sport meets our CSR plans, as VIVA always keen to support different activities that aim to serve the society and spread the awareness among its members." After the marathon's

conclusion, VIVA has been recognized by organizers, and VIVA's representative Hessah Al-Sabea received the trophy.

Since its inception in 2006 under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait, CAN organized several activities, which reflected positive impact about the danger of the cancer disease and its prevention methods.

VIVA's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities can be reviewed on the company's website at <https://www.viva.com.kw/csr>. This offers a description of each CSR initiative that VIVA has supported, or taken on since its inception.

KFH OFFERS WHALY BOATS TO VOLUNTARY FOUNDATION

**KUWAIT:** The Environmental Voluntary Foundation has received a number of Whaly Boats from Kuwait Finance House (KFH) as part of the bank's endeavors to optimally assume the social responsibility and support the efforts of Kuwait Dive Team.

KFH participates in several environmental awareness activities and events in collaboration with the concerned authorities such as the Environmental Voluntary Foundation and Kuwait Dive Team. The Whaly Boats help in lifting waste and neglected materials, not to mention assist in the protection and rehabilitation mission of Kuwait's

aquatic world and the safety of the marine environment.

KFH is keen on supporting programs that serve the community and spread awareness among people in efforts to keep the environment safe, healthy and clean. The bank organized many events for children in collaboration with schools and the Ministry of Education to raise their awareness of the importance of the environment. KFH attaches great importance to the environmental issues in Kuwait, and calls for boosting the synergy among all respective authorities to keep Kuwait clean and pollution free.



**KUWAIT:** Fireman Fahad Al-Furaih returned home recently from Germany where he spent six months for treatment. Furaih had suffered an amputated leg while on duty. He was received by Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) officials including Director General Lieutenant General Khalid Al-Mikrad, Deputy Director General for Fighting Affairs Major General Jamal Al-Blaihees, Deputy Director for Prevention Affairs Brigadier Khalid Al-Fahad and Sheikh Duaij Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah.



Supported by  
**Australian Embassy**  
in Kuwait

In cooperation with

**Kuwait Times**



# Colours of Australia

**STUDENT ART COMPETITION**

12 December 2016 to 26 January 2017

HELLO ARTISTS

Welcome to the student art competition. We hope you are ready to produce a beautiful painting and win valuable prizes. The theme for your painting is



Australia is a land of many colours, in the diversity of its landscape, animals, food and people. Show us what you think of when you imagine Australia!

**Good Luck To You..**

Sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_



- Competition is open to students from (6 - 9 years) (10 - 13 years) (14 years and above) and students with special needs.
- The competition is open to all schools in Kuwait (Government and Private)
- 10 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
- All participants will receive a certificate of appreciation.
- All schools participating in the competition will receive a certificate of appreciation.
- Any schools or individuals interested in participating are welcome to visit the office of Kuwait Times and collect the drawing sheet.
- Drawing sheets will be given to schools FREE of charge.
- Only drawing sheets provided by the Kuwait Times will be permitted for use in the competition.
- You may use any drawing material such as colour pencils, paint or crayons.

**Participation Form**

If you are interested in participating fill in the form and send it to Kuwait Times.

From: \_\_\_\_\_

We would like to confirm our participation in the above mentioned activity with the total number of participating students so the required number of drawing sheets can be delivered to our school.

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

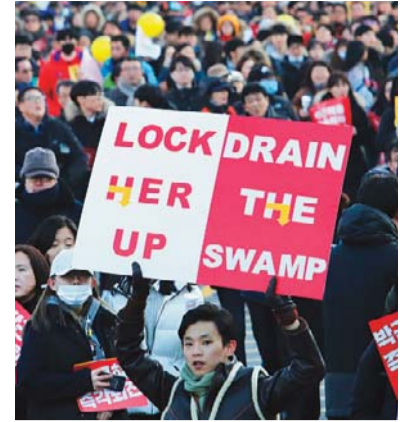
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of interested students are

6- 9 years  10 - 13 years  14 years and above  special needs

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information contact Kuwait Times  
Tel: 24835616/7 Fax 24835620/1 or send an email to: ads@kuwaittimes.net



**S Korea prosecutors charge two senior ex-Park officials**

**GENTILONI NAMED AS ITALY'S NEW PRIME MINISTER**



**DOUMA: A Syrian youth cleans a room at a makeshift hospital following a reported government airstrike on the rebel-held town of Douma. —AFP**

**SYRIA ARMY ADVANCES IN ALEPPO**

**IS RECAPTURES PALMYRA AFTER ARMY WITHDRAWS FORCES**

**ALEPPO:** Syria's army pushed forward in Aleppo yesterday as thousands fled rebel-held areas but its forces lost ground to the south where the Islamic State group recaptured the ancient city of Palmyra. After a sudden withdrawal by regime forces, IS jihadists made a lightning-fast advance across Palmyra, sparking new worries for its remaining ancient treasures. Forces loyal to President Bashar Al-Assad have been focused since mid-November on second city Aleppo, where they have retaken about 85 percent of the one-time rebel bastion in the city's east.

Yesterday, they pounded the shrinking rebel enclave in Aleppo's southeast with artillery and air strikes, seizing a large part of the Maadi district, a monitor said. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said more than 10,000 people had fled the remaining rebel-held districts since midnight, heading to government-run west Aleppo and newly retaken

areas in the city's north and centre. An estimated 120,000 people have poured out of east Aleppo since late November, according to the Britain-based monitor. State news agency SANA said at least 4,000 people had fled rebel districts in just hours yesterday and were taken by bus to temporary shelters. Heavy bombardment on the east could be heard through the night, rattling windows across the city in the west, an AFP correspondent said.

**Army withdraws from Palmyra**

US and Russian officials were expected to continue talks in Geneva yesterday on trying to reach a ceasefire in Aleppo, but a week of intense diplomatic efforts have failed to stem the fighting. Backing from Moscow, which launched an air war in support of Assad last year, has been crucial in the Syrian army's ability to make gains across the country.

Russian raids overnight bolstered Syrian

soldiers fighting off an IS offensive on Palmyra, the renowned UNESCO World Heritage site in central Syria. But the jihadists launched a fresh attack yesterday, the Observatory said, recapturing all of Palmyra after Syrian armed forces pulled out.

"Despite the ongoing air raids, IS retook all of Palmyra after the Syrian army withdrew south of the city," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman. The IS-linked Amaq news agency also reported that IS regained "full control" of the city yesterday after taking the citadel, which overlooks Palmyra from a strategic hilltop.

Capturing Palmyra from IS in May was considered a major symbolic victory for Assad's forces and for its Russian ally. Russia has come under severe criticism in the West for its continued political and military support for Damascus as the regime pursues its all-out assault on east Aleppo. Moscow says it is consulting with

Washington on the terms of a ceasefire in the city after a full rebel withdrawal, but there has been no sign of an agreement so far.

**'Yes to peace'**

Pope Francis yesterday made a heartfelt call for an end to violence in Aleppo and across war-ravaged Syria. "I appeal to all to choose civilization: no to destruction, yes to peace, yes to the people of Aleppo and Syria," he said. At least 413 civilians have been killed in east Aleppo since the November 15 start of the offensive, according to the Observatory, and 139 killed in rebel rocket fire on the city's west.

With such heavy fighting, the retaking of Aleppo by Assad's forces appears to only be a matter of time. "It looks now as if sadly Aleppo will fall," British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon told BBC television yesterday. The loss of east Aleppo will deal the biggest blow to

Syria's opposition since the start of the country's civil war in 2011. "We're now past the point where the opposition has any hope of pulling things back," said Yezid Sayigh, a senior associate at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut. Assad "will have in effect broken the back of the armed opposition... and the idea that the regime can be overcome militarily will be finally put to rest." After meetings in Paris on Saturday, Western and Arab powers called for talks between the regime and opposition to end the war.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, who called the regime's bombings of Aleppo "war crimes," said the time was ripe for a return to negotiations. Now that the rebels "are about to lose Aleppo, conceivably... I think the best thing they can do is get to the table and negotiate. Because they can still win a political settlement that honors the fight and all they've invested," Kerry said. —AFP

**BRITISH FM'S 'PROXY WARS' COMMENT MISREAD: SAUDI**

**RIYADH:** The press took out of context comments by Britain's foreign secretary about "proxy wars" waged by longtime ally Saudi Arabia, the Saudi foreign minister said yesterday, deeming the matter closed. In a video reported last week, Boris Johnson at a conference in Rome accused Saudi Arabia and its regional rival Iran of "puppeteering" and "playing proxy wars".

A video of his comments was posted on the Guardian website. "I have no doubt that his comments as reported in the press were misconstrued," Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir told reporters at a joint news conference with Johnson in Riyadh. "If you look at the actual video of what was said, it was not as implied in the press," Jubeir said.

The British minister was on an official visit to the kingdom, during which he met King Salman. The Guardian report came on Thursday, a day after British Prime Minister Theresa May attended a summit with the leaders of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states in Bahrain. Downing Street had to pull Johnson back into line, saying the com-

ments reflected his "personal position".

"There are no mixed messages that we are getting from Britain," Jubeir said, noting that Saudi-British ties go back more than a century. "We don't have any doubt in where Britain stands, and Britain has no doubt in where we stand," he said as Johnson sounded agreement. "I believe that the matter is closed," the Saudi minister said. Johnson thanked Jubeir for his comments. A former mayor of London less than six months into his ministerial job, Johnson is a colorful and captivating speaker who has made a series of diplomatic blunders.

**'Positive things'**

Asked at the press conference if he would apologize, Johnson said he was "here to emphasize the friendship" between the two countries. But he added: "We believe in a candor in our relationship," emphasizing the word "candor." "And now, if you don't mind, is the time for us to talk about the positive things that we're doing together," Johnson continued. May and the Gulf leaders agreed at their

Bahrain summit to form a "strategic partnership" to foster defense and other ties. Sunni-majority Saudi Arabia and Shiite-dominated Iran support opposite sides of the war in Syria and also in Yemen, where Riyadh has since March last year led a coalition bombing campaign against Iran-backed Houthis rebels. On Saturday, Tehran summoned the British ambassador to protest against "interference" by May, over comments she made at the GCC summit. She said her country would help "push back against Iran's aggressive regional actions". In a joint statement, GCC states and Britain said that they "oppose and will work together to counter Iran's destabilizing activities".

Iran and Britain reopened their respective embassies in 2015 following an international agreement to curb Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. Johnson yesterday echoed May's comments supporting the agreement with Iran, while also cautioning that the world needs to be "clear-eyed" and vigilant about Iran's role in the region. —AFP



**RIYADH: Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir (R) and British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Boris Johnson (L) arrive for a joint press conference. —AFP**



# TRUMP EYES ACCOMPLISHED EXECUTIVE FOR STATE

**WASHINGTON:** President-elect Donald Trump has found an accomplished American executive in Rex Tillerson, but one whose longstanding support for free trade, international law and an expansive US presence in the Middle East largely doesn't fit with what Trump has pitched to supporters.

A native of Wichita Falls, Texas, Tillerson came to Exxon Mobile Corp as a production engineer straight out of the University of Texas at Austin in 1975 and never left. Groomed for an executive position, Tillerson came up in the rough-and-tumble world of oil production, holding posts in the company's central United States, Yemen and Russian operations.

His nomination as the country's top diplomat would be the nascent Trump administration's most concrete outreach yet to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Success in Russia required aligning the company's interests with those of the Russian government, mettle and good relations with Putin. Exxon steadily expanded its Russian business even as its rivals faced expropriation and regulatory

obstacles, and in 2013 Putin bestowed the Order of Friendship on Tillerson.

In 2006, Tillerson won the battle to succeed former Exxon CEO Lee Raymond. Under the Texan's leadership, oil prices broke records and Exxon's profits helped make it the most valuable public company in the world, with a security force totaling thousands of employees, direct channels with governments worldwide and a strong aversion to American sanctions or limitations on where it could operate.

Tillerson has used Exxon's enormous profits to explore new regions for oil and gas and to invest in new acquisitions like XTO Resources, a company that had helped pioneer drilling for natural gas in formations of shale in the United States. But over the years oil has become more difficult and expensive to find as large, easy-to-tap reservoirs in stable countries were slowly depleted. Exxon and other giant oil corporations found it ever more difficult to replace the oil they sold every day with new resources, and they were forced to look in every

more difficult and hostile regions for oil and gas.

## Hands-off approach

"Energy made in America is not as important as energy simply made wherever it is most economic," he said in 2007 in a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations. "We are free-market, free-trade advocates," he said in another speech to the group five years later, declaring that the greatest boon for American energy security would be support for oil production and trading worldwide.

While Tillerson advocates for a hands-off approach to markets, he's backed continued American engagement in the Middle East. After the Iraq war, Exxon agreed to develop a large project in still-unstable southern Iraq at terms that less favorable to Exxon than most deals. In 2011, Tillerson announced an expansive relationship with Russia's Rosneft that will spend years and billions of dollars developing technology to explore and produce oil and gas in icy waters in the Russian Arctic.

While the revolutionary gains from shale fracking have poised the US to supply far more of its own energy, Tillerson has said it would be a mistake to step back. "The question you have to ask is, 'Well then, who steps into that void?'" he said, suggesting it would be a "large consuming country" such as China.

While his predecessor was a firm skeptic about the link between fossil fuel combustion and climate change, Tillerson has softened the company's position on the issue, even if he's unconvinced by the most dire predictions of the consequences. At an industry conference in 2007, Tillerson acknowledged Earth's climate is changing, the average temperature is rising and greenhouse gas emissions are increasing. He also noted that climate remains a complex area of scientific study.

Exxon remains under fire for its past efforts to undercut climate change - even as recently exposed internal documents show the company's own scientists recognized climate change's legitimacy as early as the 1970s. — AP



**BATON ROUGE:** President-elect Donald Trump speaks at a "Get Out The Vote" rally to stump for Republican senate candidate, Louisiana Treasurer John Kennedy, and other congressional candidates. — AP

## REPUBLICANS REJECT REPORTS THAT RUSSIA HELPED TRUMP WIN

**WASHINGTON:** Republicans on Saturday rejected reports of a secret CIA assessment finding that Russia sought to tip the US presidential election in Donald Trump's favor, as a Democratic Senate leader called for an investigation. "The intelligence is wrong," Republican National Committee spokesman Sean Spicer told CNN. "It didn't happen."

He was referring to a New York Times report saying US intelligence agencies had "high confidence" that Russian hackers infiltrated the Republican National Committee's computer systems as well as those of Democratic Party organizations, but released information stolen only from the Democrats. News about the CIA report, first reported by The Washington Post on Friday, 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.

Trump said the election was over and that it's "now time to move on and 'Make America Great Again.'" However Senator Chuck Schumer, set to become Democratic minority leader in January, called for a congressional probe into the matter. "That any country could be meddling in our elections should shake both political parties to their core," he said Saturday. "It's imperative that our intelligence community turns over any relevant information so that Congress can conduct a full investigation."

The debate simmered as US media reported that ExxonMobil President and CEO Rex Tillerson—a businessman with ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin—is Trump's likely pick for secretary of state. Democratic Senator Bob Menendez, a senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee, slammed the idea of Tillerson as top diplomat as "alarming and absurd." "With Rex Tillerson as our Secretary of State, the Trump administration would be guaranteeing Russia has a willing accomplice in the president's cabinet guiding our nation's foreign policy," he said in a statement. And Republican Senator John McCain said on CNN Saturday that Tillerson's ties to Putin were "a matter of concern to me." "I'd have to examine it," he said, adding: "Vladimir Putin is a thug, bully and a murderer, and anybody else who describes him as anything else is lying."

### 'Help Trump get elected'

The reports of Russian interference in the White House vote follow President Barack Obama's order for a review of all cyberattacks that took place during the 2016 election cycle. According to The Post, individuals with connections to Moscow provided anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks with emails hacked from the Democratic National Committee, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton's campaign chief, and others. WikiLeaks steadily released those emails in the months before the election, damaging Clinton's White House run. "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," a US official briefed on an intelligence presentation to key senators told the newspaper. "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. Russian hackers did not limit their hits to the Democrats, The New York Times reported. "We now have high confidence that they hacked the D.N.C. and the R.N.C., and conspicuously released no documents" from the Republican organization, one senior administration official told The Times.

### Question marks

The CIA's assessment falls short of a formal US assessment produced by all 17 intelligence agencies, The Post said. Intelligence agents cannot prove that Russian officials directed the identified individuals to give WikiLeaks the hacked Democratic emails. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has denied links with Russia's government. California Republican Congressman Devin Nunes, chair of the House Intelligence Committee and a member of the Trump transition team, said he "does not believe the evidence shows that the Russians interfered in the elections in order to help Trump," a spokesman told AFP. However Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the same committee, said "the integrity of our elections is hindered" when Trump and his transition team "minimize or dismiss the intelligence assessments." — AFP

# FEARING TRUMP POLICIES, FOREIGN DREAMERS ADVISED TO END TRAVEL

'WE WOULDN'T WANT TO EXPOSE THEM TO AN UNCERTAIN SITUATION'

**NEW YORK:** Immigrants who were brought to the US illegally as children, but were protected from deportation by President Barack Obama, are being warned by some advocates to make sure they are not traveling abroad when Donald Trump is sworn in as president on Jan 20. Some advocates, lawyers and universities are concerned that Trump might immediately rescind an Obama program that had allowed these young immigrants to work and travel for humanitarian, educational or employment purposes. That could lead, they fear, to some people traveling abroad being barred from re-entering the US.

"We are recommending all travel be completed by or before Jan 20 in the event laws or procedures experience a drastic change," said Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles. "We wouldn't want to expose them to an uncertain situation should they not be allowed back to the US."

Trump made illegal immigration the cornerstone of his campaign, promising to build a wall along the Mexican border and deport millions of people living in the country illegally. His actual plans, though, have yet to be revealed. Recently, he has said he wants to focus on people who have committed crimes. During a recent Time magazine interview, Trump expressed sympathy for the 741,000 people in Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which started in 2012.

"We're going to work something out that's going to make people happy and proud," Trump said. "They got brought here at a very young age, they've worked here, they've gone to school here. Some were good students. Some have wonderful jobs. And they're in never-never land because they don't know what's going to happen." Advocates are still being cautious.

### 'It's nerve-racking'

Nancy Lopez-Ramirez, a 20-year-old student born in Mexico who is planning a trip there as part of a City College of New York class, said she is glad the group is returning by Jan 15. "My mom is like 'I am concerned with you not coming back, I want you to be able to come back,'" she said. "It is nerve-racking but I think that at the end it is going to be worth it," said the political-science student, who was brought to the US when she was 4.

City College, part of the City University of New York, is one of the institutions advising students in the DACA program to return before Inauguration Day. So is California State University, which told administrators to tell partici-

pants in the program "that if they are outside of the United States as of January 20, 2017, there is no assurance they will be allowed to return to the US." Trump can rescind the promised protection right away through an "operational memo" because Obama implemented it through one, said William Stock, president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. He said the program's participants should not consider traveling overseas unless they absolutely need to.

US Customs and Border Protection spokesman Anthony Bucci said his agency "cannot speculate" when he was asked how long would it take for CBP officers to deny entry

to the U.S. to program participants if Trump eliminated the protection. US Citizenship and Immigration Services records said that as of Dec. 31, 2015, about 22,340 people in the DACA program were approved for the "parole" that allows them to travel outside the US. Trump called the program an "illegal amnesty" during his campaign. Tatyana Kleyn, an associate professor at City College who organized the upcoming Mexico trip, said interest in it actually surged among students after the presidential election. "So right now our bus fits 18 and we are bringing 20," she said. "It feels like a last chance." — AP



**SAN FRANCISCO:** In this Thursday, Nov 10, 2016, file photo, high school students protest in opposition of Donald Trump's presidential election victory. — AP

# REPUBLICANS SWEEP LOUISIANA RUNOFFS, 2016 ELECTIONS END



**BATON ROUGE:** Louisiana state treasurer John Kennedy hugs his wife Becky after addressing supporters at his election watch party, after being elected to the senate seat vacated by Sen. David Vitter, R-La. — AP

## ALGERIAN JAILED OVER FACEBOOK POEM DIES

**ALGIERS:** A British-Algerian journalist died yesterday three months into a hunger strike to protest a two-year jail term for offending Algeria's president in a poem posted online, his lawyer said. "I can confirm the death of the journalist Mohamed Tamalt in Bab el-Oued hospital after a hunger strike of more than three months and a three-month coma," Amine Sidhoum said on Facebook.

The prison service, in a statement said Tamalt had died of a lung infection for which he was receiving treatment since it was detected on December 4. Tamalt, a dual national, launched the hunger strike in protest after his arrest near his parents' house in the capital Algiers on June 27.

The 42-year-old blogger and freelance journalist who ran a website from London where he lived was charged with "offending" President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and "defaming a public authority" in the poem which he shared on Facebook. A court in Algiers sentenced him two years in prison on July 11 and fined him 200,000 dinars (\$1,800), and an appeals court upheld the ruling a month later.

Human Rights Watch had urged Algerian authorities to release him in August when he was reportedly in critical condition. "The Algerian authorities should quash the case against Tamalt and send the message that free speech will be respected in Algeria," it said at the time. — AFP

**BATON ROUGE:** The 2016 campaign season has finally ended, with Louisiana's runoff election cementing Republican control of the US Senate. The GOP also is holding onto the two U.S. House seats that were undecided going into the state's runoff election. Republican state Treasurer John Kennedy's victory Saturday gives the GOP a 52-48 edge in the Senate starting in January. His runoff campaign focused on his support for President-elect Donald Trump and opposition to the Affordable Care Act.

Voters also chose Republican Clay Higgins, a former sheriff's captain known as the "Cajun John Wayne," in the 3rd District representing southwest and south central Louisiana. Republican state Rep. Mike Johnson won the 4th District, covering northwest Louisiana. Kennedy entered as the front-runner and never relinquished the position, even when the field swelled to two dozen contenders in November. In the runoff, he defeated Democrat Foster Campbell, a state utility regulator who was such a long-shot that national Democratic organizations gave him little help.

