

Kutayba Alghanim visits orphanage



AUB named 'Bank of the Year Middle East'



Tevez double leads Boca to derby win over River Plate



Ronaldo caps dream year with fourth Ballon d'Or



OPPOSITION DISUNITY EXPOSED AFTER SPEAKERSHIP SETBACKS

CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERT SAYS ASSEMBLY COULD BE DISSOLVED



Min 06°
Max 20°
High Tide 12:55 & 22:42
Low Tide 05:23 & 17:14



150 FILMS
NO: 17079
40 PAGES

QATAR 'TWEAKS' KAFALA SYSTEM FOR EXPATS

DUBAI: Qatar announced yesterday it is introducing long-expected reforms to policies governing its vast foreign-labor force, though the changes still require workers to seek clearance from their bosses before leaving the country. The new policies follow years of intense criticism from labor and human rights activists over working conditions in Qatar. The natural gas-rich country is in the midst of a torrid building boom tied to its hosting of the 2022 World Cup.

Critics say Qatar's long-standing "kafala" sponsorship system binding workers to their employer leaves migrants open to abuse, and in some cases can amount to forced labor. Qatar touted the reforms as abolishing the kafala system altogether. Rights groups say the changes fall far short of what is needed to protect the armies of mostly Asian low-wage workers transforming the tiny country.

A statement released by the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs said the changes are intended to ensure "greater flexibility, freedom and protection" to the more than 2.1 million workers in Qatar. The minister responsible for labor, Issa bin Saad Al-Jafali Al-Nuaimi, said Qatar welcomes constructive criticism and he urged outsiders to give the law time to take root before drawing any conclusions. He said the ministry is boosting its monitoring efforts and hiring more labor inspectors to enforce compliance. "We are doing this because we believe it is the right thing to do and because it provides tangible new benefits to expatriate workers," Nuaimi said.

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DOHA: Migrant workers are seen walking next to a construction site in the Qatari capital on Dec 6, 2016. (Inset) Qatari Labor Minister Issa bin Saad Al-Nuaimi holds a press conference on reforming Qatar's labor laws and practices yesterday. — AFP



By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A number of opposition MPs stunned by the massive defeat in the speakership election charged that around 11 lawmakers who had joined the opposition MPs' meeting betrayed their pledge. Islamist opposition MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei said these MPs will be exposed to the people after betraying their promises. A number of opposition MPs posted declarations on their Twitter accounts testifying that they voted for one of the two opposition candidates, who together collected only 17 votes against an incredible 48 votes by Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Ghanem yesterday said he has decided to withdraw all cases he had filed against online activists who criticized or insulted him on social media.

The outcome of the speaker's vote could have a serious damaging impact on the unity of the 27 MPs who had pledged not to vote for Ghanem. The opposition was dealt another blow yesterday when they lost the election of two key committees - the financial and economic affairs and interior and defense - which they were won by pro-government MPs. The top posts of the financial and interior panels were taken by MPs Khalaf Dumaitheer and Askar Al-Enezi respectively.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly agreed on the opening day which ended late at night to refer a dispute over the election of the deputy speaker to the legal committee and then to the constitutional court for a ruling. The row was triggered when in the first round of voting, MP Jamaan Al-Harbash received 32 votes against 31 for MP Essa Al-Kandari, with one ballot blank.

The speaker then said the voting had to be repeated because no one obtained an absolute majority of 33 votes. It was won by Kandari, who got 32 votes against 31, since a simple majority was enough in the second round of voting.

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DUBAI: (From left) Actors Nicole Kamato, Jaber Jokhadar, Serena Chami, director Sophie Boutros and actresses Julia Kassar and Betty Taoutel pose upon their arrival for the screening of their movie "Solitaire" during the 13th Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) on Sunday. — AFP

'SOLITAIRE' BRINGS LEVANT TENSIONS TO BIG SCREEN

DUBAI: There is a Lebanese mother keen to meet her daughter's groom-to-be but she gets the shock of her life when she hears his Syrian accent. "Solitaire", which premiered at the Dubai International Film Festival, reflects a history of animosity accumulated over years of Syrian military intervention in neighboring Lebanon. It also highlights the mounting tension between Lebanon's small population and the hundreds of thousands of Syrians who have fled their own country's devastating war since 2011.