It was Kennedy's third U.S. Senate run since 2004 and this time he won in a landslide, taking 61 percent to Campbell's 39 percent in the low-turnout election. "With 52 seats in the U.S. Senate, we are excited for Republicans to confirm a conservative Supreme Court justice and begin working with President-elect Trump to pass an agenda of change for the American people," a statement from Republican National Committee co-chair Sharon Day said. Kennedy declared that he represents change in Washington.

"I believe that our future can be better than our present, but not if we keep going in the direction the Washington insiders have taken us the last eight years," he said. "That's about to change, folks." Louisiana's open primary system pits all candidates against each other and sends the top two vote-getters into a runoff when no one gets more than 50 percent.

### No stone unturned

Trump and Vice President-elect Mike Pence both traveled to Louisiana to rally for Kennedy, and despite Campbell's slim chances, he did get donations from around the country, aimed at bolstering resistance to the Trump presidency. "We worked as hard as possible. We left no stone unturned," Campbell said in his concession speech. "I make no excuses. We did everything humanly possible."

The results keep Louisiana with one Democratic representative among its six congressmen and two senators. The Senate seat was open because Republican David Vitter decided against running for a third term after losing the governor's race last year. Both Kennedy and Campbell have been involved in Louisiana politics for decades.

Kennedy, an Oxford-educated lawyer from south Louisiana, is in his fifth term as treasurer, and has repeatedly been in the headlines while clashing with Louisiana's governors over state finances. He sprinkled campaign speeches with examples of government-financed contracts he considered outrageous, like money "to study the effects of Swedish massage on bunny rabbits."

Campbell, a cattle farmer and populist former state senator from north Louisiana who rallied against "Big Oil," talked openly about man-made climate change and argued for increasing the minimum wage. Though a Democrat, he opposed abortion and ran as supportive of gun rights. Two House seats were open because Republicans Charles Boustany and John Fleming unsuccessfully sought the Senate seat instead of re-election.

The 3rd District race's presumed front-runner had been Scott Angelle, a Republican member of the Public Service Commission and well-known public official for nearly 30 years. But Higgins - who made attention-grabbing Crime Stoppers videos as a sheriff's captain - capitalized on disenchantment with career politicians to trounce Angelle with only a fraction of his money and a bare-bones organization. — AP





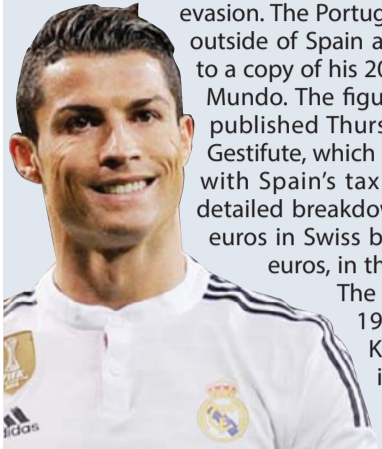






## RONALDO DECLARED 20M EUROS IN SWISS BANKS

**MADRID:** Cristiano Ronaldo declared income of over 225 million euros in 2015, including 20 million euros held in 22 Swiss bank accounts, a Spanish newspaper reported yesterday as the Real Madrid star battles accusations of tax evasion. The Portuguese international earned 203.7 million euros outside of Spain and 23.5 million inside the country, according to a copy of his 2015 tax return obtained by daily newspaper El Mundo. The figures match the details of the player's income published Thursday by the player's management company Gestifute, which argued they show Ronaldo was in compliance with Spain's tax authority. But El Mundo provided a more detailed breakdown of his finances. It said he had 20 million euros in Swiss banks—the vast majority, more than 17 million euros, in three accounts at Swiss private bank Mirabaud. The rest of his money in the country was held in 19 accounts in regional Swiss bank St. Galler Kantonalbank. The player had just 33,452 euros in five bank accounts in his native Portugal, the newspaper added. —AFP



## TOKYO STARTS CONSTRUCTION OF MAIN OLYMPIC STADIUM

**TOKYO:** Construction of the main stadium for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics officially started yesterday, more than a year after the original blueprints were torn up following public outcry over skyrocketing costs. The stadium is due to be completed by the end of November 2019, five months behind schedule. "I believe, after four years, many athletes will challenge their physical limits at this stadium and empower spectators and the society," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said at a ceremony to mark the start of building work. Japan approved the new stadium plans in September after Abe scrapped the initial design by the late Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid as costs soared beyond \$2 billion. The 149 billion yen (\$1.29 billion) price tag for architect Kengo Kuma's proposal comes in just under the cap for the contractors, led by construction giant Taisei Corp. The new venue is being built on the site of the former national stadium which was used for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Concerns that ballooning costs could hit a staggering \$30 billion—four times the initial estimate and almost triple that of the 2012 London Olympics — have forced organisers to rethink plans for several venues. — AFP

## UK'S YAFAI WINS WBA SUPER-FLYWEIGHT TITLE

**MANCHESTER:** Khalid Yafai became Britain's 13th reigning world champion by winning the WBA super-flyweight title on Saturday, beating Luis Concepcion of Panama by a unanimous points decision. The judges called the fight 120-108, 119-108 and 117-110 in favor of Yafai, who knocked down Concepcion in the 10th round and made the cleaner punches overall. Concepcion arrived in Britain as the champion, but was stripped of the title after failing to make weight and wasn't fighting to regain it. It was one of two world title fights on a packed card at Manchester Arena, with the heavyweight contest between IBF champion Anthony Joshua and Eric Molina the other. In another heavyweight fight, Dillian Whyte beat fellow Briton Dereck Chisora on a split decision following an evenly matched slugfest that acted as an eliminator for the WBC title, currently held by Deontay Wilder. Both fighters were out on their feet by the end, though neither was knocked down despite some huge shots. — AP



## HOLLOWAY TAKES INTERIM FEATHERWEIGHT TITLE

**TORONTO:** Max Holloway scored a knockout over Anthony Pettis 4:50 into the third round for the interim featherweight championship in the co-main event at UFC 206 on Saturday night. It was the first time a UFC belt was on the line for just one fighter. It became an interim featherweight title bout for Holloway when Pettis failed to make weight on Friday, coming in 3 pounds over the 145-pound limit. Pettis was fined 20 percent of his purse as a result. During his post-fight interview in the octagon, Pettis said he broke his right hand with his first punch in the first round. Earlier, Cub Swanson won a unanimous decision over Dooho Choi (30-27, 29-28, 30-27) in an entertaining featherweight bout. Emil Meek got the main card started by defeating Lethbridge, Alberta, native Jordan Mein by unanimous decision (29-28) in his UFC debut. Toronto's Misha Cirkunov forced Nikita Krylov to tap out at 4:38 of the first round with a guillotine choke. Cirkunov improved to 4-0 in UFC and moved into the top 10 at the light heavyweight level. "I definitely belong in the top 10," Cirkunov said. "I'm on an eight-fight win streak since I dropped my coach. I'd like to fight Mauricio Shogun Rua. If I fight a big name like that, more than just Toronto will

see my potential. The whole world will see my potential." Olivier "The Quebec Kid" Aubin-Mercier was the first Canadian to emerge victorious, defeating Drew Dober in a lightweight bout. The Montreal native forced Dober into submission with rear-naked choke, causing the referee to stop the fight at 2:57 of the second round. "I'm still at the point where I can improve," Aubin-Mercier said. "(Dober) was a really tough opponent, my toughest opponent so far, so I got a little emotional after the win." In her UFC debut, Viviane Pereira beat Valerie "Trouble" Letourneau of Montreal by split decision (29-28, 28-29, 29-28) in the lone women's strawweight bout on the card. Letourneau, who fell to 3-3 in UFC, was initially supposed to fight Poliana Botelho, but Botelho was dropped from the card in October. Rustam Khabilov beat Bolton, Ontario, native Jason Saggo by unanimous decision, 30-27, in the first of two lightweight bouts on the evening. John "The Bull" Makedessi didn't fare much better in the second lightweight bout. Makedessi, of Montreal, was knocked out by a spinning heel kick to the chin from Lando Vannata. In a bantamweight bout, Mitch Gagnon of Sudbury, Ontario, fell to Matthew Lopez in a unanimous decision (29-28, 29-28, 29-27). — AP



MANCHESTER: Britain's IBF Heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua, left, fights American Eric Molina in Manchester, England, Saturday. — AP

## AN ODD, SHORTENED WORLD CUP LUGE STOP WINDS DOWN IN CANADA

**WHISTLER:** Those competing in World Cup luge races Saturday night got only one run instead of the customary two, because delays in getting the sleds to the track forced some schedule changes. Tucker West of the US apparently didn't mind. West won the men's World Cup race for the second straight weekend, finishing in 50.109 seconds for his third career victory on the circuit. Wolfgang Kindl of Austria was second in 50.153 seconds, and Andi Langenhan of Germany was third in 50.243 seconds. "He is on top of the world," USA Luge women's racer Summer Britcher said of West, as he draped himself in an American flag on the podium after the race. "You can see it." West's win capped a strange World Cup week in Whistler, where most athletes waited around all week and were unable to train while their sleds were stuck in transit because of a snowstorm. "This was a crazy week," West said. West didn't get on the Whistler ice for practice until Saturday. John Fennell didn't even get that. Fennell, like all other athletes who rely on Nations Cup qualifying races to get a chance at being in the World Cup field, couldn't get on the track at the Whistler Sliding Center this week. Shipping problems meant most competitors planning to race in Whistler didn't have their sleds until Friday night, leading to a very condensed World Cup schedule - with all training and races being squeezed into Saturday.

and teammate Fennell was maybe the biggest casualty. Fennell used to race for Canada, knows the Whistler track well and this weekend was a legitimate chance for him to collect some critical World Cup points that could have gotten his first year with the Americans rolling. Instead, he got nothing. No points, and now probably no chance of qualifying for the world championships later this season. "I'm feeling angry, frustrated, upset," Fennell said. "I don't think it's the right decision. Zero World Cup points is huge for me." Fennell had his sled with him in Whistler all week, while many sliders didn't get theirs until Friday night - a truck involved in the shipping of sleds from last weekend's World Cup in Lake Placid, New York got stuck in a snowstorm and it took several days to get the sleds rerouted and on the move again. But since so many sliders did not have equipment, Fennell and others who had their sleds were told to keep them off the ice. "This was my best chance to do well this season and show coaches and the organization what I'm capable of, and it was a waste of time, effort and money," Fennell said. "I'm walking away empty-handed." Canada's Alex Gough walked away in a very different mood. Gough won the women's race Saturday night on her home track, finishing the single-heat competition in 38.796 seconds. Germans took second and third, with Natalie Geisenberger finishing in 38.848 and Tatjana Huefner in 38.850. For the US, Emily Sweeney was fourth, Erin Hamlin sixth and Britcher took seventh. "This was a very interesting week," Sweeney said. In doubles, Toni Eggert and Sascha Benecken of Germany prevailed in 38.542 seconds. Fellow Germans Tobias Wendl and Tobias Artl were second in 38.570, and Peter Penz and Georg Fischler of Austria were third in 38.642. — AP



WHISTLER: Natalie Geisenberger of Germany races down the track during a women's World Cup Luge event, Saturday in Whistler, British Columbia. — AP

## JOSHUA RETAINS IBF TITLE, SETS UP BOUT WITH KLITSCHKO

**MANCHESTER:** Anthony Joshua had just out-classed Eric Molina to retain the IBF world heavyweight title when the undefeated British boxer was finally given a proper fight. Wladimir Klitschko strode into the ring at Manchester Arena, shook hands with Joshua, and the announcement many boxing fans wanted was made. Joshua vs. Klitschko, Wembley Stadium in London, April 29. Maybe then, the boxing world will get to find out how good Joshua really is. Molina certainly wasn't in his league in Saturday's fight, with the American knocked down by a straight right from Joshua midway through third round before the referee stepped in to end the fight. There was just under a minute left in the round. Joshua was the aggressor throughout and it was always a matter of when he would unload on Molina to collect his 18th straight win since turning professional after winning an Olympic gold medal at the London Games in 2012. "I was slow and patient and that's all I needed to do," Joshua said. The WBA had already sanctioned a fight between Joshua and Klitschko for the spring, but it was left to Joshua's manager, Eddie Hearn, to announce the date and location from the center of the ring. Molina was still getting treated by his corner. "Do you want to see a big fight?" Klitschko asked the crowd. "Do you want to see a fight where two Olympic champions are involved? Do you want to see a fight AJ vs. WK? You got it." In a sign of the respect between the two fighters, who have been sparring partners in the past, Klitschko turned to Joshua and said: "I love you, you are awesome." After nearly a decade of ruling the heavyweight division, Klitschko lost his IBF, WBO and WBA belts with a surprise defeat to Tyson Fury in November 2015. The Ukrainian boxer hasn't fought since, with a rematch against Fury postponed twice. When Klitschko gets in the ring with Joshua, it will end an 18-month wait to get a chance to restore his reputation. "This guy wants his belt back," Joshua said, pointing to Klitschko. "Let the best man win." The 34-year-old Molina has lost both his shots at a world title, having also been knocked out by WBC champion Deontay Wilder last year. He fought defensively and never threatened Joshua, whose left jab rocked back the American in the first round. Joshua dominated the second round without finding the big shot, but it wasn't long in coming. A straight right from Joshua sent Molina to the canvas near his corner. Molina got to his feet but was being hit by a flurry of punches when the referee called a stop in another climactic finish to a Joshua fight. Joshua hasn't been taken beyond seven rounds in a professional bout. "We move on," said Joshua, who defended his IBF belt for the second time. "This is not the end of the story." — AP

## CRAWFORD CRUISES TO WIN OVER MOLINA IN EIGHTH

**OMAHA:** Champion Terence Crawford easily defended his WBO and WBC belts by stopping brawler John Molina Jr. in the eighth round of their junior welterweight title fight on Saturday. Crawford dominated the fight from the opening bell landing precision head shots and bruising body blows through the first seven rounds then taking out the challenger with a series of rights late in the eighth round. "I showed everything in this fight," said Crawford, who improved to 30-0. "Give credit to John Molina because he came to fight." The 29-year-old Crawford was rarely tested in his third fight of 2016 in front of his hometown fans as he landed 109 punches through eight rounds compared to just 22 for Molina. The 2014 fighter of the year said he wants his next fight to be against Filipino champion Manny Pacquiao. "I would love to fight Pacquiao, but it is a business. Right now I want to fight anyone with a title. I want them belts." "If I can't get

Pacquiao, I want the belts." Molina showed determination and big heart but he was no match for the quick hands and smooth footwork of Crawford who was the heavy favourite coming into the fight at CenturyLink Center arena. Crawford pinned a defenceless Molina in the corner, then landed three straight right hands before the referee stepped in and stopped the slaughter as the challenger slumped to the canvas. Crawford started 2016 with an impressive fifth-round knockout of Henry Lundy in February and followed it up five months later with two knockdowns while cruising to a one-sided decision over Viktor Postol to unify the titles in Las Vegas. The 33-year-old Molina dropped to 29-7. He earned a shot at the titles by upsetting former champion Ruslan Provodnikov in June. But Molina did not come close to making the 140-pound weight for his title shot so he would have been denied the belts if he had done the impossible and won. —AFP



OMAHA: Terence 'Bud' Crawford is declared winner over John Molina Jr. after a WBO junior welterweight boxing bout at the CenturyLink Center in Omaha, Neb., Saturday. Crawford won by TKO in the eighth round. — AP











# Sports

Joshua retains  
IBF title, sets up  
bout with Klitschko



Costa gem sends  
Chelsea back to  
the top of EPL



MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016

PACIORETTY HAS FOUR GOALS AS CANADIENS CRUSH AVALANCHE Page 17



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic vies with Tottenham Hotspur's Belgian defender Jan Vertonghen (right) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur at Old Trafford yesterday. — AFP

## MKHITARYAN TAMES SPURS TO STOP ROT

Man United 1

Tottenham 0

MANCHESTER: Henrikh Mkhitaryan scored his first Premier League goal for Manchester United and was later stretchered off as Jose Mourinho's side claimed a timely 1-0 victory over Tottenham Hotspur yesterday. Mkhitaryan converted Ander Herrera's through ball just before the half hour to end a frustrating run of four successive home draws and give United just a second win in nine league matches. It was the Armenian playmaker's second goal in two games, after he opened his account for the club against Zorya Luhansk on Thursday.

He exited on a stretcher after turning his ankle in a late challenge by Danny Rose, but Mourinho said: "We don't think it's a serious injury. Maximum a couple of

weeks." Mourinho's team remain 13 points below leaders Chelsea, but closed to within three points of fifth-place Spurs and six of Manchester City, who occupy the fourth and final Champions League berth. United once again failed to convert their dominance into goals, but unlike in their recent 1-1 draws against Arsenal, West Ham United and Everton, they were not made to pay.

"After so many matches playing well but not winning, we needed more the points than the performance," Mourinho said. "But I knew against Tottenham it's difficult to get a result without playing well. But we played very well." Initially kept on the sidelines by Mourinho following his arrival from Borussia Dortmund, Mkhitaryan has become something of a lucky charm for the Portuguese, who will be relieved the injury is not grave.

Defeat curbed Spurs' recent revival, which had seen them beat Swansea City 5-0 and secure a Europa League place with a 3-1 win over CSKA Moscow. Mauricio Pochettino's side remain without an away league win since Sept 24. "It was a disappointing result, but if we analyse the game I think it was a very competi-

tive game and we need to take positive things from that," Pochettino said.

### Pogba smacks bar

Tottenham centre-back Toby Alderweireld made his first start in eight weeks after a knee injury and he and his defensive colleagues quickly found themselves under examination. It took United less than two minutes to carve Spurs open, Zlatan Ibrahimovic teeing up Paul Pogba for a left-foot shot that was parried by his France team-mate Hugo Lloris. Mkhitaryan saw an effort blocked by Jan Vertonghen, Herrera gave Lloris some catching practice with a dipping volley and Michael Carrick whistled a shot over from range.

United goalkeeper David de Gea had to deal with a zippy free-kick from Christian Eriksen, but the hosts looked the more likely scorers and duly went ahead in the 29th minute. Harry Kane played the ball straight to Herrera, whose inviting pass between the Spurs centre-backs freed Mkhitaryan to run through and smash a rising shot past Lloris. The Spurs goalkeeper was called

into action again shortly after, dropping to his right and saving from Ibrahimovic.

At the other end, Son Heung-Min cut in from the right and let fly with a left-foot effort that de Gea had to tip over, but the spring was in United's step as the teams went off at half-time. Their failure to take their chances left them vulnerable to the threat of a counter-punch, however, and there were nervous moments early in the second half as Tottenham went on the attack. De Gea boxed away a shot from Eriksen before Victor Wanyama gave the hosts a big let-off, completely mis-cuing his header after Eriksen's free-kick found him unmarked six yards from goal.

Seeking to soothe the home fans' frayed nerves, Pogba took it upon himself to try to extend United's lead. The France midfielder left the Spurs crossbar shuddering with an arcing 25-yard free-kick and then stung Lloris's palms with a crisp shot following a one-two with Herrera. De Gea had to claw away another Eriksen free-kick, but despite Mkhitaryan's premature 84th-minute exit, United saw the game out. — AFP

## WEST HAM GOALKEEPER GIFTS LIVERPOOL POINT

Liverpool 2

West Ham 2

LIVERPOOL: Divock Origi scored for the fourth consecutive match to save a point for frail Liverpool as they were frustrated in their attempts to stay in touch with Premier League leaders Chelsea yesterday. Jurgen Klopp's side took an early lead through Adam Lallana's stylish finish, but weaknesses at the back allowed Dimitri Payet's free-kick and a neat finish by Michail Antonio to give West Ham a surprise half-time lead at Anfield. Loris Karius, the Liverpool goalkeeper, was arguably at fault for Payet's goal, but then saw Hammers counterpart Darren Randolph make a mistake for Origi's equalizer by failing to hold Sadio Mane's cross.

The 2-2 draw did at least lift West Ham out of the relegation zone, although it extended their run without a Premier League victory to six matches. It looked like being a gloomy day for Slaven Bilic's side when they conceded a well-worked goal in the first five minutes, as Mane crossed from the left and Lallana took a touch to control before steering a shot past Randolph. Yet even in the early stages Liverpool's defensive frailties that marked last weekend's 4-3 defeat at

Bournemouth were apparent once again.

Antonio found space too easily as he sprinted between center-backs Dejan Lovren and Joel Matip to collect Winston Reid's long ball over the top, but Karius turned aside the shot at his near post. Karius was then caught out as West Ham drew level in the 27th minute, getting a hand to Payet's free-kick as it was floated over the wall, but failing to stop it. That equalizer affected Liverpool's rhythm, despite half-chances for Jordan Henderson and Roberto Firmino soon afterwards, and they went behind six minutes before half time to another soft goal.

This time Havard Nordtveit's long diagonal pass out of defense flicked off Henderson to wrong-foot Matip, who was caught on his heels as Antonio ran into the space behind him to flick the ball beyond Karius - who was caught in noman's land - and in. Liverpool could have been level by the interval but Firmino glanced wide from Georginio Wijnaldum's cross and then Lallana had a penalty appeal rejected after tumbling with Payet's arm across his chest.

Referee Mark Clattenburg gave only a corner and from it Matip nodded Henderson's delivery on to the face of the crossbar. Klopp's team were though level within three minutes of the restart. Mane spun to cross from the left, Randolph lost his balance and the ball as he stretched to try to gather, and Origi turned it in via the post. Spirits restored, Liverpool almost regained the lead within moments, as Wijnaldum steered a shot just wide on the turn from the edge of the



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Sadio Mane and West Ham United's Angelo Ogbonna (back) jump for a high ball during their English Premier League football match at Anfield yesterday. — AP

penalty area.

Wijnaldum had another good chance just after the hour mark after being played into space down the left, but placed his effort beyond the far post. Henderson then bent a fine 25-yard shot towards the top corner midway through the second half, only for Randolph to deny him with magnificent flying save. Bilic brought on former Liverpool striker Andy Carroll with just under half-an-hour to play. The home side finished the stronger, though, with full-back Nathaniel Clyne blazing over after Lallana's clever back-heeled flick from Mane's low cross. — AFP

## BOUFAL BRINGS RELIEF TO SAINTS

Southampton 1

Middlesbrough 0

SOUTHAMPTON: A superb goal by record signing Sofiane Boufal secured Southampton a much-needed 1-0 win over Middlesbrough in their Premier League match yesterday. Moroccan international Boufal - bought from French Ligue 1 side Lille in August for a reported £16 million (\$20 million) - struck early in the second-half to give Saints just their second win in seven matches and provide some succor for exiting the Europa League last Thursday.

They move on to 20 points, eight clear of the relegation zone whilst Middlesbrough remain very much mired in a battle for survival as they are just three points clear of the bottom three. Boufal's goal made up for the absence of Charlie Austin, who has accounted for nearly half their goals this season but was ruled out with a shoulder injury. Certainly spectators would not have been expecting a goal feast in the two sides' first Premier League meeting since 2005 as they had each found the net only 13 times apiece before Sunday's match.

Boro were also missing two of their most impressive performers from last Monday's 1-0 win over fellow strugglers Hull, Gaston Ramirez and Alvaro Negredo,

both of whom are injured. Jordan Rhodes almost made light of their absence immediately ghosting in with not a Saints defender in sight and firing a shot on target only for Fraser Forster to save. The hosts worked their way into the game after early Boro dominance and Jay Rodriguez forced Victor Valdes into a smart save just after the quarter of an hour mark.

Middlesbrough were denied by some stoical Southampton defending 10 minutes before the break as Viktor Fischer rounded Forster but his shot was blocked on the line and the follow up by Uruguayan Christian Stuani was also stopped on the goal-line. Saints took advantage by taking the lead early in the second-half. Boufal, who was an injury doubt prior to the game, scoring with a superb left-footed effort from the edge of the area rounding off a move involving five players.

Middlesbrough were lacking in invention and ideas and it was the hosts who came closest to scoring again, veteran Northern Ireland midfielder Steven Davis being picked out by Cuco Martina, but his header went over the bar. Rodriguez went even closer with another header but Adam Clayton reacted brilliantly to clear it off the line. Rodriguez may have been unlucky there but he was guilty of a complete howler in time added on as Nathan Redmond did brilliantly to square the ball across the goal line but Rodriguez managed to somehow spoon it over from a yard out. — AFP



RSM INTERNATIONAL HOLDS 'ECONOMY WATCH FORUM'



TEHRAN: Farhad Parvaresh (left), Chairman and Managing Director of Iran Air, and Fletcher Barkdull, Boeing regional director, sign an agreement in the presence of Abbas Ahmad Akhouni (center), Minister of Roads and Urban Development, in the capital Tehran yesterday. —AFP

# IRAN INKS DEAL TO BUY 80 BOEING PLANES

## TEHRAN SEEKS TO REVAMP AGEING FLEET

TEHRAN: Iran Air finalized a contract to buy 80 planes from Boeing, the US aerospace firm confirmed yesterday, as it seeks to renew its ageing fleet despite sanctions.

Boeing said the contract-Iran's first deal with a US aviation firm since the 1979 Islamic revolution-was worth \$16.6 billion (15.7 billion euros). "Fifty of the planes are 737 and the other 30 are the long haul 777 that will be delivered to Iran Air in a period of 10 years," said Farhad Parvaresh, chief executive of the national carrier, who signed the contract with Boeing officials in Tehran. With the incoming administration of US president-elect Donald Trump expected to take a tough line on Iran and American lawmakers recently voting for

renewed sanctions, Boeing emphasized the employment opportunities of the deal.

"Today's agreement will support tens of thousands of US jobs directly associated with production and delivery of the 777-300ERs and nearly 100,000 US jobs in the US aerospace value stream for the full course of deliveries," the company said in a statement. Many US lawmakers have opposed the deal, accusing Iran Air of helping to transport troops and weapons to conflict zones around the region.

The lack of new planes and parts has taken a severe toll on Iran's carriers over the years, earning it one of the worst safety records in the world with close to 1,700 people dying in a string of civilian and military air disasters since

1979, according to the Flight Safety Foundation.

"With the signing of this contract, the first important step has been taken for the modernization of the country's aviation fleet," Transport Minister Abbas Akhouni was quoted as saying. The first Boeings are due to arrive in 2018 and Iran Air is also due to finalize the purchase of 100 planes from European firm Airbus.

"Our goal is to increase our ability to compete in the aviation industry to be able to get back our share in the transport industry in the region and the world," said Akhouni, referring to the fact that Iran was a regional hub for air transport before the revolution.

### Sanctions pressure

Following initial agreements earlier in the year, the Boeing and Airbus deals were given final approval by the US government in September. Washington lifted some of its sanctions on Iran under a nuclear deal that came into force in January, but many restrictions have remained in place that mean companies trading with Tehran must receive explicit approval from the US Treasury.

That includes European firms like Airbus who manufacture some of their parts in the United States.

Pressure has been mounting on those in Iran and the United States who want to see increased trade between the two countries in

order to cement the nuclear deal. Iranian leaders have reacted angrily to news that Washington will renew its existing sanctions in the coming days, saying it is a breach of the deal, while Trump has vowed to rip up the accord entirely. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has faced a barrage of criticism at home after the deal failed to attract the level of foreign investment he promised-mostly because global banks remain wary of doing business with the country. The supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has questioned the focus on purchasing billion-dollar fleets of aircraft.

"Suppose we modernize our air fleet. Okay, it's a very important and necessary move. But is it the priority?" Khamenei said in June. —AFP

# QATAR TO MERGE QATARGAS, RASGAS

DOHA: Qatar will merge state-owned liquefied natural gas producers Qatargas and RasGas Co Ltd, the chief executive of Qatar Petroleum (QP) said yesterday, in the Gulf state's latest reaction to lower energy prices. The more-than-two-year slump in oil prices has forced Gulf countries to reduce state spending and consider consolidations as a way to cut costs: among the biggest being Abu Dhabi's merging of Mubadala and International Petroleum Development Co.

While Qatar is more focused on gas than oil, it too has been forced into reorganisations, with QP already going through a process that reduced staffing and earmarked a number of assets for divestment. The tie-up of Qatargas and RasGas, Qatar's number one and two LNG producers respectively, has been talked about for a number of years stretching back before the oil price reduction. At a news conference, QP CEO Saad Al-Kaabi said that behind the announcement was an element of wanting to cut costs.

"Of course as an outcome of this cost reduction will be realized, it will make us more competitive in the market," he said, adding that the move would save "hundreds of millions of dollars", without giving a timeframe for

the savings. "It's one business that will do the same thing. Putting it all (in) one place gives you a much bigger advantage in marketing."

The transition, which will result in a single company called

Qatargas, will take around 12 months to complete and will begin before the end of this year.

Once the new structure is in place, some areas of the business could see job cuts, although the operational side of the plants will not be affected, Kaabi said.

A Doha-based energy analyst said the move was in line with QP's recent cost cutting but also had other benefits. "Arguably the reasons for having two firms - to deal with western and eastern markets and also to encourage some competition during the roll-out phase of LNG facilities - are no longer relevant," he said.

Qatargas is the largest LNG-producing company in the world, with an annual output capacity of 42 million tons a year, according to its website. While QP owns a majority stake, global energy firms including Total, Mitsui & Co and ConocoPhillips also possess small stakeholdings. RasGas has a production capacity of about 37 million tons a year, according to its website. It is a 70/30 percent joint venture between QP and Exxon Mobil. —Reuters



DOHA: In this Saturday, April 4, 2009 file photo a gas production facility is seen in at Ras Laffan, Qatar. Qatar is merging its two government-backed liquefied natural gas companies, streamlining distribution of the fuel as the OPEC nation weathers a slump in energy prices. —AP

# NON-OPEC OIL STATES AGREE TO CUTS IN 'HISTORIC' DEAL

VIENNA: Eleven countries agreed on Saturday to cut their oil output, teaming up with the OPEC cartel in an exceptional bid to end the world's glut of crude and reverse a dramatic fall in income.

Russia and 10 other non-OPEC states will reduce their production by more than half a million barrels per day (bpd), OPEC announced. The deal will take effect from the start of 2017 and last for six months, though it may be extended depending on market conditions.

"I am happy to announce that a historic agreement has been reached," said Qatar's Energy Minister Mohammed Bin Saleh Al-Sada, whose country holds the OPEC rotating presidency of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The cut will contribute to OPEC's own initiative to ease a saturated market and end a price slump that has brutally affected the economies of many oil producers. On November 30 its members announced a slash in output by 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) beginning in January, to 32.5 million bpd.

Under that deal, OPEC sought for

non-member producer states to lower their output by 600,000 bpd. Saturday's deal approves cuts totalling 558,000 bpd. Russia had already signalled it would provide half of that production cut in the first half of 2017. The other countries which will contribute cuts are Mexico, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Oman, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, South Sudan and Brunei.

"This is a truly historic event, the first time that so many oil-producing countries are meeting in one room, to accomplish what we've done," Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak told a press conference. "In the room we had more than half of the global oil" production, he enthused.

In a statement following the meeting OPEC said the other oil giants were working "to achieve oil market stability in the interest of all oil producers and consumers."

A monitoring committee, comprising three OPEC and two non-OPEC members, will now be set up. Sada said OPEC would continue its efforts to persuade non-OPEC producers to join the reduction effort. —AFP





KUWAIT: Delegates attend the priority banking event.

## POSITIVE OUTLOOK FOR US IN 2017

By Haider Tawfik

It seems that November 2016, was a turning point for the US, politically and economically. The financial market liked the result of the US election even though they were nervous before the election. At present, the outlook for the US economy appears much brighter than a few months ago. This is in absolute and relevant to some other Western and emerging economies.

Thanks to the change in the US administration led by the newly-elected president. The whole developments were very surprise to most of us and very few of us predicted the election outcome and the reaction of the financial markets. Could this be the start of the reversal of low interest rates, end of Quantitative Easing, low inflation, low bond yields etc. The early signs are telling us that the new normal that started back in 2008 has come to an end. This could only happen if politicians deliver what they promised.

The strong rally in global stocks and dollar and the big rise in yields on government bonds, show that investors have accepted the likelihood of higher growth and higher inflation in the coming months. However, this may not apply to other economies. As the risk of high inflation and weak currency could threaten Eurozone and emerging economies. At present US economy is growing moderately with no risk of inflation. Investors have already decided

that their money is on the US economy. Frustrated people in the western world had enough of slow economic growth and high unemployment and have taken their anger out on the politicians. This has happened in Canada, UK, the Eurozone now in the US. The global market urgently needs new pro economic growth policies and practical measures. Donald Trump has promised his voters that he will do exactly what the economy urgently needs.

Clever politicians have been reacting to people's demands for economic growth and employment, and they are responding by saying that they are listening and they will deliver people's demands. Investors and the financial market have already shifted gear and they will not reverse as they will allow the politicians, time and space to carry out on what they have promised. The big move in stocks, the dollar bond yields and inflation outlook is not easy to reverse as billions of dollars have already shifted into new investment strategies. The message that was sent to US politicians back in November are likely to be repeated elsewhere around the world.

The rest of the world should benefit from Donald Trump's presidency and particularly the emerging markets. That is because he is more focused on economic growth in the US. A doubling of US economic growth should benefit the rest of the world tremendously. — @rasameel



KUWAIT: Meshari Shehab, Assistant General Manager Priority Banking during the presentation.

## GULF BANK HOLDS SESSION ON UK PROPERTY INVESTMENT TRENDS

SEMINAR IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BLUEPRINT HOLDING CO, KNIGHT FRANK

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held an exclusive session on the British property investment trends and tax regulations for 2017 for its "Priority Banking" clients, in collaboration Blue Print and with Knight Frank LLP, one of the leading residential and commercial property consultancy based in London. The event took place on 6 November 2016 at Sheraton Hotel, Kuwait.

Gulf Bank Assistant General Manager - Priority Banking Meshari Shehab, and Gulf Bank Assistant General Manager - Investment, Consumer Banking, Tarek Al-Saleh welcomed the attendees. They emphasized that through such private knowledge-oriented events that Gulf Bank strives to create beneficial platforms for its customers, through which it can update them on International economic and investment topics, and support them in making better informed decisions, thus, enhancing their overall business status.

Engineer Meshaal Al-Melhem, CEO of Blue Print, confirmed that the session comes within the framework of the start of cooperation with

Gulf Bank to provide the bank's clients unique integral consulting services across fields of international experience. The cooperation includes organizing lectures and informative seminars specializing in the British real estate market, accompanied by consultations related to legal or tax affairs, management of real estate investment, management of property including buying, selling, leasing, and an array of other services offered by the company in collaboration with Knight Frank.

During the session, Knight Frank's professional team of experts presented Gulf Bank's priority customers with an insightful overview of the Global property market. The main segment of the seminar was focused on the UK property market, how it has performed post Brexit, what measurements the UK government undertook to overcome the economic slowdown, and how the market is expected to perform in the next coming years.

Gulf Bank's Priority Banking clients got the opportunity to discuss and have an overview

about taxation regulations and procedures applied in UK, as well as the Comprehensive Real Estate Services Knight Frank offer in UK and other European Cities, through their local representative in Kuwait Blue Print Holding Company. The event provided an unparalleled platform to learn about the potential investment opportunities in the UK, and beyond.

With Gulf Bank Priority Banking, customers enjoy a personalized and preferential treatment coupled with a suite of Banking and investment products and services designed to meet their financial goals.

A dedicated Relationship Manager is assigned to manage customers banking requirements in the comfort of dedicated private floors. In addition, they will receive a branded ATM card that recognizes their status across Gulf Bank Network, premium credit cards with exclusive privileges, discounted fees and waivers on banking transactions and added value benefits through our premium partner merchants.



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank's Priority Banking team along with representatives of Blueprint Holding and Knight Frank.

## BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI ACCOUNT

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the lucky winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners for the daily draws took home a cash-prize of KD 5,000 each, and they are:

1. Fares Thani Kasar Eyadah
2. Sheikh Nawal Mohammed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah
3. Fatemah Sulaiman Naser Al-Oraifan
4. Anant Devidas Kapadiya

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more

chances to win higher rewards, entitling one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for 2 months prior to draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account, will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The more customers deposit, the higher the chances they receive of winning.

For more information on opening a Yawmi account or about the new quarterly draw, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch and receive all the details, or simply call the bank's Call Center at 1804080 where customer service representatives will be delighted to assist with any questions on the Yawmi account or any of the bank's products and services.



## AL TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT DRAW

**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al-Najma Account daily draw yesterday. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

**The winners of the Al-Najma daily draw are:** Ameenah Abdullah Al-Kandari, KD 7000, Waleed Yousef Al-Zaabi, KD 7000, Heirs of Mohammed Hassan Al-Zaid, KD 7000, Fawziyah Abdulkareem Al-Hasawi, KD 7000.

Al-Najma awards are now brighter and bigger than ever

With the revamped Al-Najma account, all your dreams will be turned to reality. On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our Mega prize draws got bigger to reach KD 250,000.

The new prizes scheme for Al-Najma account, daily draw to win KD 7000.

Quarterly draws to win great prizes that would start from KD 100,000 to KD 250,000

- 1ST quarter — KD 100 000,
- 2ND quarter — KD 150 000,
- 3RD quarter — KD 200 000,
- 4TH quarter — KD 250 000.

With Al-Najma you have more chances to win greater prizes

- Each KD 25 kept in your account gives you one chance to win

- Each KD 25 kept in your account for one week will give you a chance to enter the daily draw.

- Each KD 25 kept in your account for 3 months will give you chance to enter the quarterly draw.

Additional features

- ATM card
- Issue a credit card against your account

- Obtain all CBK banking services

You deserve to win! Open an account now with just KD 500 and you will enter all draws.

## FED TO JACK UP RATES AS TRUMP ECONOMY LOOMS

**WASHINGTON:** There is little room for doubt that the US Federal Reserve will raise the benchmark interest rate in the coming week for only the second time in a decade. With unemployment at a nine-year low, jobs being created at an average of 180,000 per month, the economy growing at better than three percent in the most recent quarter and some signs of a pickup in inflation, the writing is on the wall.

Some members of the Federal Open Market Committee, which sets the key federal funds rate, the basis for mortgage and lending rates, have even cautioned that failing to raise rates in December could harm the central bank's credibility, given expectations set by policymakers in recent months.

"All the necessary and sufficient conditions are there," Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, told AFP.

With a rate hike assumed, the question remains whether Wednesday's move will be the first in a series.

That was what central bankers thought was going to happen a year ago, when they announced the start of the "normalization" of interest rates after keeping them at zero in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

### 'Normalization' under Trump?

But the Fed's efforts to turn the page on monetary stimulus with gradual tightening quickly went off track, despite forecasts for up to four rate hikes in 2016.

Seven times this year, the FOMC declined to raise rates, impeded by poor US economic data, Britain's shock June vote to exit the European Union, and above all by fears of interrupting a fragile recovery.

And analysts said there were no guarantees 2017 would see the beginning of a tightening cycle either, given uncertainties in geopolitics and the yet-to-be-determined policies of President-elect Donald Trump, who shocked the world last month by winning the US election while offering proposals scant on specifics.

A Wall Street Journal poll of economists this week put the Federal funds rate at an average of 1.26 percent by December 2017, implying four rate increases. A Reuters poll projects three rate increases.

## CHINA FACES BATTLE OVER MARKET ECONOMY STATUS

**BEIJING:** China's battle for recognition as a market economy that would help it avoid penalties from key trade partners has been thwarted, as a key clause in Beijing's deal to join the WTO expired yesterday.

As China marks the 15th anniversary of its accession to the WTO, the United States, European Union and Japan are maintaining tough rules that protect them from cheap Chinese products flooding their markets. An outraged Beijing said the failure of its major trade partners to grant China market economy status on December 11 as promised was an example of "covert protectionism" and "double standard" by the West.

Beijing highly covets market economy status, which would make it more difficult for other countries to launch anti-dumping cases against it. Dumping is when a country prices its exports below what it would charge for the same product in its home market. When China joined the WTO on December 11, 2001 it was written into the terms of the deal that member states could treat it as a non-market economy, allowing them to impose heavy anti-dumping duties on the basis that its low prices did not reflect market reality.

China was told all that would change by the end of 2016 when it would be upgraded to market economy status. But rather than enjoying this trade advantage, Beijing continues to face a climate of mistrust towards its exports, with critics arguing the country has not done enough to qualify for the designation.

"China will take steps to defend its rights if (WTO) members continue this old practice of anti-dumping regulation against Chinese products after the expiration date" of the accession agreement clause, China's commerce ministry spokesman Shen Danyang was quoted as saying by state media on Friday. International trade

experts say China will have to start a lengthy legal battle at the WTO against its trade partners in order to get recognition of its new status.

### Protectionism in disguise

In a vitriolic commentary, the official Xinhua news agency said that "China would automatically move to market economy status" on December 11. "The refusal is nothing short of covert protectionism, which runs against the trend of globalization and poisons the recovery of the global economy," it said Friday, denouncing "another double-standard applied by the West against China".

But for Washington, the granting of market economy status is not automatic and other anti-dumping clauses of the accession agreement "remain intact". "The United States remains concerned about serious imbalances in China's State-directed economy, such as widespread production overcapacity, including in the steel and aluminum industries, and significant State ownership in many industries and sectors," according to a statement by the Department of Commerce.

"China has not made the reforms necessary to operate on market principles," Washington will therefore continue to apply "alternative" methods for calculating dumping margins, added the DoC.

That is unlikely to change under a Donald Trump administration after the president-elect threatened to impose 45 percent punitive tariffs to protect American jobs. The position is also supported by the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM), who say China's trade surplus has cost 3.2 million jobs in the US since Beijing joined the WTO. "It is no coincidence that economic pain played such a central role this election season. — AFP

Amazing news from Al-Tijari...

Al-Najma account gives you the biggest daily prize in Kuwait!











# INFINITI POISED TO UNLEASH Q50 RED SPORT 400 POTENTIAL WITH WORLD FIRST AUDIO VISUAL DISPLAY INCREASED BRAIN ACTIVITY EXPRESSED THROUGH SYMPHONY

**KUWAIT:** Building on the foundation of the study launched in November, INFINITI Middle East yesterday announced the next phase to bring the brain data obtained by their customers to life in a way never been done before.

"Now that customers have driven the vehicle, we challenged ourselves to interpret this data in a manner that would provide our audience a truly unique experience," said Juergen Schmitz, Managing Director, INFINITI Middle East. "We identified music as this medium, as it is both a universally expressive tool and an integral part of the Arabian culture."

With all of the data being analyzed by Emotiv Inc to deliver on the quantifiable analysis, INFINITI Middle East selected Yessian Music as a producer to take these brain waves and convert them into a harmonious melody that pays homage to the Middle Eastern heritage with distinct notes.

Yessian Music is an independently owned music and sound design company with studios in New York, Detroit, Los Angeles and Hamburg.

Comprising producers, composers, engineers, sound designers and creative, they specialize in original music composition.

"Once we had the song locked the obvious next step was to select a delivery mechanism to our audience and what better an iconic backdrop than The Dubai Fountain - the world's tallest performing fountain by Emaar," added Schmitz.

Working with Emaar, INFINITI Middle East will choreograph a special performance of The Dubai Fountain, in the heart of Downtown Dubai, spanning four days that will be synced with the song created by the brain data.

"The visual interpretation of this song through The Dubai Fountain epitomizes the excitement of driving the Q50 Red Sport 400 and we are sure that our audience will feel this too. There are few additional elements that will help to further bring this display to life which will be communicated to everyone in the next fortnight," added Francesca Ciaudano, Deputy General Manager, Marketing & PR.

Launched under the banner of 'UnleashYourPotential' INFINITI Middle East in collaboration with Emotiv Inc. sought to demonstrate how the changes in brain activity when driving the powerful sports sedan can affect their enjoyment, excitement, engagement and focus.

Infiniti Motor Company Ltd. is headquartered in Hong Kong with sales operations in over 50 countries. The Infiniti brand was launched in 1989. Its range of premium automobiles is currently built in manufacturing facilities in Japan, the United States, United Kingdom and China. Infiniti plans to also expand manufacturing into Mexico by 2017. Infiniti design studios are located in Atsugi-Shi, near Yokohama, London, San Diego and Beijing.

Infiniti is in the middle of a major product offensive. The brand has been widely acclaimed for its iconic design and innovative driver-assistance technologies.