There's brother was killed in Syrian bombing during 1975-1990 Lebanon's civil war. His portrait on the wall loomed large over Samer and his family as they sat in There's living room. "Send them away to where they came from," she ordered her daughter Ghada, who met Samir in Dubai. "Your future mother-in-law seems racist!" followed the warning from the Syrian suitor's mother.

For film director Sophie Boutros, the antagonism in her feature film is "rooted in an unpleasant history between the Lebanese and the Syrians during Lebanon's war". Syria was the powerbroker in Lebanon where it deployed troops for decades until they had to withdraw following ex-prime minister Rafiq Hariri's assassination in Feb 2005, despite its denial of any involvement. The conflict in Syria over the past five years has sent more than one million Syrians to seek shelter in Lebanon, where they now make

up a quarter of the population. The film is "an observation of something that is real and that we should shed a light on", Boutros told AFP on the red carpet. Lebanese and Syrian actors star in the 92-minute film, whose script was written jointly by Boutros and Jordan's Nadia Eliewat. "The timing of the movie is good because of the current tension," said Lebanese actress Betty Taoutel, who plays the role of Ghada's aunt. "People hate each other sometimes because of politics, despite the fact that we are all victims of these politics," she said. The movie comes to a climax when Ghada tells Samir he should be grateful that her mother has finally accepted their engagement "despite (him) being Syrian".

At that point, Samir walks out with his family. Television producer Elie Aramouni said Boutros has managed in her first movie to "strike a balance in a very sensitive story". "The best thing about Solitaire is that it does not preach. It introduces the problem as is," he said. Instead of focusing on the problems that distort relations, Solitaire tries to focus on the similarities between the two peoples, including cuisine and music. "This film brings us closer to each other more than it pushes us apart," said a member of the audience, Zeina Al-Sayyed, as she left the theatre. Solitaire is scheduled for release in March in Lebanese cinemas, while the Dubai film festival, featuring 156 films from 55 countries, ends tomorrow. — AFP

BEIJING WARNS TRUMP OVER ONE CHINA POLICY

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ARSENAL GET BAYERN, BARCELONA MEET PSG

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ALEPPO BATTLE IN 'FINAL PHASE'

SAUDI COPS ARREST YOUNG WOMAN FOR REMOVING ABAYA

RIYADH: Police in the Saudi capital said yesterday they had arrested a woman for taking off her veil in public and posting pictures of her daring action on Twitter. Police spokesman Fawaz Al-Maiman did not name the young woman, but several websites identified her as Malak Al-Shehri, who triggered a huge backlash on social media after posing without the hijab in a main Riyadh street last month. "Police officers have detained a girl who had removed her abaya, implementing a challenge she announced on social media several days ago," Maiman said.

He said in a statement that the police in the ultraconservative kingdom acted in line with their duty to monitor "violations of general morals". He said the woman posted a tweet of herself standing next to a popular Riyadh cafe on Al-Tahliya Street but without wearing the Islamic headscarf that is required in Saudi society. The woman, in her 20s, was taken to prison, he said, also accusing her of "speaking openly about prohibited relations with (non-related) men". "Riyadh police stress that the action of this woman violates the laws applied in this country," Maiman said, urging the public to "adhere to the teachings of Islam".

The sabq.org news website said the woman had posted on Twitter that she would go out in public without her abaya. — Agencies

ALEPPO: The crucial battle for Aleppo entered its "final phase" yesterday after Syrian rebels retreated into a small pocket of their former bastion in the face of new army advances. President Bashar al-Assad's forces held more than 90 percent of the onetime opposition stronghold of east Aleppo, a monitor and military official said, and appeared on the verge of retaking the entire city. A Syrian military official in Aleppo told AFP the "operation in eastern neighborhoods is entering its final phase", as fierce clashes were reported in the few

districts still under rebel control. The fall of Aleppo would be the worst rebel defeat since Syria's conflict began in 2011, and leave the government in control of the country's five major cities. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group reported that the army had captured southeast Aleppo's large Sheikh Saeed district. Syrian official media confirmed Sheikh Saeed had been retaken, with state television showing what it said was live footage from the neighborhood.

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ALEPPO: Fighters of the Free Syrian Army fire an anti-aircraft weapon in the rebel-held Mashhad area yesterday as they battle Syrian government forces during an operation to retake the embattled city. — AFP

SAUDI PASSION PARADES AT CITY TRACK

RIYADH: Horses round the track in the soft light of an afternoon sun as Riyadh's "best kept secret", the King Abdulaziz Racetrack, begins another weekend of action. The horses of wealthy Saudis have been major players at the world's biggest racing spectacles, from Royal Ascot to Longchamp and Melbourne. On home turf, Friday afternoon racing in the Saudi capital is a more low-key affair. Betting is banned and the buzz is somewhat muted early in the season, but race fans still crowd the rails for a glimpse of

the passing thoroughbreds. The modern facility surrounded by greenery on the edge of Riyadh offers respite from the highways and urban sprawl of a city carved out of the desert. "Unfortunately, it's the best kept secret," says track manager Robert Turman, who moved to Saudi Arabia after retiring from the racing business in the United States. "We would love to have more people here because it's an amazing night out for entertainment," he says. "Their goal here is really to achieve international stan-

dards and they're really doing a great job." Horse racing is one of the few diversions in Saudi Arabia, where alcohol, public cinemas and theatres are banned. Professional sport is otherwise limited to football, with women not allowed inside stadiums in a country where tradition prevents unrelated men and women from mixing. But such practices are not rigidly in force everywhere. At the track, men and women sit together in the open grandstand, where a sparse Friday

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Kutayba Alghanim, Nasser Al-Ayyar and Sheikha Maryam Al-Sabah receive an update on the orphanage.



Kutayba Alghanim and Sheikha Maryam Al-Sabah are seen during the visit.



The renovated houses.

KUTAYBA ALGHANIM VISITS ORPHANAGE TO MONITOR PROGRESS OF COMPANY-FUNDED RESTORATION INITIATIVE

'HAVING THESE CHILDREN AMONG US IS CONSTANT REMINDER TO EVALUATE PRIORITIES'

KUWAIT: Kutayba Y Alghanim, the Chairman of Alghanim Industries, visited the Children's Home - an orphanage operated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's Social Welfare Sector. The purpose of his visit was to view the restoration progress on the houses which Alghanim Industries had pledged to bear the full cost of last year, in addition to the outdoor playground.

Kutayba Alghanim was welcomed by representatives from the Khair Al-Kuwait Organization, which operates under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.

The representatives included Vice Chairperson - Sheikha Maryam Mohammad Al-Sabah, Secretary General - Nasser Mohammed Al-Ayyar, board member and Head of the Facilities Committee - Engineer Fawzi Al-Rowashed, and board member and Head of the Training Committee - Dalal Al-Rowashed.

The site visit included a tour of the six houses which were restored by Alghanim Industries, where the children have now moved into with their 'Alternative Mothers'. These new houses are modeled on the United Nation's SOS Children's Villages system, which is based on the 'Alternative Mother' concept, where orphaned children are given the opportunity to live and grow up in independent homes with 'brothers' and 'sisters' and an alternative mother. This will replace the old system used previously in the orphanage, where all the children lived in dormitory housing, without a sense of family warmth.

At present, the Khair Al-Kuwait Organization is working on the second phase of the restoration project with the help of Alghanim Industries. This includes the restoration of an outdoor playground. Once that is completed, restoration work will start on the central kitchen.

Renewed optimism

Kutayba Alghanim, Chairman of Alghanim Industries, said: "Visiting the orphanage and spending time with children always leaves me with a renewed sense of optimism. This segment of our society has suffered the loss of something vital, that any child at that age should have - the sense of warmth that comes from a family. Having these children among us is a constant reminder to evaluate our own priorities and exercise our humanitarian responsibilities in a way that impacts their lives for the better. It gives me joy knowing that Kuwait and its people never pass up a chance to help those who are in need, and that we at Alghanim Industries can do our part, through the hard work and efforts put forth by the Khair Al-Kuwait organization." Chairperson of Khair Al-Kuwait, Sheikha Feryal Dua'ij Al-Sabah, said: "We have always found endless support from Alghanim Industries and its Chairman,

We are delighted to have him at the orphanage once again and for him to see the completed work that was only possible through his generous donations. We have no doubt that Alghanim Industries will continue their strong support, and we hope to see more companies from the private sector contributing towards those who are less fortunate within our community."

Caring for orphans

The Children's Home is the only entity in Kuwait that is responsible for housing and taking care of orphans, launched and operated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor - Social Welfare Sector. It welcomes children of all ages, who are then cared for until the age of 12. After that age, boys are transferred to specialized housing units, while girls are also transferred to separate specialized housing. Both buildings are also part of the Social

Welfare Sector, within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.