From the 2016 season, Infiniti is a technical partner of the Renault Sport Formula One team, contributing its expertise in hybrid performance.



Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Dow Jones	19,614.81	19,756.85	142.04	▲ 0.72	13.38
NASDAQ	5,417.36	5,444.50	27.14	▲ 0.50	8.73
SBP 500	2,246.19	2,259.53	13.34	▲ 0.59	10.55
Financial Times	6,931.55	6,954.21	22.66	▲ 0.33	11.40
DAX	11,179.42	11,203.63	24.21	▲ 0.22	4.29
CAC 40	4,735.48	4,764.07	28.59	▲ 0.60	2.74
Swiss	7,953.68	8,099.63	145.95	▲ 1.83	-8.15
Nikkei 225	18,765.47	18,996.37	230.90	▲ 1.23	-0.20
Topix	1,512.69	1,525.36	12.67	▲ 0.84	-1.42
Hang Seng	22,861.84	22,760.98	-100.86	▼ -0.44	3.86
Straits Times	2,958.86	2,956.13	-2.73	▼ -0.09	2.55

Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait	5,589.16	5,611.78	22.62	▲ 0.40	-0.46
Saudi Arabia	7,118.00	7,188.99	70.99	▲ 1.00	2.98
Dubai	3,495.73	3,558.68	62.95	▲ 1.80	10.94
Abu Dhabi	4,433.74	4,517.15	83.41	▲ 1.88	2.94
Bahrain	1,181.47	1,191.95	10.48	▲ 0.89	-2.83
Qatar	10,053.95	10,187.90	133.95	▲ 1.33	-3.60
Oman	5,667.58	5,696.32	28.74	▲ 0.51	4.83
Lebanon	1,224.62	1,224.62	0.00	-	0.00
Jordan	2,163.42	2,175.63	12.21	▲ 0.56	1.27
Egypt	11,348.37	11,297.93	-50.44	▼ -0.44	61.98
Morocco	10,753.18	10,957.24	204.06	▲ 1.90	20.47
Tunisia	5,467.06	5,461.83	-5.23	▼ -0.10	8.43

Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwait Dinar	-	12.1675	3.2579	3.0836	2.5891	3.3149	375.83	4.3694
Saudi Riyal	0.08219	-	0.2678	0.2534	0.2128	0.2724	30.89	0.3591
US Dollar	0.30695	3.7348	-	0.9465	0.7947	1.0175	115.36	1.3412
Euro	0.32429	3.9458	1.0565	-	0.8410	1.0741	121.71	1.4192
Sterling Pound	0.38624	4.6995	1.2583	1.1891	-	1.2798	144.94	1.6877
Swiss Franc	0.30167	3.6706	0.9828	0.9310	0.7814	-	113.23	1.3181
Japanese Yen	0.00266	0.0324	0.0087	0.0082	0.0069	0.0088	-	0.0116
Australian Dollar	0.22886	2.7847	0.7456	0.7046	0.5925	0.7586	86.01	-

Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dollar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar	-	0.30695	3.7348	0.3741	3.6266	0.3837	3.6574	18.1400
Kuwait Dinar	3.2579	-	12.1675	1.2186	11.8150	1.2500	11.9153	59.0976
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08219	-	0.1002	0.9710	0.1027	0.9793	4.8570
Bahraini Dinar	2.6734	0.82059	9.9845	-	9.6952	1.0257	9.7776	48.4949
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08464	1.0298	0.1031	-	0.1058	1.0085	5.0019
Omani Riyal	2.6063	0.79999	9.7339	0.9749	9.4519	-	9.5322	47.2778
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08393	1.0212	0.1023	0.9916	0.1049	-	4.9598
Egyptian Pound	0.0551	0.01692	0.2059	0.0206	0.1999	0.0212	0.2016	-

Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Kuwait Dinar	0.00	1.19	1.44	1.63	1.94
US Dollar	0.60	0.68	0.95	1.29	1.64
Euro	-0.39	-0.38	-0.33	-0.22	-0.08
Sterling Pound	0.24	0.25	0.37	0.54	0.79
Swiss Franc	-0.78	-0.81	-0.73	-0.66	-0.50
Australian Dollar	1.56	1.63	1.62	1.60	1.60
Japanese Yen	-0.03	-0.11	-0.05	0.01	0.11

Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year
United States	1.13	1.89	2.46	3.15
Europe	-0.78	-0.45	0.36	1.16
United Kingdom	0.12	0.61	1.45	2.11

Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait Oil	50.50	50.64	0.14	▲ 0.28	43.07
Brent	51.75	51.73	-0.02	▼ -0.04	27.36
West Texas	51.56	51.46	-0.10	▼ -0.19	27.99
Gold	1157.74	1157.74	0.00	-	0.00
Silver	16.86	16.86	0.00	-	0.00

Source: National Bank of Kuwait

# RSM INTERNATIONAL HOLDS 'ECONOMY WATCH FORUM'

**KUWAIT:** RSM Albazie & Co, a member of the sixth largest network of independent audit, tax and consulting firms 'RSM International', recently held an Economy Watch workshop in collaboration with Bordier & Cie Private Bankers; a Swiss independent private bank founded by the Bordier family as an unlimited liability partnership in 1844 in Geneva, at JW Marriott in Kuwait. The workshop addressed recent world economy developments and investment opportunities featuring Mr. Grégoire Bordier - Senior Partner of Bordier & Cie, Gianluca Tarolli - Market Economist at Bordier & Cie and Yama KabirMaroofi - Head of Middle-East at Bordier & Cie.

The workshop was attended by senior level executives of various corporations, investment decision makers and High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs). Commencing the Economy Watch workshop, Dr Shuaib A Shuaib - Chairman at RSM Albazie & Co focused on providing an overview of macroeconomic indicators in Kuwait as well as an understanding to the size and importance of the projects market in Kuwait. Dr Shuaib said: "Historically,

GCC projects did not witness funding issues; however, with the decline in oil prices, GCC governments are forced to realign capital spending plans."

Grégoire Bordier and Yama Maroofi gave an introduction on the tradition of Swiss private banking through the history of the Bordier family starting with Ami Bordier who founded the family bank in 1844 as an unlimited partnership. The partners then bore unlimited personal liability on their personal fortune for all the commitments entered into by the bank and this remains unchanged to this day. This distinctive aspect has always ensured a complete alignment of interest between the bank and its clients and to concentrate on the clients' long-term goals rather than on the short-term targets of external shareholders.

Gianluca Tarolli focused on where to find value in the global financial markets. "Due to the geopolitical risk in the region, local investors are looking at USA and Europe and other safe havens which are in itself witnessing extreme changes in monetary policies. Political risk is no longer considered a tail-event. Trump's triumph

and Brexit could potentially empower similar right-wing parties across the Globe. The risk of large economies cutting down on global trade tie-ups has seen a significant increase - a step in the reverse direction. Decelerating China, stagnant Japan, US' atypical economic cycle and EU's political woes all add up to a very unique situation for investors and portfolio managers; an economic situation which has almost no precedent in history", said Tarolli.

He went on to explain that in Europe, with flat corporate profits, tepid economic growth, and a fragile banking system, the market is vulnerable to a range of political risks in the coming months that could derail the region's weak recovery. The global trend towards more fiscal easing, taking over the baton from monetary easing which has reached its limits, will not take place in Europe next year due to the busy electoral calendar, which will prevent any coordinated economic policy.

Addressing family businesses' investments, Tarolli said, "family business will react in function of investment opportunities that will vary from a sector of activity to another. The preciseness of the tax rate cut timing, both on corporate profits and personal revenues will be crucial to determine their investments. In fact, they will give back some margins and hence profitability to sustain the current fading investment cycle: to invest, corporates need profits."

"For GCC investors, investments in the US and USD will continue to make sense. As markets are currently anticipating additional growth and inflation, they are pushing interest rate upwards, lifting up the currency. We expect this trend to continue for some months, and that's why floating rates bonds are to be favoured. Keeping some cash may allow to clip in higher yield in the fixed income area early next year. On the equity front, the disadvantages of higher financing costs and stronger currency, on top of the global political uncertainty, are not priced in. We think there will be some disappointment in the next couple of quarters that could allow us to come back into the market at a better level. Globally speaking, we find US assets quite expensive and are waiting on the side lines for better entry points."

Since its foundation in 1844 in Geneva, Bordier & Cie became an international group with offices in three major continents, still owned and managed by the fifth generation of its founders. The bank focuses solely on managing and safeguarding the wealth of its private clients by forging long-term relationships built on trust while delivering personalized services that meet the highest standards.

RSM Albazie & Co. strives to monitor developments in the financial and economic world to provide its clients with the best in-class advisory services. The firm will continue hosting similar events that in turn would help guide the business community in Kuwait. Established in 1963, RSM Albazie & Co. is considered to be among the oldest accounting and advisory firms in Kuwait, with more than 50 years of experience.



(Left to right) Fouad Al-Hourani, Dr Shuaib Shuaib and Gregoire.



Economy Watch Forum attendees.

# SOCIAL NETWORK GAB DRAWS 'ALT-RIGHT'

**NEW YORK:** Squeezed out of Twitter and other social media websites cracking down on hate speech, far-right activists are finding a home on a new platform that promises never to censor content. Launched in August, Gab has become known as a safe haven for the "alt-right" movement dominated by the white supremacists who are helping fuel America's deepening polarization. The social network currently has 100,000 members and another 200,000 on its waiting list, according to the company. "All are welcome to speak freely," spokesman Utsav Sanduja says.

Gab is unable to accommodate all those who want to join, he adds, because it is still in its test phase. The social network's rise comes amid Twitter's suspension of political activists for purportedly promoting racist and harassing comments. One of the new

"Gabbers", Richard Spencer, heads the white supremacist National Policy Institute, whose account Twitter has suspended. Spencer, whose "Hail Trump" comments were seen as evocative of the Nazi era, joined the Twitter exile along with Milo Yiannopoulos, accused of fomenting a social media campaign against the African-American actress Leslie Jones.

### Rising Acrimony

Gab's appearance follows the launch two years ago of another free-speech labeled platform, Voat, which has had limited success. But the new site comes amid escalating tensions and acrimony over politics in social media. Some say the new guidelines for major platforms represent an effort to curb harassment and hate, others call it censorship. Reddit, an online news and messaging

board, announced last month that it would crack down on "toxic users" in an effort to curb some incendiary comments from supporters of President-elect Donald Trump. "We have identified hundreds of the most toxic users and are taking action against them, ranging from warnings to timeouts to permanent bans," Reddit chief Steve Huffman wrote.

Gab meanwhile pledges no censoring or filtering, allowing users to post messages of 300 characters, compared to Twitter's 140-character limit. Headquartered in the Caribbean island Anguilla, Gab is "bootstrapped," or self-financed, with some donations from the "Gab community". Despite its user base, Gab denies having a political agenda. "Gab is for everyone and our mission is to challenge censorship on a global scale," Sanduja says. "Whether it is from

authoritarian governments persecuting their own people, politically incorrect citizens engaging in peaceful and civil discourse or whistleblowers in establishment institutions seeking a safe refuge, Gab will always be there for them and the people."

### Overtly racist

Although the platform's terms prohibit calls for violence or "terrorism", many messages on the site are overtly racist or anti-Semitic. That reflects the belief of Gab's founders "that free speech is a fundamental right, one that is absolute and cannot be vitiated in any way," Sanduja says. That means "a free exchange of ideas" on the site "without proscription". Instead of censoring content, Gab enables its users to filter their news feeds by blocking messages with certain keywords or from

specific users. Sanduja points to the startup founders' backgrounds as a reflection of diversity.

He is a Canadian Hindu with roots in India. The other co-founders include Ekrem Buyukkaya, a Muslim of Kurdish origin, and Andrew Torba, the chief executive who calls himself a "Christian conservative". However, that kind of symbolism does little to mollify the concerns of those worried that services such as Gab keep users inside "filter bubbles" that reinforce their own ideas and block out other viewpoints.

"The service that they have created is an echo chamber for extremely conservative opinions," says Lauren Copeland, associate director of the Community Research Institute at Baldwin Wallace University. "It may be open to everybody, but it certainly doesn't appeal to everybody." — AFP



**NEW YORK:** In this April 30, 2015, file photo, Apple CEO Tim Cook responds to a question during a news conference at IBM Watson headquarters. —AP

## APPLE CHIEF TIM COOK PICKED TO GIVE MIT COMMENCEMENT SPEECH

**CAMBRIDGE:** The Massachusetts Institute of Technology has chosen Apple CEO Tim Cook to deliver its 2017 commencement address.

MIT made the announcement on its website Thursday. It says Cook will headline the June 9 ceremony. It calls Cook an advocate for equality and a champion of the environment. MIT President L. Rafael Reif says Cook's brilliance as a business leader and his passion for important issues

will resonate with its graduates. Cook has led Apple Inc. since 2011. He has degrees from Auburn University and Duke University.

He says his Cupertino, California-based company is proud to have many MIT graduates on its team and he looks forward to giving the speech. MIT's 2016 speaker was "Jason Bourne" actor Matt Damon, who followed US Chief Technology Officer Megan Smith. —AP

## WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE BUYING A DRONE THIS CHRISTMAS: ICAO

**MONTREAL:** UN aviation officials cautioned anyone Friday who might want to



**LOS ANGELES:** A competitor untangles his drone from a safety net after it crashed while maneuvering an obstacle course during the International Drone Expo in Los Angeles, California on December 10, 2016. —AP

leave a gift of a drone under the Christmas tree this season, to learn how to safely operate it first. "Drones can pose a serious threat to manned flights and people and property on the ground," the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) said in a statement.

In reaction to their growing popularity, the UN agency put out basic information on its website explaining what pilots of the unmanned aerial vehicles need to know before chasing Santa's sled.

In a list of tips and facts for recreational users titled "Ten things to know before buying a drone this Christmas," it said a drone weighing more than 25 kilograms (55 pounds) requires a permit to operate it.

The ICAO also urges reading the user manual, keeping the drone within eyesight and 50 meters (55 yards) away from people, property or vehicles. As well, it warned pilots against flying it more than 150 meters off the ground and to keep it at least eight kilometers (five miles) away from an airport. And, it said, drones used for commercial purposes may require the remote pilot to be licensed. Finally, "Always remember that you are now a remote pilot and are responsible for flying safely and avoiding collisions." —AFP

## PEBBLE DISCONTINUING SMARTWATCHES AFTER ITS SALE TO FITBIT

**PALO ALTO, California:** Pioneering smartwatch maker Pebble is no longer manufacturing or selling any of its devices after the bulk of the company was bought by Fitbit.

Palo Alto, California-based Pebble says its devices will continue to work as normal for now but might lose functionality in the future. San Francisco-based Fitbit announced the deal to acquire Pebble on Wednesday. Terms weren't disclosed.

Pebble's first smartwatch was launched in 2012, three years before the Apple Watch.

The company had raised more than \$10 million for the project through a Kickstarter campaign. It raised more than \$20 million through the site for an updated version of the watch last year. Pebble founder Eric Migicovsky calls the sale "bittersweet." He says many Pebble employees will be joining Fitbit. —AP



**PALO ALTO, California:** In this Feb 12, 2013, file photo, Eric Migicovsky, CEO of Pebble, displays his company's smart watch. —AP

# JAPAN LAUNCHING 'SPACE JUNK' COLLECTOR

### EXPERIMENTING TO PULL JUNK OUT OF ORBIT

**TOKYO:** Japan launched a cargo ship Friday bound for the International Space Station, carrying a 'space junk' collector that was made with the help of a fishnet company. The vessel, dubbed "Kounotori" (stork in Japanese), blasted off from the southern island of Tanegashima just before 10:27 pm local time (1327 GMT) attached to an H-IIB rocket.

Scientists at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) are experimenting with a tether to pull junk out of orbit around Earth, clearing up tonnes of space clutter including cast-off equipment from old satellites and pieces of rocket. The launch was successful as "the satellite was removed from the rocket" and put into the planned orbit about 15 minutes after the liftoff, JAXA spokesman Nobuyoshi Fujimoto on Tanegashima told AFP.

More than 50 years of human space exploration since the Soviet-launched Sputnik satellite in 1957 has produced this hazardous belt of orbiting debris. There are estimated to be more than 100 million pieces in orbit, posing a growing threat to future space exploration, scientists say. Researchers are using a so-called electrodynamic tether made from thin wires of stainless steel and aluminum.

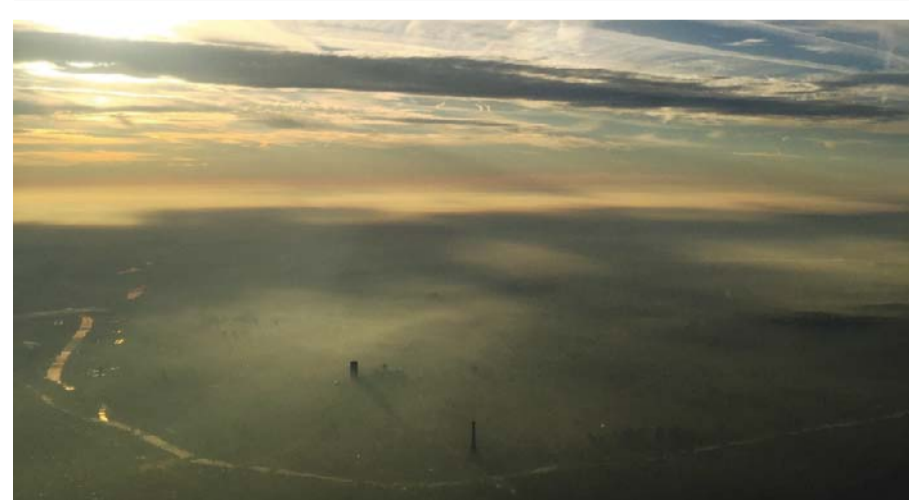
The idea is that one end of the strip will be attached to debris which can damage working equipment—there are hundreds of collisions every year. The electricity generated by the tether as it swings through the Earth's magnetic field is expected to have a slowing effect on the space junk, which should, scientists say, pull it into a lower and lower orbit.

Eventually the detritus will enter the Earth's atmosphere, burning up harmlessly long before it has a chance to crash to the planet's surface. JAXA worked on the project with Japanese fishnet manufacturer Nitto Seimo to develop the cord, which has been about 10 years in the making. "The tether uses our fishnet plaiting technology, but it was really tough to intertwine the very thin materials," company engineer Katsuya Suzuki told AFP. "The length of the tether this time is 700 meter (2,300 feet), but eventually it's going to need to be 5,000 to 10,000 meter-long to slow down the targeted space junk," he added.

Previous experiments using a tether have been done in recent years. Another spokesman for the space agency has said it hopes to put the junk collection system into more regular use by the middle of the next decade. "If we are successful in this trial, the next step will be another test attaching one tip of the tether to a targeted object," he added. The cargo ship launched Friday is also carrying other materials for the ISS including batteries and drinking water for the astronauts living there. —AFP



**ANEGASHIMA SPACE CENTER, Japan:** This July 6, 2016 picture shows the HTV6, an unmanned cargo spacecraft, "Kounotori", or "stork" in Japanese, being assembled at the Tanegashima Space Center in Tanegashima island, Kagoshima prefecture. —AFP



**Taken from an airplane window, The Eiffel Tower and the Tour Montparnasse, center left, emerge from a haze as Paris suffers a pollution spike, Thursday, Dec 8, 2016. —AP**

## FRANCE GIVES BOOST TO ELECTRIC VEHICLES AMID POLLUTION PEAKS

**PARIS:** The French government has announced an anti-pollution plan, including a financial boost to buy electric vehicles, as Paris and other cities in the country are emerging from a particularly severe episode of air pollution.

Environment Minister Segolene Royal said Saturday professionals will get a bonus of up to 10,000 euros (\$10,600) if they scrap their old diesel light commercial

vehicles or taxis for electric ones, starting next month. The measure has been in effect for private buyers since last year.

Royal also said she will ask to exempt electric vehicles from highway tolls. A 1,000-euro bonus will be given when buying electric scooters. Paris faced its worst winter pollution in a decade over the past week. —AP

## SANDBERG: FALSE STORIES ON FACEBOOK DIDN'T SWAY ELECTION

**NEW YORK:** Facebook executive Sheryl Sandberg says she doesn't think misinformation spread on the social media platform swayed the election in favor of President-elect Donald Trump.

But she said Thursday during an interview on NBC's "Today" show that the company is looking at ways to label fake news and "doing the things we can do to make it clearer what's a hoax on Facebook."

Sandberg says Facebook takes misinformation seriously, "but there's a lot more work to do."

The comments come after Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg outlined steps the Menlo Park, California-based company is taking to address the issue. Those steps included creating stronger detection of fake news stories and making it easier to report them. —AP



**WASHINGTON:** In this June 22, 2016, file photo, Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg speaks at the American Enterprise Institute. —AP

## SURGEON GENERAL SOUNDING ALARM ON TEENS' USE OF E-CIGARETTES

**WASHINGTON:** The US surgeon general is calling e-cigarettes an emerging public health threat to the nation's youth.

In a report released Thursday, Surgeon General Vivek Murthy acknowledged a need for more research into the health effects of "vaping," but said e-cigarettes aren't harmless and too many teens are using them. "My concern is e-cigarettes have the potential to create a whole new generation of kids who are addicted to nicotine," Murthy told The Associated Press. "If that leads to the use of other tobacco-related products, then we are going to be moving backward instead of forward."

Battery-powered e-cigarettes turn liquid nicotine into an inhalable vapor without the harmful

tar generated by regular cigarettes. Vaping was first pushed as safer for current smokers. There's no scientific consensus on the risks or advantages of vaping, including how it affects the likelihood of someone either picking up regular tobacco products or kicking the habit.

Federal figures show that last year, 16 percent of high school students reported at least some use of e-cigarettes - even some who say they've never smoked a conventional cigarette. While not all contain nicotine, Murthy's report says e-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco-related product among youth.

Nicotine is bad for a developing brain no matter how it's exposed, Murthy said. "Your kids are not an experiment," he says in a public service

announcement being released with the report.