This initiative comes as part of Alghanim Industries' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, which is committed to giving back to the community, supporting education and encouraging entrepreneurship. Last year, the company was named 'Diamond Partner' by Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KCRS) in recognition of its efforts to support KCRS by facilitating treatment for needy patients in Kuwait, and by helping Nurture and Educate Students Today (NEST), which aims to raise awareness and support education of underprivileged children, both locally and internationally. This year, the company participated in the "Give Them a Chance" campaign launched by the KCRS, with the aim of providing quality education opportunities to 13,000 non-Kuwaiti children living within the country whose families are not able to afford paying school fees.

News

in Brief

Amir extends condolences to Nigerian President

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences yesterday to Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, expressing his deepest sympathies for the victims of a church collapse in the city of Uyo. In his cable, His Highness the Amir also wished those wounded in the church collapse a speedy recovery. 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 Nigerian President.

Amir congratulates committee members

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent cables of congratulations to the MPs who were elected as members of the National Assembly's standing committees on Sunday. His Highness the Amir wished the committee members success in serving the dear homeland and the interests of the citizens. 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 similar cables to the elected members.

FM receives letter from Cuban counterpart

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received a letter from Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla. The letter tackled the deep-rooted relations between Kuwait and Cuba, means of fostering them in all fields as well as the latest regional and international developments. — KUNA



The campaign's poster showing information including the bank account number, website and hotline through which donations can be made.

KRCS LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TODAY TO AID ALEPPO



Anwar Al-Hasawi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has announced the launch of a campaign to collect donations for Syrians at the society's headquarters today. The five-day campaign aims to ease the suffering of Syrians affected by the ongoing war in Aleppo, especially in such extreme weather conditions, KRCS' Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi announced yesterday.

The number of displaced Syrians in Aleppo is rising, said Hasawi, adding that the society aims to collect \$1 million to cover food and winter clothing needs. Hasawi called on the private sector and philanthropists to take part in aiding Syrians who are facing a humanitarian disaster.

Donations will be received from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the KRCS headquarters, the official noted. He added that there will also be a donation booth at 360 Mall starting tomorrow from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm, as well as through the KRCS' official website. — KUNA



MOSUL: Kuwaiti humanitarian aid is distributed to the people in Mosul. — KUNA



MOSUL'S MPs APPRECIATE KUWAIT'S HUMANITARIAN ROLE

KUWAIT BUILDS NEW SCHOOL IN IRAQ

IRBIL/BAGHDAD: Iraqi members of parliament representing Nineveh province as well as members of Nineveh provincial Council expressed appreciation for Kuwait's Humanitarian role towards displaced people through provision of medical treatment for the wounded civilians fleeing Mosul.

Nineveh's MPs expressed in a 'Thank You' letter their gratitude on behalf of Nineveh's province and Iraqi people for Kuwait's continued provision of urgent humanitarian aid to the people in Mosul as part of the 'Kuwait By Your Side' campaign. With the start of the operation to retake Mosul from the so-called Islamic State (IS), Kuwait has allocated tens of thousands of food parcels to the needy people in Nineveh province, including villages of Nimrud south Mosul, in addition to preparation of daily meals in the various camps. Kuwait also built two hospitals for emergency cases to treat the displaced Iraqis.

Heaters distributed

On Sunday, Up to 1,500 heaters were

given to displaced Iraqis at a camp east of the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. The heaters, provided to the Iraqis who had been relocated from the embattled city of Mosul to Hassan Sham shanty town, came as bitter winter cold set in, aggravating the displaced persons' hardships.

Dr Omar Al-Kandari, the State of Kuwait's General Consul in Irbil, said that the heaters were secured for the relocated Iraqis as part of a campaign, "We are on your side," to help them survive the extreme cold. Such aid is in line with the initiative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah aiming to alleviate the displaced and refugees' suffering.

Rezkar Obaid, an official at the camp, has expressed deep gratitude to Kuwait for providing the heaters at a time temperature has been ebbing in northern Iraq. There is regular coordination between the Kuwaiti Consulate and the camp managers to furnish the displaced with various means of support. The Kuwaiti mission has already

provided food to residents of Hassan Sham and another camp, named Al-Khazer. Both hosts people who have fled Mosul, scene of ongoing fighting between government forces and Islamic militants.