It's already illegal to sell e-cigarettes to minors. Earlier this year, the Food and Drug Administration issued new rules that, for the first time, will require makers of nicotine-emitting devices to begin submitting their ingredients for regulators to review. The vaping industry argues the regulations will wipe out small companies in favor of more harmful products, and likely will lobby the incoming Trump administration to undo the rules.

Murthy's report calls on parents and health workers to make concerns about e-cigarettes clear to young people. He said local officials should take action, too, such as including e-cigarettes in indoor smoke-free policies. — AP



**WASHINGTON:** In this Feb 4, 2014, photo, US Surgeon General appointee Vivek Murthy appears on Capitol Hill. — AP



**ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast:** In this photo taken on Tuesday, Nov 22, 2016, a vendor pours a drink for clients from a plastic sachets containing alcohol in the city. — AP

## IVORY COAST IS LATEST TO CRACK DOWN ON ALCOHOL SACHETS

**ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast:** Each morning at dawn, taxi driver Rene Kouame stops by his neighborhood bar in Abidjan for a potent pick-me-up: Two plastic sachets of "Che Guevara," a drink of spiced rum and a host of chemicals that costs 100 CFA francs, or about 15 US cents.

With an alcohol by volume figure of 43 percent, the 2-ounce sachets are about as intoxicating as a typical 16-ounce beer, but consumers say that's just one of their virtues. Kouame claimed they give him a jolt of energy other drinks can't match - just what he needs to face a long day of hectic traffic, run-ins with police and testy fare negotiations. "It inspires me. It gives me a bit of courage to confront the challenges of life," he said.

From now on, however, Ivory Coast's government wants Kouame to get his courage elsewhere. Last month, officials announced a ban on alcohol sachets, citing their health risks and the need to combat alcoholism, especially among youth.

### Half-dozen bans or partial bans

The measure is one of more than a half-dozen bans or partial bans on alcohol sachets in effect in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the World Health Organization. Other countries with bans include Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo and South Sudan, said Jean-

Marie Vianny Maurice Yameogo, the WHO's Ivory Coast representative.

Tracking the sales of alcohol sachets, many containing spirits distilled from palm wine, is difficult because they are often produced outside regulated markets. The sachets are typically mass-produced in West Africa, with colorful packaging. The drink "Amour Profond," or "Deep Love," shows a man standing behind a bare-shouldered woman, whispering into her ear.

The sachets are not necessarily more potent than other drinks available. Palm wine-based traditional drinks such as koutoukou, which are similarly cheap, can have alcohol by volume rates of more than 50 percent. But sachets are more likely to contain toxic chemicals such as methanol, or wood alcohol, Yameogo said. And the packaging often boasts of health and other benefits that Yameogo said have no basis in science. Some are said to provide cures for maladies such as hemorrhoids, while others are reputed to function as appetite-suppressants or aphrodisiacs.

Moreover, the small sachets are easy to hide, making them especially tempting for schoolchildren, according to the Ivorian government and the WHO. "It's something that's accessible to everyone. You can buy a sachet, put it in your pocket and just walk around like that," said Patrick Gbodou, president of School Anti-Drug,

an Ivorian organization that campaigns against drinking and drug use by students. The official drinking age in Ivory Coast is 21, but it is rarely enforced, and teenage drinking is common.

Vendors are worried they will take a huge hit if the ban on sachets is enforced, as many drinkers go for sachets and nothing else. "The government needs to have pity on us," said Adjo Abega, the owner of a bar in Abidjan's Port-Bouet district.

Drinkers generally acknowledge the health risks posed by alcohol sachets, but some criticized the government for cracking down on their favorite vice while permitting other health hazards such as cigarettes.

Desire N'Guessan, an unemployed 26-year-old, began drinking sachets when he was a teenager. He said he relies on them to ward off illness and for motivation to keep looking for work. "When you are not able to overcome your timidity, it can be difficult to operate in your neighborhood," N'Guessan said.

If the government makes good on the ban, he warned, Ivorian children could turn to drugs. He also predicted marches and protests. But Kouame, the taxi driver, was less worried. In the absence of alcohol sachets, he said he would switch up his morning routine by drinking glasses of palm wine instead, adding: "Man can adapt to anything." — AP

## NEW CDC DATA UNDERSTATE ACCIDENTAL SHOOTING DEATHS OF KIDS

**IOWA CITY:** Government statistics released this week claiming that 77 minors in the US were killed by unintentional gun discharges last year significantly understate the scope of an enduring public health problem.

A review of shootings nationwide by The Associated Press and USA TODAY Network found that at least 141 deaths of minors were attributed to unintentional or accidental shootings in

2015 - 83 percent higher than what the Centers for Disease Control reported.

Advocates for stricter laws and new technology meant to keep guns away from children argue that many of the deaths are preventable, and the undercount is significant because it can skew the public policy debate. Lobbyists for the firearms industry, including the National Rifle Association, cite the CDC statistics to argue that

such deaths are so rare that voluntary education - not additional laws or regulations - are needed.

CDC officials have acknowledged that their statistics are low because they rely on how coroners classify the fatalities on death certificates. Some coroners rule deaths in which one child unintentionally shoots another as a homicide - rather than an accidental discharge - because they fit the definition of being killed by another. They also can classify them as undetermined if the intent is unclear - for example, if it's not certain whether a minor committed suicide or accidentally shot himself.

AP and USA TODAY Network counted fatal shootings that were declared accidental or unintentional by investigating agencies. The media organizations' review did not include deaths where guns were fired on purpose, such as cases of stray bullets or celebratory gunfire.

### Undercount

The undercount for 2015 is in line with, but more significant than, the one observed for 2014, when the CDC missed one-third of the 113 deaths documented by the media outlets.

The CDC data, released Thursday, does track a trend identified in the media organizations' review in which deaths of all minors are most common among 3-year-olds, who typically pick up unsecured, loaded guns in their homes and fire back at themselves. The data also shows another spike in deaths among 15- to 17-year-olds, who are more likely to be shot by another teen playing with a gun. — AP



**ATLANTA:** In this June 28, 2016 file photo, Mark Rosenberg, the former director of the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, poses for a photo outside his home. — AP

## FOUR MORE ZIKA CASES, LIKELY HOMEGROWN, FOUND IN TEXAS

**DALLAS:** Four more cases of Zika that were likely transmitted by mosquito bites in Texas have been found in the same neighborhood where the state's first such case was discovered, state health officials said Friday.

The Texas Department of State Health Services said the new cases were found during tests conducted after the first homegrown infection, announced on Nov. 28, was found in a woman who lives in Brownsville, a town along the Mexico border.

The four people who were later diagnosed live close to the woman's home and reported becoming ill between Nov. 29 and Dec. 1. Health officials believe they acquired the infections in the area before mosquito control efforts intensified following the initial case, department spokesman Chris Van Deusen said.

Florida is the only other state in the US with locally spread Zika. On Friday, officials there said the popular tourist destination of South Beach was cleared of active transmission, though the virus remains a risk in Miami-Dade County.

Zika is primarily transmitted to humans by mosquitoes that have previously bitten an infected person, though sexual transmission can also occur. Most infected people don't have symptoms, but for those who do, it's usually a mild illness with fever, rash and joint pain. But the disease

is especially dangerous to pregnant women because it can cause severe birth defects, including babies born with unusually small heads. None of the people with homegrown Zika cases in Texas is pregnant, officials said.

Officials have gone door-to-door in the woman's neighborhood to offer testing, education about the illness and how to prevent mosquito bites, and tips on how to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds, such as removing standing water.

Health officials said tests are ongoing in the neighborhood but no other Zika cases have been found. Dr. John Hellerstedt, the state health commissioner, said colder weather and mosquito-control efforts have decreased mosquito activity in the area, but he warned that South Texas' mild winters mean mosquito populations can quickly rebound during short periods of warmer weather.

Van Deusen also noted Zika could be introduced by a traveler from an area with an outbreak. "Zika is something we're going to need to be watching for the foreseeable future. It's still circulating and it will be," Van Deusen said.

The locally transmitted Florida cases were detected over the summer. Until then, all US cases had been connected to people traveling to countries with outbreaks, mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean. — AP



**HOUSTON:** In this Feb 10, 2016, photo, Darryl Nevins, sprays a backyard to control mosquitoes. — AP

## LOST AND FOUND: JAPAN TAGS DEMENTIA SUFFERERS WITH BARCODES

**TOKYO:** A Japanese city has introduced a novel way to keep track of senior citizens with dementia who are prone to getting lost-tagging their fingers and toes with scan-able barcodes.

A company in Iruma, north of Tokyo, developed tiny nail stickers, each of which carries a unique identity number to help concerned families find missing loved ones, according to the city's social welfare office.

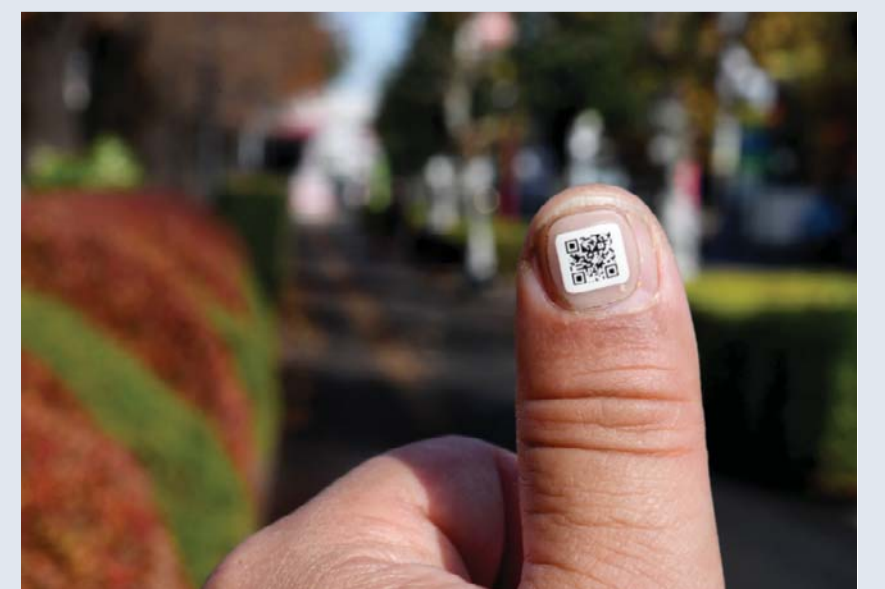
The adhesive QR-coded seals for nails-part of a free service launched this month and a first in Japan-measure just one centimeter (0.4 inches) in size. "Being able to attach the seals on nails is a great advantage," a city worker told AFP. "There are already ID stickers for clothes or shoes but dementia patients are not always wearing those items." If an

elderly person becomes disoriented, police will find the local city hall, its telephone number and the wearer's ID all embedded in the QR code.

The chips remain attached for an average of two weeks-even if they get wet-the official said, citing recent trials. Japan is grappling with a rapidly ageing population with senior citizens expected to make up a whopping 40 percent of the population around 2060.

Last month, Japanese police started offering noodle discounts at local restaurants to elderly citizens who agreed to hand in their driving licenses.

The offer followed a series of deadly accidents involving elderly drivers-a growing problem in a country where 4.8 million people aged 75 or older hold a license. — AFP



**IRUMA, Japan :** This picture taken on December 5, 2016 shows a city officer displaying a QR code on his fingernail near the Iruma city hall in Iruma, Saitama prefecture, a western suburb of Tokyo. — AFP

## SPAIN: SUSPECTS IN ILL CHILD CHARITY SCAM SPENT \$633,000

**BARCELONA:** A Spanish couple arrested for allegedly exploiting the rare illness of their daughter in a charity scam spent almost 600,000 Euros (\$633,000) of donations on a ritzy lifestyle, according to Spanish police.

Court documents issued by the investigating judge on Friday said that Fernando Blanco and Magarita Garau spent nearly two-thirds of the over 900,000 Euros (\$950,000) they received in charitable donations on personal expenses, including their rent, a car, travel and a collection of luxury watches.

The couple raised that money since 2009, when they established a charity in the name of their now

11-year-old daughter, Nadia Nerea, who they said suffered from the rare disease trichothiodystrophy.

The judge in the court in the northern Catalan town of Seu D'Urgell, where the couple who were arrested Wednesday lived, said police investigations indicated either they had misrepresented the seriousness of their daughter's illness or had invented it altogether. The judge ordered the girl to be removed from her parents' custody and placed in care of an aunt. "The couple under investigation appears to have turned charity into their way of life," the judge wrote.

After questioning both parents, the judge kept

the father in jail without the right to bail. The mother was released. The couple's lawyer, Alberto Martin, told Spanish media his clients denied any wrongdoing to the judge. Police searching the family's home found "a massive amount of clothes and electronic goods" and a collection of watches worth around 60,000 Euros (\$63,000). The police investigation indicates the couple spent money raised for their daughter's care on regular expenditures at supermarkets, hardware stores, shopping malls, vacations, hotels, restaurants and elsewhere.

Prior to his arrest, Blanco said in a recent televised interview that he and his wife had "exaggerat-

ed" the seriousness of his daughter's illness to generate interest in her case and asked for forgiveness from people who had made donations.

Last weekend, the couple posted a statement on their charity's Facebook page saying they would return all the money they had received. Besides using social media, the couple had held events and made media appearances asking for help to pay for their daughter's medical costs.

The US National Institute for Health says trichothiodystrophy is a rare genetic disease whose severity can span from brittle hair in mild cases to intellectual disabilities and even death. — AP

## GIRAFFES, RARER THAN ELEPHANTS, PUT ON EXTINCTION WATCH LIST

**WASHINGTON:** The giraffe, the tallest land animal, is now at risk of extinction, biologists say. Because the giraffe population has shrunk nearly 40 percent in just 30 years, scientists put it on the official watch list of threatened and endangered species worldwide, calling it "vulnerable." That's two steps up the danger ladder from its previous designation of being a species of least concern. In 1985, there were between 151,000 and 163,000 giraffes but in 2015 the number was down to 97,562, according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

At a biodiversity meeting Wednesday in Mexico, the IUCN increased the threat level for 35 species and lowered the threat level for seven species on its "Red List" of threatened species, considered by scientists the official list of what animals and plants are in danger of disappearing.

The giraffe is the only mammal whose status changed on the list this year. Scientists blame habitat loss. While everyone worries about elephants, Earth has four times as many pachyderms as giraffes, said Julian Fennessy and Noelle Kumpel, co-chairs of the specialty group of biologists that put the giraffe on the IUCN Red List. They both called what's happening to giraffes a "silent extinction."

"Everyone assumes giraffes are everywhere," said Fennessy, co-director of the Giraffe Conservation Foundation. But they're not, Fennessy said. Until recently, biologists hadn't done a good job assessing giraffes' numbers and where they can be found, and they have been lumped into one broad species instead of nine separate subspecies.

"There's a strong tendency to think that familiar species (such as giraffes, chimps, etc.) must be OK because they are familiar and we see them in zoos," said Duke University conservation biologist Stuart Pimm, who wasn't part of the work and has

criticized the IUCN for not putting enough species on the threat list. "This is dangerous."

Fennessy blamed shrinking living space as the main culprit in the declining giraffe population, worsened by poaching and disease. People are moving into giraffe areas especially in central and eastern Africa. Giraffe numbers are plunging most in central and eastern Africa and are being offset by increases in southern Africa, he said.

This has fragmented giraffe populations, making them shrink in size with wild giraffes gone from seven countries - Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Guinea, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal, said Kumpel of the Zoological Society of London.

The IUCN says 860 plant and animal species are extinct, and another 68 are extinct in the wild. Nearly 13,000 are endangered or critically endangered. The next level is vulnerable, where giraffes were placed, followed by near threatened and least concerned.

The status of two snake species worsened. The ornate ground snake, which lives on the tiny island of Saint Lucia, deteriorated from endangered to critically endangered. The Lacepede's ground snake of Martinique, which was already critically endangered, is now considered possibly extinct, pending confirmation, as is the trondo mainty, a river fish in Madagascar.

But there is also good news for some species. The Victoria stonebasher, a freshwater fish in Africa, went from being considered endangered to least concerned with a stable population. And an African plant, the acmadenia candida, which was declared extinct, has been rediscovered and is now considered endangered. Another freshwater fish, ptychochromoides itasy, which hadn't been seen since the 1960s, has been rediscovered in small numbers in Africa's Sakay River and is now considered critically endangered. —AP

## US LIFE EXPECTANCY FALLS, AS MANY KINDS OF DEATH INCREASE

### JAPAN REPORTS HIGHEST AT NEARLY 84 YEARS

**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 S. Jay Olshansky, a University of Illinois-Chicago public health researcher.

An American born in 2015 is expected to live 78 years and 9 1/2 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.

#### Highest life expectancy

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 uptick in the death rate from the nation's leading killer, heart disease. Death rates also increased for chronic lower lung disease, accidental injuries, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, kidney disease and suicide.

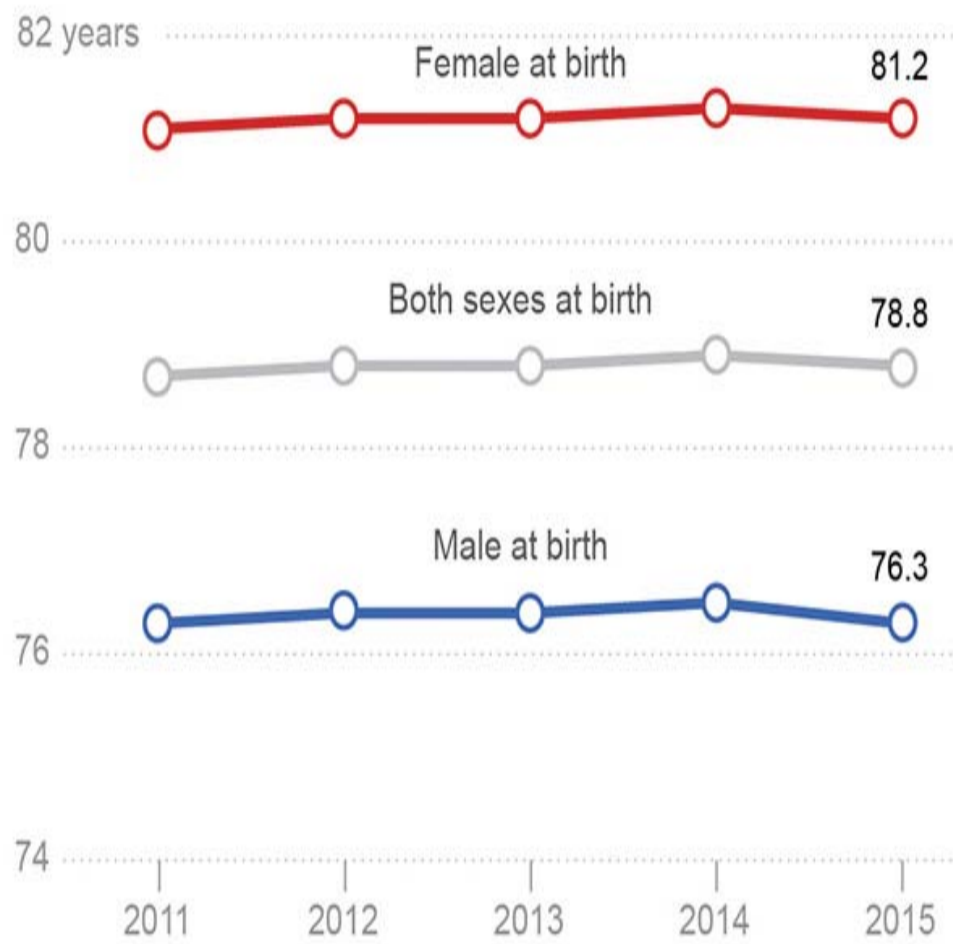
The only clear drop was in cancer, the nation's No. 2 killer. Experts aren't sure what's behind the stall. Some, like Olshansky, suspect obesity, an underlying factor in some of the largest causes of death, particularly heart disease. But there's also the impact of rising drug overdoses and suicides, 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,

## US life expectancy falls

A decades-long trend of rising life expectancy in the U.S. could be ending: It declined last year and it is no better than it was four years ago.



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

AP

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 ris-

ing 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



**NAIROBI:** A giraffe bends over to take food pellets from Kenyan visitors at the Giraffe Centre in Karen, on the outskirts on Wednesday, Dec 7, 2016. —AP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
ر. فهد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال  
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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



## ACK'S GAITH: EQUIPPING STUDENTS WITH COMMUNICATION, LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK SKILLS

By Ben Garcia

The Australian College of Kuwait's (ACK) School of Engineering yesterday held its fifth Fall/Semester 2016 students' graduation projects' exhibition at Movenpick Hotel. The projects presented by students at ACK have always been special, as they are the result of

years of hard work and perseverance.

Projects include utilizing local waste materials in concrete form, construction management study for private villas, restaurant complexes, reconstruction of pavements, recycled asphalt pavements, reduction of paper consumption, reduction of electricity usage, water recovery at mosques, water recovery at car wash facilities, recycling

used oil, green villas, delivery robots, solar energy, etc.

Dr Mohamed Gaith, Associate Dean, School of Engineering, assured parents that the students have already acquired soft and hard engineering skills, knowledge and concepts necessary to perform well when they leave ACK and join the workforce. "In these projects, you'll find the work of students from civil, electrical, mechanical

and petroleum engineering. It is really very important to equip the students with communication skills, leadership and teamwork," he said. ACK students successfully produced 32 unique projects. "Our students have worked very hard to reach this level and utilized the accumulated engineering skills and available educational tools to broaden their knowledge about subjects," Gaith said.



## NCCAL, IWG ORGANIZE 'KUWAIT IN THE EYES OF DIPLOMATS'

By Faten Omar

In celebration of Kuwait as the Capital of Islamic Culture for 2016, The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters and the International Women's Group Kuwait, organized a panel discussion entitled "Kuwait in the eyes of diplomats" on Wednesday at the Kuwait National Library auditorium. The Amiri Diwan's Advisor Mohammad Abu Al-Hasan welcomed the ambassadors for the panel discussion. He said, "I served Kuwait as its ambassador in 6 countries, and I know how hard it is to be serving your country and to emerge with the community, like these ambassadors did."