Makeshift hospitals for emergency cases have been built at the two shanty towns. Scores of civilians have abandoned their homes in Mosul fleeing to safer regions as the government forces push ahead to drive the militants out of the country's second largest city.

School built

In other news, a Kuwaiti-financed school of prefabricated units has been built in Al-Ramadi, the largest city in Al-Anbar governorate west of the Iraqi capital. The school, made of caravans, is part of the Kuwaiti humanitarian campaign in the nation.

The Kuwaiti embassy in Iraq directly supervised the project.

Kuwait, through opening this school in Al-Ramadi that has suffered extensive dam-

age particularly in the teaching sector, manifests anew its sincere support for "the brothers in Iraq," part of the efforts to enable them cope "with the current crisis," said the Kuwaiti Ambassador Salem Ghesab Al-Zamanan, in a press statement.

Ambassador Zamanan said he was elated for accomplishing, properly, this important and vital project to accommodate a segment of the students in Al-Ramadi, some 110 kilometers (68 miles) west of Baghdad.

Up to 19 caravans have been brought in to establish the school, which will accommodate some 600 students, namely those who could not register in other schools in the province.

It is the third school to be built in Al-Anbar with financing by the Kuwaiti Relief Society. As part of the Kuwaiti humanitarian campaign, a large number of food parcels, heaters and school bags have been distributed to those in need in various regions of the country. — KUNA



A scene from the opening ceremony of a Kuwaiti-funded school in Al-Ramadi.





KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem at Seif Palace yesterday. — KUNA

MP DEMANDS REINSTATING DISMISSED BEDOON OFFICERS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Chairman of the parliament's defense and interior committee MP Askar Al-Enezi urged Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah to reappoint bedoons (stateless) who he said were dismissed from the interior ministry, describing the decision to terminate people with over 25 years of service as unfair and incomprehensible, especially since the discharged bedoon officers have families to support and are still needed to meet a military personnel shortage.

Meanwhile, MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei said he will propose writing off interest on retirees' loans because interest is against sharia. He promised to pursue the completion of the second public university as well as establish a third one in Jahra and a fourth in Ahmadi.

Working together

In the meantime, MP Yousef Al-Fadhalah urged all his colleagues to forget about their previous disagreements and start working on achieving people's aspirations. Fadhalah added that the government has to show more commitment towards cutting spending and stressed that this starts with preventing wastage of public funds. He also promised to open the overseas treatment issue and investigate "the previous touristic medical trips" and corruption within the Ministry of Health, including in construction projects. In addition, Fadhalah urged the new ministers to work on fighting corruption. "We have too much corruption and it ought to be discussed in public

sessions and not behind closed doors," he concluded. Separately, MP Rakan Al-Nisf said that corruption at the Ministry of Health will be excessively discussed in the parliament and called on new Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi to fight corruption.

Also yesterday, MP Safa Al-Hashem, rapporteur of the parliament's financial committee, called for discussing Kuwait Airways' decision to discharge some Kuwaiti pilots and transfer them to work in other bodies. Hashem urged the government to define the duties of the newly-established ministry of state for utilities and whether these services will include electricity and water, for instance.

Wedding halls

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's Assistant Undersecretary for Development Hassan Kathem said that since the administrative decision number 1291/2015 went in effect and the ministry started taking over the management of violating wedding halls, 25 had so far been taken over to be run by the ministry's community development department.

"Ten halls belong to co-ops and 15 belong to individuals," he explained. Kathem explained there are 69 wedding halls in Kuwait including 18 owned by cooperative societies and 51 donated by individuals. "The ministry will eventually take over all the halls, but will start with the ones violating the decision and which have ignored repeated warnings," he said, noting that the ministry will not tolerate turning the halls into investment projects only concerned with making profits.

KUWAIT COMMITTED TO IMPROVING ILLEGAL RESIDENTS' CONDITIONS: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: The Executive Director of Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents' Affairs Saleh Al-Fadhalah has affirmed Kuwait's keenness on improving the living conditions of illegal female residents in the country.

Fadhalah made his remarks in a press statement yesterday while meeting with Kamala Chandrakirana, Vice-President of UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women, and her accompanying delegation at the apparatus' headquarters. Facilitating matters and providing basic services for women of the illegal residents is part of the privileges and facilitations included in the resolution

(409/2011) on providing facilitations for illegal residents in Kuwait, he said.