French Ambassador to Kuwait, Christian Nakhle said that the diwaniya, which includes all spectrums of the Kuwaiti people from all ages and cultures, played an important role to his knowledge of Kuwait. He stressed that his country's relationship with Kuwait is old and rooted which began when French geographers

placed Kuwait on their geographical maps. Adding that France was one of the first countries to recognize Kuwait's independence, it knows the importance of the development of diplomatic relations with the State, as they invested in Kuwait in August 1961 following its independence. Nakhle pointed out that Kuwait is keen to promote its cultural work with the French by organizing various exhibitions, cultural events, hosting academics and artists referring to the keenness of the French Embassy in turn, on the development of this joint work. He added that there are upcoming projects such as a hospital for cancer treatment, which is scheduled to open soon. About visa, he explained that France is continuing its efforts in facilitating this process, pointing out that last year, nearly 60 thousand Kuwaiti citizens got the French visa. He praised the role of Kuwaiti women in all areas and their struggle for access to political rights and equality with men.

The Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Yasser



Atef said that the diwaniya was a new experience. He added that diwanias distinguish between various components of Kuwaiti society and among the guests from various countries of the world who contribute towards development. He pointed out that he personally felt

welcomed after arriving in Kuwait, he saw that Kuwaiti people are aware of Egyptian history, tradition, culture, and art. Egyptian ambassador added that his knowledge of Kuwait did not establish when he became an ambassador but long time ago, "I know Kuwait since I was addicted to reading Al-Arabi magazine and enjoyed its versions, world of knowledge and its distinguished newspapers."

The Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Alexey Solomatina said that Kuwait was the first country in the Arabian Gulf to establish diplomatic relations with Russia. That's why there is much more respect and desire to cooperate with Kuwait and exchange visits. We are expecting a proposal from Russia to set up a joint committee with the government of Kuwait. Meetings covering economic, technical, cultural, scientific and education fields, he said. Solomatina said, he took up his duties as a Russian ambassador to Kuwait in the spring of 2013 when the two friendly countries at the time were celebrating the fiftieth

anniversary of the diplomatic ties. He said that the relationship with Kuwait is old and rooted since last century when it hosted Sheikh Mubarak Al-Kabeer crews warships of the Russian Imperial Fleet, which was visiting Kuwaiti beaches on its way to the Far East in 1900 and in 1903.

He explained that the Russian political leadership is continuing to develop and strengthen relations between the two countries, particularly through the visits that contributed to the enrichment since the nineties, when the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, was a guest in Moscow in order to coordinate the positions of the exchange between the two countries towards the most important issues on the regional and international business. Kuwait signed six agreements and memoranda of understanding between the two countries in oil and gas, transportation, direct investment, military cooperation, technical and cultural field.



## ALARGAN EXTENDS SUPPORT TO INJAZ FOR 11TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

**A**LARGAN International Real Estate Company announced that it has renewed its support to the non-profit youth education organization INJAZ Kuwait for the 11th consecutive year, committing to the knowledge and skills development of university and high school students as part of its responsibility to engage future professionals who will drive Kuwait's growth.

Over the previous 10 years, the Company has supported and volunteered in four of INJAZ's key programs, namely the Job Shadow, Career Success, Entrepreneurship Masterclass and Innovation Camp, which are all educational programs on entrepreneurial and leadership skills aimed at inspiring and educating future generations.

ALARGAN team members volunteer in delivering these programs at the company's headquarters in Kuwait. In the 2015/2016 academic year, the number of ALARGAN volunteers increased to 26, including the Company's CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors Engineer Khaled Al-Meshaan, and Chief Business Development Officer Meshaan Al-Meshaan. During the same year, the Company hosted over 136 students from Kuwait University, the Australian College of Kuwait, the New English School, and the Canadian Bilingual School.

Khaled Al-Meshaan said: "Our business mot-

to is interlinked with our wellbeing vision for our communities. We believe in the importance of sustainable development to support an economically and socially viable urban environment. In reaching our aim, we also need to invest and share our knowledge with younger generations to whom we will pass on the torch of building a sustainable society."

Launching the 2016/2017 academic year, ALARGAN hosted students from the American Creativity Academy Girls' Campus in the Career Success program. Company engineers presented fundamentals in engineering and design, and focused on the necessity of developing green buildings. The program concluded with a tour of ALARGAN's headquarters, the only building in Kuwait to be accredited Platinum ranking, the highest ranking, in the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) program awarded by the US Green Building Council (USGBC).

Al-Meshaan added: "It is never too early to introduce our young students into the challenges we see today and share the solutions we are bringing each day. We have a responsibility towards providing them with a world where they can grow, and a world they can sustain as well. We hope to have inspired many of these young ambitious students into a career in engineering and sustainable development in the near future."



## THE PALMS BEACH HOTEL & SPA INAUGURATES THE BEAUTY LOUNGE, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN KUWAIT IN THE PRESENCE OF LEBANESE POP SINGER ROLA SAAD

**T**he Palms Beach Hotel & Spa launched the most luxurious Beauty Lounge, the first of its kind in Kuwait, in the presence of VIP guests, media delegates as well as the Lebanese pop singer Rola Saad. The Beauty Lounge Owner, Ghosoun Al-Khaled expressed her delight for the great response achieved from ladies and their satisfaction, especially when they were the first to witness the magnificent look of Rola Saad and her makeup done by the lounge experts. Every woman wants to look great and feel good, that's why

she's always in search for a solution or technique that provides her with everything she needs to have beautiful hair, skin, face, and nails. In addition to paying more attention to her entire charming, elegant look by shopping the latest fashion trends. Keeping this in mind, the luxurious Beauty Lounge was launched aiming to indulge women in a luxurious experience and give her the perfect look.

The Beauty Lounge offers a comprehensive range of services that are provided by international experts from Lebanon and Europe, giv-

ing women a flawless look for every occasion. The team of stylists and expert artists are available to offer outstanding services that help women look and feel their best, as well as to help them shop for the appropriate pieces from the latest fashion trends that are available in the atelier featuring a large collection of evening and wedding wardrobes, which are handmade and designed to reveal women's fine taste. Not forgetting the beauty center where women can indulge in total relaxation to achieve a radiant soft smooth healthy skin,

cellulite treatment, as well as the best nails, hair and facial care.

Besides, the lounge services include scalp care for dry hair, hair loss, and cleansing water treatment, in addition to obesity and body contouring treatments by the use of latest machinery like the solarium for tanning and the collagen to rejuvenate body cells under the supervision of qualified experts. The Beauty Lounge also offers a wide range of high-quality cosmetics and skin care products from renowned top brands, enabling women

to take care of their skin and hair at home.

That's not all! The lounge also embraces a deluxe spa for women to relax and unwind in utmost privacy while enjoying the Moroccan baths and soothing massages. What's more? Brides-to-be can get pampered before their big day with the exceptional bridal package. The Beauty Lounge is the number one destination for every woman who is looking to enhance her natural beauty and build her confidence, because definitely every woman defines her own beauty.

## KERALA GOVT CONSIDERS REHABILITATION PROJECT FOR GULF RETURNEES

By Sajeev K Peter

**T**he Kerala government will soon convene a meeting of the members of non-resident Keralites affairs (NORKA) department and other concerned officials in order to expand the welfare schemes for non-resident Keralites and introduce more incentives to them, said Kodyeri Balakrishnan, the general secretary of the ruling Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M), Kerala.

"The Kerala government is planning to reform the Pravasi Welfare Board with the introduction of more attractive incentives and benefits for non-resident Keralites," he said addressing a meet-the-press program prior to an interactive session with Indian community leaders in Farwaniya on Saturday.

Balakrishnan, who arrived in Kuwait to attend a Renaissance Conference' organized by Kerala Art Lovers Association's (KALA), Kuwait, said the state government is proposing to establish legal cells in Gulf countries with the help of the central government in order to provide legal assistance to Keralites who are facing legal cases in their resident countries.

"These legal cells can be attached to the respective Indian embassies in these countries," he said.

Similarly, the Kerala government is also working on a mechanism to simplify the procedure of repatriation of the bodies of Keralites who pass die abroad.

Talking about the proposed project initiated by the Kerala government to rehabilitate Gulf returnees, Balakrishnan said, the government is still formulating a viable project for the rehabilitation of the Gulf returnees in consultations with various Malayali organizations in the Gulf. NORKA-ROOTS has already started registration of Keralites who return from overseas for implementation of various welfare schemes and formulating policies for their rehabilitation.

Balakrishnan said the Left Democratic Front government in Kerala has launched a 'Green Kerala Mission' on December 8, which is a multidimensional development project focusing on sanitation, water conservation, environmental protection and paddy cultivation. "We conceive this mission as a people's initiative with their active



involvement from grassroots level," he said.

He said the government will identify 1,000 schools in the state in order to develop them into schools of international standards. "Our

objective is to provide quality education to all. We will create 44,000 smart classrooms in two years' time," he said. Balakrishnan admitted that around 450,000 people in Kerala are homeless. "The state government

will provide houses to all these people in a span of five years," he said.

### Currency ban

Talking about the grave issue of currency ban by the central govern-

ment and its immediate impact on Kerala, he said, the state will witness a dip of 40 percent of its revenues this year following the currency crisis. "All sectors are reeling from its impact, be it agriculture or small industry. Tax collection has been seriously affected. There is a moratorium on loan. Cooperative sector is the worst affected by the ill-conceived policy of the central government and the Supreme Court has intervened in this matter," he said. He called on the central government to announce a package for state governments to tide over the crisis situation.

Reacting to a report that Kerala Chief Minister Pinarai Vijayan was prevented by Madhya Pradesh state police from attending a conference in Bhopal, Balakrishnan said, "It is a despicable act that reflects the vehement intolerance of the BJP government in the state. It is for the first time in the history of India that a chief minister was prevented from attending a function in another state. It is a blatant violation of the federal system and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has failed in discharging his constitutional obligation," he said.





# CLASSIFIEDS




## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (01/12/2016 TO 07/12/2016)

Programme	Time	Programme	Time	Programme	Time
<b>SHARQIA-1</b> TAHT AL TARABEZA DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi TROLLS TAHT AL TARABEZA TAHT AL TARABEZA TAHT AL TARABEZA	11:45 AM 2:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM	I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER ALLIED I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER	2:15 PM 4:45 PM 7:15 PM 9:45 PM 2:15 AM	I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER	4:45 PM 7:00 PM 9:15 PM 11:30 PM
<b>SHARQIA-2</b> UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS	12:30 PM 2:30 PM 4:30 PM 6:30 PM 8:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:30 AM	FANAR-3 DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi LION LION KAHAANI 2: DURGA RANI SINGH - Hindi DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi LION	1:00 PM 1:30 PM 4:00 PM 6:30 PM 9:00 PM 12:05 AM	<b>AVENUES-2</b> FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM TROLLS-3D-4DX FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM	11:30 AM 2:15 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM
<b>SHARQIA-3</b> LION LION ALLIED ITALIAN RACE ITALIAN RACE LION	12:15 PM 2:45 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:15 AM	FANAR-4 UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS	12:45 PM 2:45 PM 4:45 PM 6:45 PM 8:45 PM 10:45 PM 12:45 AM	<b>AVENUES-3</b> ITALIAN RACE ITALIAN RACE ITALIAN RACE ITALIAN RACE ITALIAN RACE	12:30 PM 2:45 PM 5:15 PM 7:45 PM 10:15 PM 12:45 AM
<b>MUHALAB-1</b> DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi TAHT AL TARABEZA TAHT AL TARABEZA DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi TAHT AL TARABEZA TAHT AL TARABEZA	12:45 PM 1:30 PM 3:45 PM 6:15 PM 9:15 PM 11:30 PM	FANAR-5 TAHT AL TARABEZA TAHT AL TARABEZA TROLLS TROLLS TAHT AL TARABEZA TAHT AL TARABEZA TAHT AL TARABEZA	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 2:30 PM 4:30 PM 6:30 PM 9:00 PM 11:30 PM	<b>360°-1</b> UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS-3D UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS-3D UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS	1:00 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:00 PM 11:00 PM 1:00 AM
<b>MUHALAB-2</b> ALLIED ARRIVAL TROLLS ARRIVAL ALLIED ARRIVAL	11:45 AM 2:15 PM 4:45 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 11:45 PM	MARINA-1 ALLIED DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi TROLLS LION ALLIED LION	12:15 PM 2:30 PM 5:30 PM 7:30 PM 10:00 PM 12:30 AM	<b>360°-2</b> I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER I AM NOT A SERIAL KILLER	1:15 PM 3:30 PM 5:45 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM
<b>MUHALAB-3</b> UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM	MARINA-2 ARRIVAL TAHT AL TARABEZA ARRIVAL TAHT AL TARABEZA TAHT AL TARABEZA ARRIVAL	11:30 AM 2:15 PM 4:30 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM	<b>360°-3</b> ARRIVAL ALLIED ARRIVAL AANANDAM - Malayalam ALLIED ARRIVAL	11:45 AM 2:15 PM 4:45 PM 7:15 PM 9:45 PM 12:15 AM
<b>FANAR-1</b> ITALIAN RACE ITALIAN RACE ITALIAN RACE ITALIAN RACE ITALIAN RACE	11:45 AM 2:15 PM 4:45 PM 7:30 PM 10:00 PM 12:30 AM	MARINA-3 UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:15 PM 6:15 PM 8:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM	<b>AL-KOUT.1</b> UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS	12:45 PM 2:45 PM 4:45 PM 6:45 PM 8:45 PM 10:45 PM 12:45 AM
<b>FANAR-2</b> ALLIED	11:30 AM	<b>AVENUES-1</b> ARRIVAL LAF WA DAWARAN	12:00 PM 2:30 PM	<b>AL-KOUT.2</b> LION ALLIED LION ITALIAN RACE	12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:45 PM

**ACCOMMODATION**  
 Sharing room with Balcony available from January 2017, with Pakistani family for couple family or ladies health workers. Farwaniya backside, Crown Plaza, Area 6, Street 3. Contact: 99552706. (C 5246) 12-12-2016

**FOR SALE**  
 For sell new white faux fur (artificial) coat size M and pre owned like new black leather coat size M made in Turkey Tel. No: 55020291 12-12-2016

**PRAYER TIMINGS**



**Fajr: 05:08**  
**Shorook 06:33**  
**Duhr: 11:42**  
**Asr: 14:32**  
**Maghrib: 16:51**  
**Isha: 18:13**

**EMERGENCY 112**

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

**Spacious & Luxurious APARTMENTS**  
**(160 m2) In Benid Alqar**

- 3 Bedroom with Bath, Maid Room, Furnished Kitchen
- Large, Living Room with Bath.

**Building Has:**

- Swimming Pool, Sauna, Gym
- Internet & Satellite
- Channels, and Car Park in Basement

**TEL: 50294929**

**Wanted For work immediately In a project in Al-Abdally**

- **Maintenance Supervisor** with experience in staff residence project maintenance, making daily reports and managing, maintenance technicians, must have Kuwaiti driving license.
- **Electric Technician** for large generators (Digital) 1600 KVA
- **AC Technician and Assistant AC Technician**
- **Welding Technician**
- **Half lorry driver** with private license (Salary KD 170)

**General conditions**  
 1- Transferable article 18 residency visa  
 2- Preference to Asians  
 3- Minimum five years experience

**Company privileges:**  
 (Visa+ Accommodation+ sustenance)

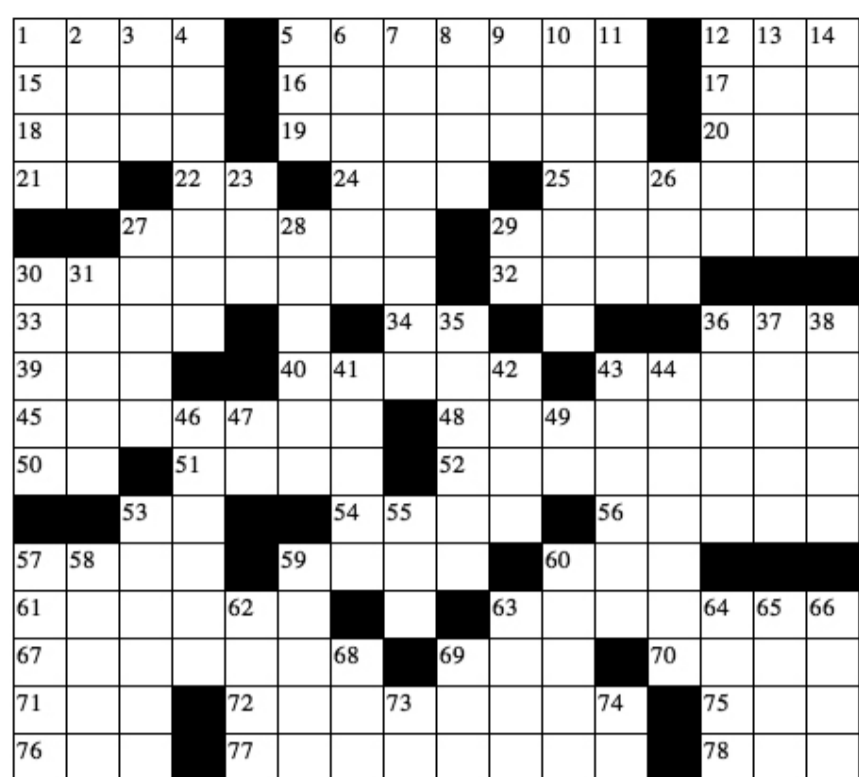
Interested candidates e-mail C.V. to:  
 soos1975@yahoo.com  
 Or call: 99567431

## Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

### Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Monday 12/12/2016				Departure Flights on Monday 12/12/2016			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20	KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KAC	564	Amman	13:40
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	FEG	931	Alexandria	13:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55
KAC	102	London	00:55	KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
KAC	742	Dammam	01:00	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	KAC	414	Bangkok	14:35
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	KAC	542	Cairo	14:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
BRZ	193	TBS	02:30	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	FDB	051	Dubai	16:25
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	788	Jeddah	16:30
CEB	0018	Manila	03:15	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	RJA	640	Amman	16:55
KAC	358	Kochi	03:30	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
KAC	784	Jeddah	03:55	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
MSC	501	Alexandria	04:05	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:55	FDB	063	Dubai	18:10
FEG	933	Sohag	05:00	JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
JZR	503	Luxor	05:10	KAC	502	Beirut	18:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05	KAC	620	Dubai	19:50
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	KNE	381	Taif	19:55
BAW	157	London	06:40	KAC	166	Rome	19:55
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	KAC	694	Muscat	20:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	647	Muscat	20:10
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	OMA	647	Muscat	20:10
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	KAC	174	Munich	20:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	FDB	5053	Dubai	21:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00	KAC	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05	UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25
FEG	953	Asyut	12:35	JZR	241	Amman	22:25
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	KAC	164	Paris	22:55
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45
				JAI	574	Mumbai	23:50
				BBC	143	Dhaka	23:55
				KAC	162	Geneva	23:55

CROSSWORD 1458



ACROSS

1. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
5. A member of an Indian people formerly living along the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.
12. A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
15. The act of scanning.
16. With sweetening added.
17. Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
18. (prefix) Within.
19. A Dravidian language spoken in southern India.
20. (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir known for his beauty and skill with bow and skis.
21. A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.
22. A hard brittle gray polyvalent metallic element that resembles iron but is not magnetic.
24. Any of various long-tailed rodents similar to but larger than a mouse.
25. Large family of bark-boring or wood-boring short-beaked beetles.
30. English physicist who studied the density of gases and discovered argon.
32. An informal term for a father.
33. In a competent capable manner.
34. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
39. Neckwear consisting of a long narrow piece of material worn (mostly by men) under a collar and tied in knot at the front.
40. (astronomy) An indistinct surface feature of Mars once thought to be a system of channels.
45. Nonstandard usage adv 1.
48. Evergreen trees and shrubs.
50. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
51. A nearly horizontal passage from the surface into a mine.
52. (chemistry) Having a valence of two or having two valences.
54. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
56. (the feminine of raja) A Hindu princess or the wife of a raja.
57. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
61. A government tax on imports or exports.
67. Give an education to.
70. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
71. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
72. Large genus of tropical American trees that yield a bast fiber used for cordage and bark used in tanning.
75. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
76. Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand.
77. The activity of converting from plain text into code.
78. An insecticide that is also toxic to animals and humans.

DOWN

1. One thousandth of a second.
2. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
3. An interest followed with exaggerated zeal.
4. Deviation from the normal or common order or form or rule.
5. Inquire about.
6. A member of a nomadic Berber people of the Sahara.
7. Eel-shaped vertebrate without jaws or paired appendages including the cyclostomes and some extinct forms.
8. Influential German idealist philosopher (1724-1804).
9. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
10. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
11. Extinct small mostly diurnal lower primates that fed on leaves and fruit.
12. Of or relating to Saudi Arabia or its people.
13. Rice cooked in well-seasoned broth with onions or celery and usually poultry or game or shellfish and sometimes tomatoes.
14. A narrow street with walls on both sides.
23. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
26. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
27. Elected Vice President and became the 10th President of the United States when Harrison died (1790-1862).
28. Chinese tree cultivated especially in Philippines and India for its edible fruit.
29. A public promotion of some product or service.
31. A promontory in northern Morocco opposite the Rock of Gibraltar.
35. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
36. A fabric woven with fibers from the flax plant.
37. Place in a line or arrange so as to be parallel.
38. Disposed to avoid notice.
41. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
42. Set down according to a plan.
43. Scarabaeid beetle considered divine by ancient Egyptians.
44. A genus of Cichlidae.
46. (prosody) Of or consisting of iambs.
47. A ductile silvery-white ductile ferromagnetic trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
49. A motorized wheeled vehicle used for camping or other recreational activities.
53. Supernatural half-man and half-bird vehicle or bearer of Vishnu.
55. An informal term for a father.
58. A group of Plains Indians formerly living in what is now North and South Dakota and Nebraska and Kansas and Arkansas and Louisiana and Oklahoma and Texas.
59. Many times at short intervals.
60. A bowl-shaped vessel.
62. The front of the head from the forehead to the chin and ear to ear.
63. A member of the Shoshonean people of northeastern Arizona.
64. (British) Traditional jazz as revived in the 1950s.
65. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
66. Tasting sour like a lemon.
68. (computer science) A coding system that incorporates extra parity bits in order to detect errors.
69. Alternative names for the body of a human being.
73. An artificial language for international use that rejects rejects all existing words and is based instead on an abstract analysis of ideas.
74. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Those around you are going to find it very easy to understand exactly what you mean when you speak. You should find it a good time to read a romantic novel or to take in a movie. You may decide to read a book to a young person, even though the young person is not present. A tape recorder can come in very handy for playing back another day. This method would also be fun when creating a story of your own. A typist could listen to your recording and type the story into a manuscript to submit to a publisher. You may be quite eloquent in speaking or communicating. Knowing how you feel about life should make the telling of some true story fun and captivating. Picture albums, hot tea and a bicycle ride for two end this weekend with a smile.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You should be feeling quite healthy and natural today. Everything points to your taking the initiative in some group endeavor. You may have a job that is part-time, perhaps as a tour guide. You could be giving assistance to newcomers in a religious group. Whatever the case, you really are involved in conversations that involve memories of the past, as well as places of interest from your travels or from reading. The elderly love to talk about these things and there are much laughter and fun conversations in your part of the world today. Taking chances on the emotional level just seems somehow natural to you. Common sense keeps you financially in check when it comes to a bit of shopping this afternoon. Do not loan or borrow money this month.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may be put in control of people today. Orientation, controlling a crowd and organizing people are just part of what you do well. You encourage others to ask questions and this eases any frustrations for them at a later date. You encourage and instruct and could be a good part of a team that enlists the public in education, military or any new beginnings of a number of professions. This group you are leading today will probably be full of young people. Listening to some of the young people in this country may be like listening to the sages of the ages. Anything is possible and ideas for investments in the future may be apparent. By the end of this day, you will find that you will be looking for more opportunities like this day offers.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You set life examples for your family and friends. Today, however, you will want to leave the door open to some beneficial changes. A family meeting is the perfect time for decisions regarding the way that money is spent or the introduction of budgeting or entertaining requirements. You join the family in making group decisions about who is responsible for which decorations. You will be guiding or helping along the way but you will be pleased at the amount of cooperation and interest that you have ignited. You teach commonsense thinking when scheduling comes into play. You may also discover it is a relief to be able to share the responsibility of making decisions. An open mind and a positive attitude equal success.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You could be looking to add a little color to your life, allowing your unique and unusual qualities to surface. It may surprise you to know that someone close to you understands you better than you thought and he or she is supportive. You could establish some new solutions or stumble on to something very inventive. Allowing your creative and intuitive talent to evolve can bring you many nice surprises. You just somehow know that anything is possible if you can picture the end result. You are not afraid to take risks at the deepest emotional level. Optimism and faith are the two guiding words. Allow yourself the luxury of exploring your feelings helps in understanding. Make an outline of the steps needed to get where you want to go.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your attitude seems at peace-others only hope to become as evolved as you appear to be. You take problems as valued lessons, rather than obstacles. You seem to find a deep appreciation for responsibilities. Nurturing is a larger than usual component in your life and as you care for others they, in turn will care for you. Managing and directing others wherever you find yourself seems to be your specialty. If the kids in your family seem to be sports oriented, you might be the first to step in and help them with the techniques of any number of sports. You may even decide that a video of the game they like the most can be studied and critiqued. Later, this afternoon your private life has moved into the direction of music or a religious group gathering.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are able to captivate and spellbind the audience today. A birthday party, a teaching lesson, a story-reading class or whatever you have gotten yourself into will certainly result in positive returns for your effort. A bit of diplomacy, however, goes a long way. You might smile and offer to help with a little money for an escort service. As it turns out, someone you and your friend know will be able to go to the dinner and will also appreciate the invitation. The result of this situation may leave you feeling very optimistic for the next few days. You enjoy experiencing life each busy day and you seem to be able to cram a large amount of activity into each day. If you have a way to visit an exercise club, diving into a warm pool, or a hot tub may be just what you need. You may be quite pleased with the results of today's busy activities.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your close friend may have a business dinner to go to next week and wants to ask your loved one to go with him or her. A bit of diplomacy, however, goes a long way. You might smile and offer to help with a little money for an escort service. As it turns out, someone you and your friend know will be able to go to the dinner and will also appreciate the invitation. The result of this situation may leave you feeling very optimistic for the next few days. You enjoy experiencing life each busy day and you seem to be able to cram a large amount of activity into each day. If you have a way to visit an exercise club, diving into a warm pool, or a hot tub may be just what you need. You may be quite pleased with the results of today's busy activities.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

One way to measure your life-progress is whether you have the same problems now as you did the year before. Although you may still have some of the habits that get you into some of the situations that cause you problems, you have learned how to detect and diminish the onset and duration of the difficulties. Your progress toward your personal goals is praiseworthy. You have, however, been neglecting your creative talents lately. This afternoon you make it a point to spend time with loved ones. Paint or photograph the sunset. You may also find that this creative project would make a thoughtful gift to someone special. You appreciate your life, your talents, your opportunities and your friends-including loved ones.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

The emotions that you have or the way that you feel should be very clear. It's a great time to understand your own situation, just how you feel about yourself. Things seem to be working together on the outside to help you develop peacefully on the inside-or it could be the other way around. Whatever the case, your energies are peaceful and others take their guidance from your presence. You seem to truly understand anything of a theoretical nature and know just how to present or communicate this to others. You could be performing or enjoying a performance of some type this afternoon. Keeping up-to-date with the way entertainment trends develop can be a lot of fun for you-as well as a study in humanity. Your outlook on life is very optimistic.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

A powerful need to nurture is a bigger than usual component in your life now. You could be feeling the need to care for others or to have them care for you, possibly on a public as opposed to a private level. You have needs and you sense the needs of others. Being able to piece the two together well is what will make for positive results. Accepting praise for your tastes or belongings helps to make your day even a bit more pleasant. You may not have any problem in valuing your own life situation today. This could be the perfect time to think and study. You could find yourself enjoying a long conversation, writing a letter or making a special phone call. Long-distance conversations can be productive. Study for a class is easy this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You could find yourself in or around the activities that come with a parade or some other similar high-energy activity. The positive and magical looks on the faces of children delight everyone present for the experience. The air is crisp and people are talking, laughing and pointing to all sorts of eye-catching fantasies. You help to teach others through your actions and today you might have volunteered to help a wheelchair rider or handicapped person see this event. Your friends or family members may have decided they liked your idea and joined to help you share the day with others. There is much to learn from those less fortunate. Creative energy this evening may open a door to poetry, musical lyrics, advertising jingle, etc., etc.

Wordsearch Puzzle

90's Songs 2

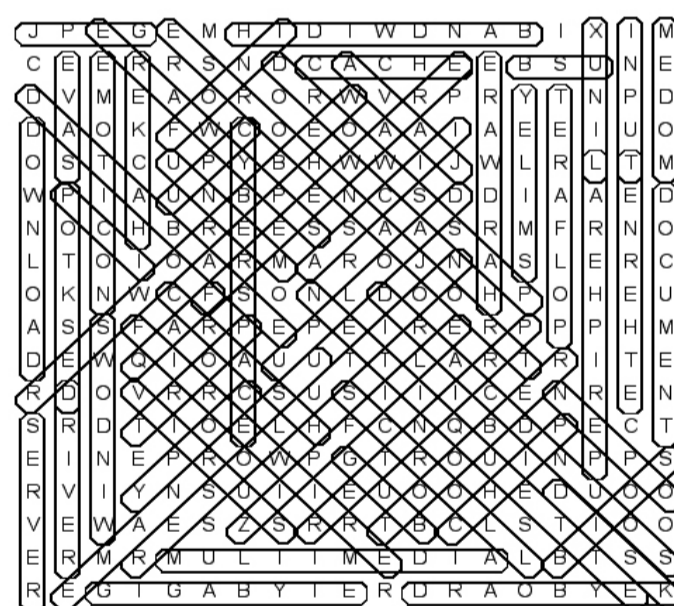
Find and circle all of the 1990's songs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional song.



- |                |              |                |               |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| AGAIN          | EPIC         | MOUTH          | STAY          |
| BABY, BABY     | ESCAPADE     | MY WAY         | STRONG ENOUGH |
| BAILAMOS       | FANTASY      | NAME           | SUMMER GIRLS  |
| BARBIE GIRL    | FUNKAFIED    | NO SCRUBS      | THE SIGN      |
| BELIEVE        | GETTO JAM    | NOBODY         | THIS KISS     |
| BOOMBASTIC     | HONEY        | ORDINARY WORLD | TODAY         |
| CAN'T STOP     | IRIS         | PUSH           | TOO FUNKY     |
| CRUSH          | LET'S RIDE   | REAL LOVE      | TWISTED       |
| DANGEROUS      | LINGER       | RUNAWAY        | UNDERSTANDING |
| DOWNTOWN TRAIN | LONGVIEW     | SLAM           | UNSKINNY BOP  |
| EMOTIONS       | LOVE IS      | SMOOTH         | WEAK          |
| ENDLESS LOVE   | MOTOWNPHILLY | SPOONMAN       | WONDERWALL    |

Yesterday's Solution

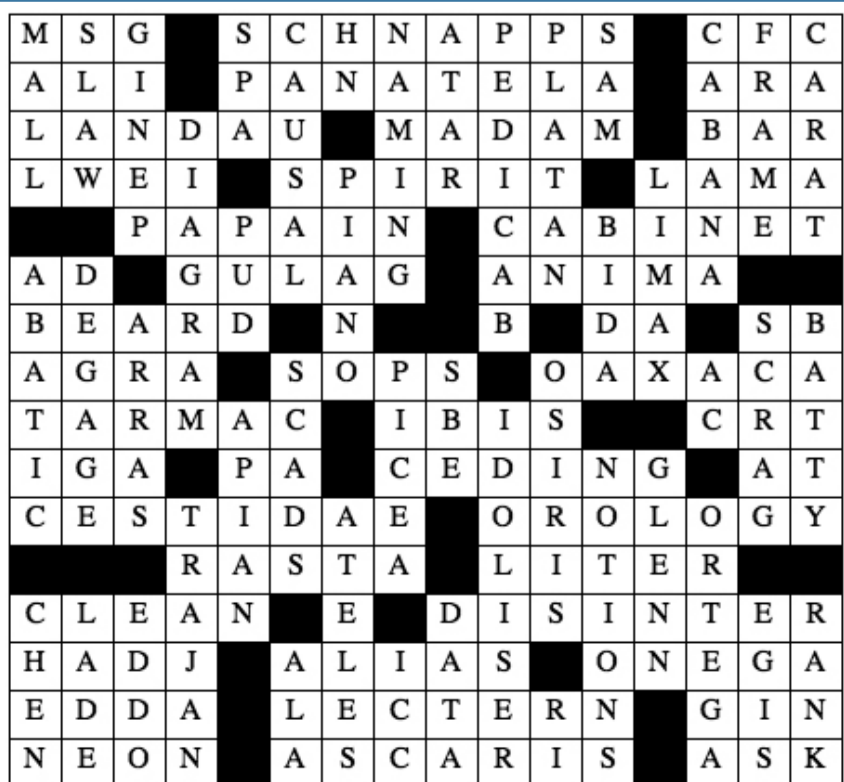
Computer Jargon 2



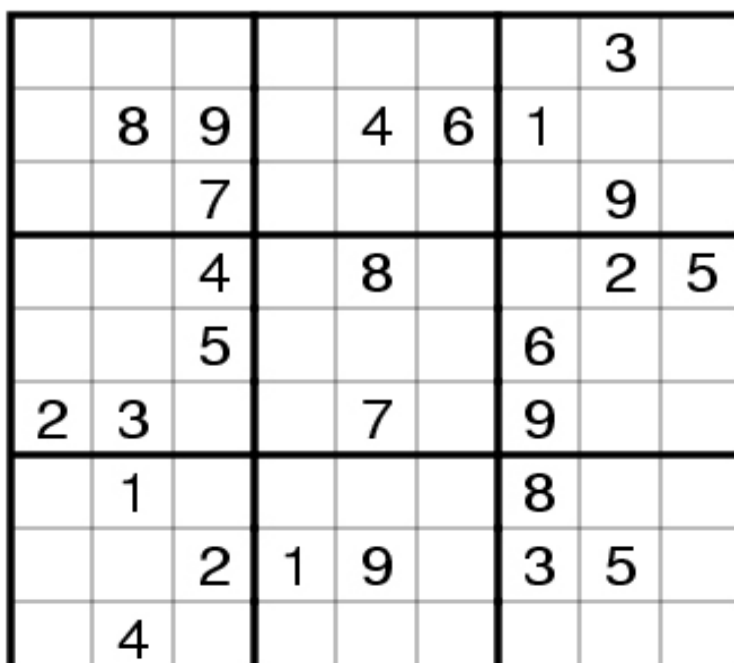
- |            |          |            |            |              |
|------------|----------|------------|------------|--------------|
| ASCII      | DISK     | HARDWARE   | PASSWORD   | SOUNDCARD    |
| BANDWIDTH  | DOCUMENT | INPUT      | PERIPHERAL | SPYWARE      |
| BIOS       | DOWNLOAD | JAVA       | PRINT      | TERRAFLOP    |
| BUG        | DRIVER   | JPEG       | REBOOT     | TROJAN HORSE |
| CACHE      | EMOTICON | KEYBOARD   | RESOLUTION | UPLOAD       |
| CHIP       | ETHERNET | LINUX      | SAVE       | USB          |
| CDPY       | FAQ      | MENU       | SERVER     | USERNAME     |
| CPU        | FIREWIRE | MODEM      | SMILEY     | VIRUS        |
| CRASH      | FONT     | MULTIMEDIA |            | WEB BROWSER  |
| CYBERSPACE | FREWARE  | NETIQUETTE |            | WINDOWS      |
| DATABASE   | GIGABYTE | OPEN       |            | ZIP FILE     |
| DESKTOP    | HACKER   |            |            |              |

The hidden word is: MICROPROCESSOR

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution







Chinese director Zang Qi Wu receives his award from Hungarian director Bela Tarr during the awards ceremony of the 14th edition of the Marrakech International Film festival in Marrakech. — AFP photos



Afghanistan actress Fereshteh Hosseini holds her trophy after receiving the best actress award.



Island's actor Blaher Hinriksson (right) and Denmark's actor Baldur Einarsson hold their trophy after receiving the best actor award.

# Chinese directors win top prizes at Marrakesh film festival

Two Chinese filmmakers won the top awards at the Marrakesh film festival this weekend, with Zang Qiwu's "The Donor" on the controversial issue of organ transplants taking the coveted Golden Star. The best director award went to China's Wang Xuebo for "Knife in the Clear Water". Fourteen films com-

peted in the annual festival but the top prize was Saturday handed to "The Donor" a drama about a poor father forced to sell his kidney to look after his family. Both Zang and Wang, seen as up and rising filmmakers, had also taken the two main prizes at the Busan International Film Festival in South Korea in October. Zang has

long worked alongside acclaimed Chinese director Zhang Yimou but "The Donor" was his first work as a director and portrayed the tragedies that come with organ transplants. "Knife in the Clear Water", also Wang's first feature film, tells the story of a farmer and the realities of life in a mountain village. The Jury

Prize at the festival was awarded to "Mister Universo" a film co-directed by Italian Tizza Covi and Austrian Rainer Frimmel. Best actress award went to Fereshteh Hosseini for her performance in the film "Parting" of Afghan director Navid Mahmoudi. Baldur Einarsson and Blaher Hinriksson

shared the best actor award for their roles in the Icelandic movie "Heartstone" of director Gudmundur Arnar Gudmundsson. Hungarian director Bela Tarr presided over the jury at this year's festival, which paid a special tribute to Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami who died in July. — AFP

## Arab film industry execs to launch first regional film awards in Dubai

The Arab film industry is starting up its first unified motion picture association and launching the Arab Film Awards, its version of the Oscars. The potentially game changing initiative, still in early stages, was announced yesterday by a group of prominent Arab producers and industry execs during the 13th edition of the Dubai Film Festival, the world's leading Arab cinema platform, which is among early supporters of the prizes.

Plans are underway for the first edition of the Arab Film Awards to take place in Dubai in March 2018, with statuettes to be handed out in 19 categories. The nascent entity behind the initiative is a non-profit called the Arab Film Institute which will be headquartered in Dubai. The goal is to have at least 500 members next year, said Lebanese producer Paul Baboudjian, a former executive director of funding org. Screen Institute Beirut, who conceived and got the ball rolling on what is intended to become the Arab rough equivalent of the European Film Academy, or the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in the US. "Being a witness and active member of the bright and rich Arab film scene, I felt we needed to bring together all this energy and exchange experiences and ideas as well as offer wider opportunities in a fast-changing world to our film community," Baboudjian said at a packed presser. The initial nucleus on the board of the institute behind the first pan-Arab film prizes includes prominent Egyptian indie producer and screenwriter Mohamed Hefzy ("Clash"); Tunisia's top arthouse producer Dora Bouchoucha ("Hedi"); the head of Jordan's Royal Film Commission George David; Moroccan filmmaker and producer Nabil Ayouch ("Much Loved"); Al Zain Al Sabah, who is Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and also a film producer; and Jawaheer Abdulla Al Qassimi, who is director of - Director of the UAE's Funn, Media Arts for Youth org. and the Sharjah Children International Film Festival.

Aside from launching the first pan-Arab film nods, the Arab Film Institute will seek to become a forum for the region's film industry to try and collectively tackle stumbling blocks such as distribution impediments caused by different varieties of Arabic in different countries, and collectively address the lack of a real pan-Arab star system. "We currently work in silos," said Hefzy. "More interaction is necessary," he noted.

"We are a single market; we need to build this market and this has not been happening," said Algerian director and producer Salem Brahimi ("Let Them Come"). Asked about potential rifts that could arise within the org, Brahimi said: "we are going to be messy! We are going to quarrel, we are going to learn as we go, we know that. But even if we make mistakes, we will achieve more than we are achieving right now, which is nothing." — Reuters



The cast of Rogue One: A Star Wars Story at the World Premiere at The Pantages Theatre on Saturday, in Hollywood, CA, where Nissan debuted their new Star Wars Limited Edition Nissan Rogue. —AP photos



Isaiah Crews, left, and Terry Crews jump as they arrive at the world premiere of "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story".

# 'Rogue One' premiere brings the Force back to Hollywood

Fans cheered wildly Saturday as the star-studded world premiere of the hotly anticipated "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" continued the space saga after the last episode shattered box office records. The \$200 million spin-off is expected to be the hottest ticket of 2016, recording the second-highest first day of domestic pre-sales ever, behind last year's "The Force Awakens." Police cordoned off the area around the Pantages Theater in Hollywood hosting almost 3,000 guests, setting up metal detectors and deploying scores of officers and sniffer dogs.

"I feel honored to be part of this family, and by that I mean the fans, not just the filmmakers," British actor Riz Ahmed, who stars as pilot Bodhi Rook, told AFP ahead of the screening. "They are what keep this alive. And it's them that we're all looking to, to gauge how we've done. I really feel proud of the film, and I hope they connect with it too." Set just before "A New Hope"—the original 1977 film—Gareth Edwards' "Rogue One" stars Felicity Jones as rebel Jyn Erso alongside Diego Luna, Donnie Yen, Mads Mikkelsen, Alan Tudyk, Jiang Wen and Forest Whitaker.

Jyn—a delinquent with a string of convictions for forgery, assault and theft—is recruited by the Rebel Alliance for a mission to destroy a planet-sized weapon of mass destruction recently named the Death Star. Mikkelsen told AFP it felt "surreal" to be part of the iconic saga, having grown up with the original trilogy.

"People will be surprised that we did a grittier film than the former ones, and more character driven," he said.

### 'Perfect film'

As well as the cast and crew, celebrities including actors Michael Douglas and Christian Bale, as well as maverick filmmaker Kevin Smith, walked the red carpet ahead of the screening. The intergalactic tale of good versus evil, friendship, loyalty and love created a defining moment in the history of popular culture, and launched one of the biggest movie franchises ever. The original "Star Wars" (1977) and its 1980 sequel "The Empire Strikes Back" turned Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill—who play its heroes Han Solo, Princess Leia and Luke Skywalker—into Hollywood's biggest stars.

"I love 'Star Wars' because it's a gateway drug, but 'Empire' is a perfect film, a top five movie of my lifetime," "Chasing Amy" and "Clerks" director Smith, 46, told AFP. Excitement around the "Rogue One" premiere had been building for days as the environs of the Pantages were closed to traffic to make way for a huge marquee and a full size model of an X-Wing fighter, parked in the street. Earlier in the day parody "Rogue Won: A Culture War" posters appeared at bus shelters and benches around Hollywood, featuring President-elect Donald Trump as the hero of the piece.

Earlier in the week a #DumpStarWars hashtag began trending on Twitter after one user made the claim—strongly denied by Disney—that the movie had been reshot to include an anti-Trump message. The campaign appeared not to have reached

scores of fans who lined up to catch a glimpse of the "Rogue One" cast, several in the outfits of their favorite characters.

### 'Awesome'

"My husband is a collector. He owns 65,000 pieces. Jyn Erso is a great female character. I love that they have incorporated female characters with great leadership," said Anne Jenkins, 48, of Kansas City. "Rogue One" is part of an attempt to revitalize the franchise since Disney bought Lucasfilm in 2012, when it was still reeling from grim reviews for the much-maligned 1999-2005 prequel trilogy. The idea was to bring out a sequel trilogy with a movie every other year—starting with "The Force Awakens" in 2015 — and intersperse those releases with an "anthology trilogy" of one-off, standalone movies in the even years.

J.J. Abrams' "The Force Awakens," made

\$2 billion to become 2015's biggest release, the most successful Disney motion picture and the third-highest grossing movie of all time. Pundits expect "Rogue One" to open at \$130-\$150 million, some way behind the \$248 million debut weekend for "The Force Awakens," and end up with a final global total around \$1.4 billion.

The premiere will be followed by a global rollout taking in 11 countries beginning on Wednesday before the film gets a wide US release on Friday.

"This is what the prequels should have been all along," TV host and film critic Scott Mantz told AFP after the screening. "I thought it was awesome. I thought it was clever the way they tied the original 'Star Wars' in with this... I actually felt like this was a more entertaining and rewarding 'Star Wars' experience than 'The Force Awakens.'" — AFP



Jaime King arrives at the world premiere of "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story".



Dylan Michael Douglas, from left, Michael Douglas and Carys Zeta Douglas arrive at the world premiere of "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story".



Characters from "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" appear at the film's world premiere.

# 'Toni Erdmann' sweeps European Film Awards, winning 5 awards



Actors, directors and producers of the film "Toni Erdmann" (from left) Dutch actress Hadewych Minis, producer Michel Merkt, producer Jonas Dornbach, German actress Sandra Hueller, German director Maren Ade, Austrian actor Peter Simonischek, producer Janine Jackowski and German actor Trystan Puetter pose with their trophies they received in the category "European Film 2016" during the 29th European Film Awards at the National Forum of Music in Wroclaw, Poland. — AFP



(From left) Director Claude Barras and producers Pauline Gygax, Kate Merkt and Michel Merkt pose for a photo during the 29th European Film Awards.



German director Maren Ade poses with her trophy after she was awarded the European Director Award for her film "Toni Erdmann".



German actress Sandra Hueller poses with her trophy she received in the category "European Actress 2016" for her role in the film "Toni Erdmann".



Polish director Malgorzata Szumowska poses with her trophy she received in the category "Audience Award".



Alice Normington poses with her trophy she received in the category "European Production Designer 2016".



Barbara Kreuzer poses with her trophy she received in the category "European Hair & Make-Up Artist".

The German-Austrian drama "Toni Erdmann," written and directed by Maren Ade, swept this year's European Film Awards, winning five awards, including best film, director and screenwriter. "Toni Erdmann" also won best actress for Sandra Hueller and best actor for Peter Simonischek. The 29th European Film Awards took place Saturday in the Western Polish city of Wroclaw.

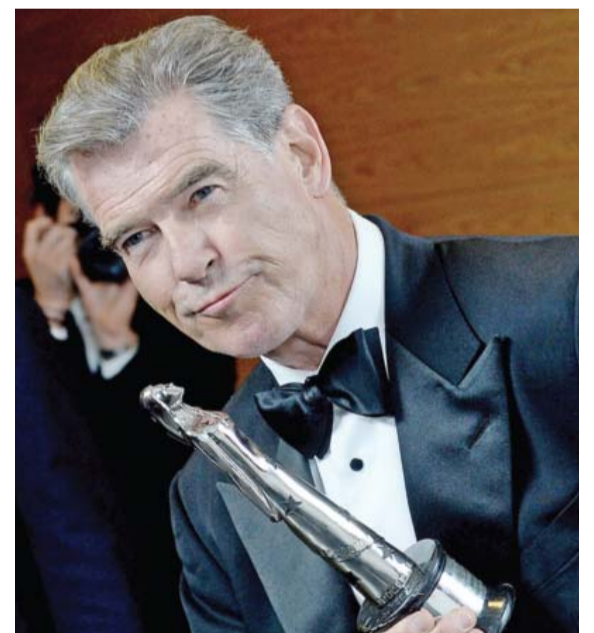
The show was peppered with political commentary by presenters, with a focus on the plight of refugees and Russia. Maria Alyokhina from the punk rock group Pussy Riot, whose members have been imprisoned for criticizing Russian President Vladimir Putin's, appealed for the release of Oleg Sentsov, a Ukrainian director carrying out a 20-year prison term in Russia on terrorism charges seen as politically motivated. — AP



Italian director Gianfranco Rosi poses with his trophy he received in the category "European Documentary 2016" for his film "Fire at Sea".



Danish camerawoman Camilla Hjelm Knudsen poses with her trophy she received in the category "European Cinematographer 2016 - Prix Carlo di Palma".



Irish actor Pierce Brosnan poses with his trophy he received in the category "European Achievement in World Cinema".

### List of winners

- European Film:** "Toni Erdmann" (Maren Ade, Germany, Austria)
- European Director:** Maren Ade ("Toni Erdmann," Germany, Austria)
- European Actor:** Peter Simonischek ("Toni Erdmann")
- European Actress:** Sandra Hueller ("Toni Erdmann")
- European Screenwriter:** Maren Ade ("Toni Erdmann")
- European Documentary:** "Fire At Sea" (Gianfranco Rosi, Italy, France)
- European Animated Feature:** "My Life as a Zucchini" (Claude Barras, France, Switzerland)
- European Comedy:** "A Man Called Ove" (Hannes Holm, Sweden, Norway)
- Fipresci Prize - European Discovery:** "The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli M?ki" (Juho Kuosmanen, Finland, Sweden, Germany).
- "European Achievement in World Cinema"** Pierce Brosnan — Reuters



Austrian actor Peter Simonischek poses with his trophy he received in the category "European Actor 2016" for his role in the film "Toni Erdmann".

# PETANQUE FEVER KINDLES PASSION OF WORLD CHAMPS MADAGASCAR



Antananarivo residents playing bocce (Petanque) at the city's club, in Antananarivo. — AFP photos



It's not even midday in the middle of the work week, but already the clacking of steel balls colliding on a makeshift pitch rings out in Madagascar's capital, Antananarivo. Curious bystanders watch as players swing their arms, releasing the balls in gentle arcs whilst avoiding a large tree root protruding from the square pitch. This is petanque, a form of boules or bowling beloved across the Indian Ocean island nation. And with Madagascar recently crowned world champions, the country's passion for the sport has reached fever pitch at any time of the day.

"Petanque is very, very important. It's everything to us," says Andry Maminirina, who built the field next to the majestic Lake Anosy three years ago.

Across the lake, at the foot of a hill where 'Antananarivo' is spelled out like the Hollywood sign, several games are well under way at the Tana Bowls Club (TBC). Tree roots are not a problem here, and about a hundred players—men and women, young and old—fill the well-maintained fields. Originating in the south of France, the goal of petanque is for players to toss their balls as close as possible



to a smaller wooden ball called a 'cochonnet' (piglet) or jack. When the French colonised Madagascar, they brought petanque with them. "I played petanque for the first time in 1964 when I was in the French army," said Clet Ramamonjisoa, 75, an amateur player.

But getting hold of the necessary equipment to train with is a challenge. Players rely on second-hand balls sent over by family members that have emigrated to Europe. "We don't have much opportunity to get equipment here—even just the balls, you can't get them in Madagascar. If you do find a pair,

they're usually very expensive," said Michel Ranarivelo, another amateur player.

#### 'Like football in Brazil'

Petanque fever was soaring when in late November the world championship was just a week away—and Madagascar was the host country. It would be the island's first time hosting a championship in any sport, ever. Madagascar has no more than 20 professional petanque players, but in 1999 it took gold and has racked up an impressive list of second places since then. "Petanque here in

Madagascar is like football in Brazil," said Beryl Razafindrainony, president of Madagascar's petanque federation. "At first it was just a leisure activity, but the 1999 victory really popularised it across the country."

But at TBC, many players mentioned rumours of "corruption" at the highest levels of the sport. Madagascar's slew of silver medals sparked allegations of match fixing and that the island's team was throwing finals for bribes worth thousands of euros (dollars) — an astronomical amount in a country where the average salary is just 45 euros a month.

This year, the national team was housed in a top secret location, their cellphones confiscated and all communication with their families cut off.

"There will always be ill-intentioned people to cause trouble with our players," said Razafindrainony. "The players feel motivated and I don't think they would be influenced by any sum of money. But the suspicion was still there and so to avoid all that we decided to remove them from society."

Whether the suspicions were fair or not, the move worked. When France—the undisputed champ since 2001 — was knocked out in the semi-final, Madagascar grabbed the opportunity to take back their crown. In a final more akin to a football match, the crowd whooping and cheering, Madagascar crushed Benin 13-5. Seventeen years after the title that started petanque fever in Madagascar, the island's enthusiasm for the sport is greater than ever. — AFP

# Acolytes of Pina Bausch keep her dance in motion



Picture shows Australian dancer Josephine Ann Endicott, former assistant to German choreographer Pina Bausch. — AFP photos



Australian dancer Josephine Ann Endicott, former assistant to German choreographer Pina Bausch, giving a dance workshop to visitors at the reconstructed "Lichtburg" practice space.



A visitor looking on a picture wall with photographs from the unique holdings of the Pina Bausch Archives, at the "Pina Bausch and the Tanztheater" exhibition.

The dance company that legendary German choreographer Pina Bausch, who died in 2009, built into one of the world's most acclaimed is doing its utmost to foster her moving legacy. Beloved of fellow artists and seen as a visionary by her peers in the dance world, Bausch mixed dance and theatre to produce a tumult of emotions, free from traditional constraints, that often divided audiences. "I'm not interested in how people move, but in what moves them," she said shortly before her death from cancer.

Now her life's work is being honored with a Berlin exhibition, "Pina Bausch and the Tanztheater", where members of the company will offer up to five workshops a day to curious visitors and dance lovers until January 7. "I couldn't have imagined that you could express yourself without difficult technique, and that it could be so much fun," said 38-year-old Kerstin

Brennscheidt, who had brought her son to rehearse a piece from Bausch's 1982 work "Nelken" (Carnations).

The exhibition recreates the "Lichtburg", a former cinema in the western industrial city of Wuppertal that Bausch turned into the headquarters of her dance revolution. "Somehow she's still there in us. I feel her aura around us. It's overpowering," said Australian Jo Ann Endicott, 66, who became the choreographer's assistant after being one of the star dancers of the Tanztheater.

#### 'Reinvented from scratch'

By the time Bausch passed away her popularity was such that her company had to take to the stage that very same night to satisfy demand. Things had been very different when she began her work in the 1970s. "We would begin our shows in packed rooms and end

them in half-empty ones," the Tanztheater's Mechthild Grossmann told feminist magazine Emma in 2010. "In Bochum, in 1978, we had to stop the show. People were standing and throwing things onto the stage." Bausch's personal style was a stark contrast to the classical forms that dominated the world of choreography at the time.

She employed exaggerated expressions and scenery to explore the human condition with a mixture of mischief, sarcasm, joy and despair. Beyond the choreography's energy, the Tanztheater survivors strive to communicate Bausch's humor and sensitivity to audiences that may not be steeped in the world of modern dance. There's no doubt that the choreographer made history with her work, and the earth, fields of carnations, waterfalls and animals that inhabited her stages have inspired many who came later. But only the

performers, with their deep bond to the company, can pass on their roles to others—a demanding task for such an intangible art form. Bausch would set dancers in motion with hints—"full moon", "desire", or "at the beginning"—before combining their responses into a whole. "When you've found what you're looking for, you know it," she once said. "Everything had to be reinvented from scratch," said Grossmann. "Just don't sing like a singer, just don't act like an actor, just don't dance like a dancer."

#### Disciples' task

Since Bausch's death, her company has stepped up the effort of passing on her works to the younger generation within their own ranks and to other professional dancers. The choreographer's disciples have communicated their secrets to the Paris Opera Ballet, the

Bavarian state ballet and the National English Ballet in recent years. And Bausch deputy, Endicott, has branched out even further by staging the dance "Kontakthof" with a group of teenagers and over-65s. Perhaps the greatest challenge for the troupe now is to begin creating something new, rather than just remaining in their founder's shadow as a living monument.

For that, they need a new artistic director—but as Endicott says, "you can't bring a copy of Pina, that's the most ridiculous thing you could do." The three pieces offered by the Tanztheater at the end of 2015 met with mixed receptions. Now, the faithful who Bausch left behind have pinned their hopes on Adolphe Binder, a Romanian without dance training who will have to convince sceptics that she can rekindle the magic in Wuppertal when she takes the reins in May. — AFP



Iranian archeologist Mohammed Naserifard displays ancient engravings in the hills outside the town of Khomein in central Iran. — AFP photos



An ancient engraving of a hunter is seen in the hills outside the town of Khomein in central Iran.

## The ibex code

# Deciphering Iran's ancient rock art



Ancient engravings of animals are seen in the hills outside the town of Khomein in central Iran.



Ancient engravings of ibex deer are seen in the hills outside the town of Khomein.



Iranian archeologist Mohammed Naserifard displays ancient engravings in the hills outside the town of Khomein.

An Iranian archaeologist has spent years in an almost single handed quest across the country's hills and desert plains to uncover ancient rock art that could be among the oldest in the world.

Now he hopes that renewed ties with the West after years of international isolation could help decipher its mysteries. Despite its rough beauty, it is hard to imagine that the desolate, rock-strewn landscape outside the town of Khomein in central Iran conceals any treasures. But Dr Mohammed Naserifard scrambles up a hillside, and waits eagerly at the top, his walking stick pointing out the long curled horns of a 4,000-year-old ibex deer scratched into a flat stone.

Over the next few hours, he leads AFP on a journey through valleys and up steep slopes, revealing dozens more images of ancient hunters, tribal dances, deities and beasts. Despite their potential world-historical importance, they have been seen by just a handful of people. All are thousands of years old, but some of the markings—such as a line of cup-marks that may have been used in religious ceremonies—could be much older.

Dutch enthusiasts who visited the area with Naserifard in 2008 dated the cup marks to more than 40,000 years

ago, putting them among the oldest rock art on the planet. But getting definitive data has been all but impossible for Iranian archaeologists. "Sanctions have deprived us of the technology," Naserifard told AFP. "We hope with the situation improving now, we can soon bring this technology to Iran and gain more accurate and scientific information on these engravings."

### 'Finding a treasure'

The sanctions imposed by world powers prior to last year's nuclear deal meant Iranian scientists were cut off from their global colleagues, deprived of modern lab equipment and the latest research, and faced severe funding shortages. Added to that was the fact that rock art has never been a priority in Iran, where pre-Islamic history can be a controversial subject. It has been left instead to Naserifard's personal determination. Having read about the subject in a German magazine, he hunted everywhere for examples.

Then one day in 2002, in the hills outside Khomein, he got lucky. "We were on a picnic and all my friends were taking an afternoon nap. I went wandering and observing the rocks in the valley and I found a rock full of shapes," he recalled. "I was so excited! Finding these works was like finding a

treasure." He estimates he has since travelled more than 700,000 kilometers (450,000 miles) across two dozen Iranian provinces, unearthing some 50,000 ancient paintings and engravings. Naserifard now teaches at a local university, and his discoveries have been catalogued by the Bradshaw Foundation, a Swiss NGO specializing in rock art, bringing them international attention. "His work is really important—there have been these blank spots on the map that we are finally starting to fill in," said Genevieve von Petzinger, a Canadian cave art expert and author of "The First Signs: Unlocking the Mysteries of the World's Oldest Symbols". The engravings could even date back to when humans made their first forays out of Africa, she said.

### 'Eerie similarities'

Naserifard's discoveries support the growing evidence that humans may have started to develop a common art tradition before leaving Africa, which might explain why the same themes and shapes have turned up in sites as far-flung as California, Spain and South Africa. "Iran could be a really important part of the puzzle. It is a very strategic location—humans migrated through there heading both



Ancient engravings are seen in the hills outside the town of Khomein.

east and west," said von Petzinger. New methods such as uranium dating—which enables scientists to date samples even older than is possible with carbon dating—are now needed

Naserifard has done all this diligent work, but he needs access to the big labs. Hopefully, people can now come to help him.

The Khomein hills are typical of rock art locations around the world—a once-fertile riverside spot that supported sizeable settlements. As in other places around the world, the artists were fixated by a single image: in Iran, pictures of the ibex deer account for more than 90 percent of the ancient engravings catalogued by Naserifard.

The Kozo hunters of South Africa obsessively drew and redrew a big-horned sheep that looks surprisingly similar. "We don't know why they picked a favorite motif and ran with it, but we see the same pattern in very different places," said Peter Robinson of the Bradshaw Foundation. He said the ibex may have been part of an origin myth, or perhaps the engravings were an attempt to summon magical hunting powers or encourage the deer to multiply.

"The similarities across time and space can be eerie. We see examples in which Ice Age art didn't vary across 30,000 years," said Robinson. "But one thing that seems clear is this innate human characteristic to want to mark a wall, to graffiti." — AFP



An unknown artist calling himself "Anonymouse" has created a mini restaurant and deli-shop for mice in central Malmo, Sweden. — AFP photos



An unknown artist calling himself "Anonymouse" takes pictures of a mini restaurant and deli-shop for mice he has created in central Malmo, Sweden.

## 'Anonymouse' opens miniature restaurant for rodents in Sweden

An art group named 'Anonymouse' has opened a new chain of miniature restaurants designed to specifically cater for mice in Sweden. The quaint 70cm x 30cm (about 25x12 inch) stores, located in the Swedish city of Malmo, offer everything a modern-day mouse would need, including a wide selection of nuts and cheeses, to notices about upcoming mouse events.

While the mice are surely thrilled with the giant step in rodent evolution, it's the

exquisite attention to detail that has humans coming back for more.

The street art creations have become something of a Banksy for rodents; the anonymous 'Anonymouse MMX' crew behind the installations has yet to reveal itself. "It's just too darn charming to imagine a world... [in which] mice live parallel to us, but just slightly out of sight," said a representative for the art group - which has no affiliation to the Anonymouse.org website - to the HuffPost. www.rt.com

# Lifestyle

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016

The ibex code:  
Deciphering  
Iran's ancient  
rock art

# 39



Lebanese Muslim Sufi men perform with sabres during a ritual ceremony to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), known in Arabic as "Al-Mawlid Al-Nabawi", yesterday in the southern city of Sidon. — AFP photos



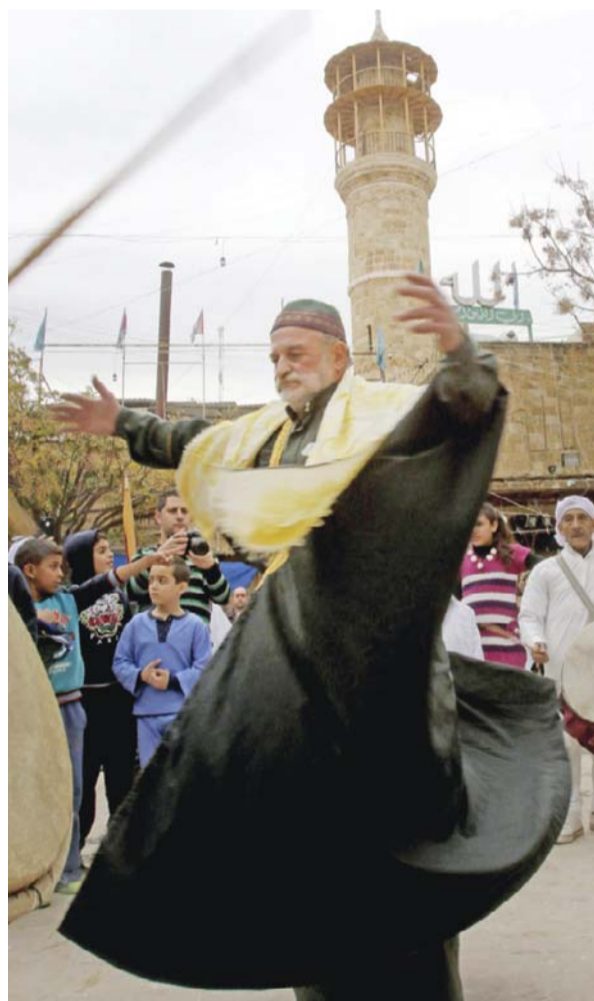
## Celebrating 'Al-Mawlid Al-Nabawi'



A Lebanese Muslim Sufi child plays music



A Lebanese Muslim Sufi young man poses with a spike pierced into his cheek.



A Lebanese Muslim Sufi man performs a traditional dance during a ritual ceremony.



Lebanese Muslim Sufi men play music during a ritual ceremony to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).



A Lebanese Muslim Sufi young man has a spike pierced into his cheek during a ritual ceremony.



A Lebanese Muslim Sufi child plays music during a ritual ceremony to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

## ARTIST WORKS TO PRESERVE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE IN HAMAS - RUN GAZA

### Gaza Christians make up fraction of population

Only about 1,200 Christians remain in Gaza—only a tiny fraction of the population in a territory run by Hamas Islamists—but artist Naser Jeldha is doing what he can to preserve its Christian heritage through art. In his studio in the heart of old Gaza, not far from a 5th century Orthodox church, Jeldha spends his days carving religious figurines, chiselling low-relief carvings of Biblical scenes and painting portraits of Jesus (PBUH), Mary Magdalene and the saints. "My message is about my religion," said the grey-bearded 57-year-old, a member of the Greek

Orthodox community. "I want to make it visual, I want to make people see it, not only to be kept as texts in church."

As he works, steel-rimmed spectacles perched on his nose, Jeldha listens to Byzantine prayer music that echoes softly around the studio, creating an atmosphere from another era. The walls are covered in his pictures, with more laid out on the arms of chairs and sofas, and others propped on a 150-year-old Russian piano in the corner. As well as painting and sculpture, Jeldha plays the accordion, piano and guitar.

In the run up to Christmas - celebrated on Jan. 7 in the Orthodox church - Jeldha is busy making pieces as gifts for friends and relatives. While he has been an artist for 35 years, he does not display his works or offer them for sale. Instead, he presents them as gifts at weddings or events on the Christian calendar. He does, however, have plans for a public showing soon. In the next two weeks, he is also hoping he will be one of about 800 Christians granted a permit by Israel to leave Gaza and travel to Bethlehem, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, to attend prayer services in Jesus's (PBUH),

birthplace. "We have applied for permits and if we get them I intend to travel with my family," said Jeldha, who is determined to remain in Gaza despite the departure of many Christians over the last decade in the face of rising economic hardship. While Gaza's Christians generally enjoy good relations with their Muslim neighbours, there have been isolated attacks by hardline Salafist groups on Christian tombs and symbols. Hamas, the Islamist movement that has ruled Gaza since 2006, is keen to ensure the Christian community feels safe and protected. Its leaders occasionally visit the

heads of the three Gaza churches to build stronger relations. Jeldha acknowledged that the economy was suffering, with the blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt, a move to pressure Hamas, limiting trade, driving up costs and causing despair. Despite that, Jeldha, whose white front door is adorned with a small cross painted in blue, said he would never leave. "I have lived in this neighborhood for 54 years. I have brotherly and wonderful relations with Muslims," said the father of four. "Gaza is beautiful and I will not leave it...I do not feel I am a stranger here." — Reuters