He also displayed recent statistics on the number of female students of that category enrolled in primary and higher education, in addition to the latest job opportunities provided for illegal female residents in the state and private sectors in accordance with the apparatus' employment procedures launched in 2012.

The Kuwaiti law grants the citizenship to the wives of Kuwaiti citizens, he noted, pointing out another statistic on the number of illegal female residents who married Kuwaitis and received the Kuwaiti citizenship eventually. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Abdulatif Al-Fares receives well wishers at his office yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

MINISTER SETS PRIORITY OF RESTORING CONFIDENCE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Abdulatif Al-Fares yesterday said that restoring confidence in the teaching institutions, highlighting achievements and development are major files he will focus on.

In spite of the numerous achievements of the Ministry of Education, it was dealt with unjustly, as people have focused on the negative aspects more than positive ones, Fares told well-wishers who visited him to congratulate the minister on being

entrusted with the portfolio.

Fares vowed to shed light on the achievements and the positive sides of the ministry over the coming period, as well as reaffirming that the development process would carry on. The minister stated that prior attention will be paid to teachers, the cornerstone of the education process. He said he would do his best to have a teachers' law issued. School curricula will also be given due care, together with the school environment. — KUNA

CABINET VOWS TO FULFILL AMIR'S VISION FOR REFORM



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah poses for a group photo with members of his new Cabinet. — KUNA

KUWAIT: The Cabinet pledged on Monday to spare no effort to ensure that His Highness the Amir's grand plan to reforms is realized and development projects will come to fruition. The vow was made during the Cabinet's weekly meeting held at Seif Palace, presided over by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

In a speech to kick off the first session of Parliament's 15th legislative term on Sunday, His Highness the Amir highlighted the need to keep the nation's best interest at heart, at a time of mounting challenges and difficulties.

Moreover, His Highness the Amir also spoke of the importance of slashing public spending and putting national resources to good use, as he underscored the private sector's crucial contributions to economic reforms, chiefly, efforts to stifle corruption.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet also reviewed His Highness the Prime Minister's speech on Sunday, where he spoke of His Highness the Amir's sage advice and the government's commitment to make substantial progress on development plans in order to fulfill the aspira-

tions of the Kuwaiti people. At the onset of the meeting, the Cabinet looked over a letter sent to His Highness the Amir by the Second Deputy President of Burundi Dr Joseph Butore, which heaped praise on Kuwait for its support of the East African nation.

Furthermore, His Highness the Prime Minister also apprised the Cabinet of the fruitful outcome of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz's historic visit to the country, one that further reinforced deep-rooted ties between the two Gulf neighbors.

On a related note, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah informed the Cabinet of His Highness the Amir's participation in the 37th session of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit held in Bahrain recently. The Cabinet reviewed the statement issued at the conclusion of the GCC summit, which cited the latest regional developments and further affirmed the concerted stance executed by GCC nations to safeguard their collective interests, which includes united efforts to fight terrorism and other threats.

Terror attacks

In the meantime, the Cabinet has vehemently denounced the recent bombing that targeted security forces in Egypt's Giza, along with Sunday's blast that hit a church in Cairo.

The Cabinet deplored the bombings as terrorist acts that aim at disrupting Egypt's security and stability and intimidating its people. It emphasized that such attacks would not undermine Egypt's resolve to fight terrorism resolutely, while supporting all measures it takes to maintain its security and stability.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet sharply denounced the recent attacks that hit Turkey's Istanbul, which left dozens of people dead or injured. It reiterated that the State of Kuwait stands side by side with Turkey in its fight against terrorism, and supports all measures it takes to maintain its security and stability.

Furthermore, the Cabinet, at its yesterday's weekly meeting, offered heartfelt condolences to Pakistani President over the victims of the recent Pakistani plane crash. — KUNA

FORMER JUSTICE MINISTER CONTESTS ELECTION RESULTS

8TH INT'L QURAN AWARD SET FOR APRIL

By Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The total number of contests against the 2016 parliamentary election results reached 52 at the end of the deadline given for petitions on Sunday. Ironically, one of the challenges was filed by former justice minister and third constituency candidate Yaqoub Al-Sane, in which he also contested the parliament's dissolution decree. Meanwhile, a court rejected a request filed by former MP Abdullah Al-Barghash yesterday to change the judges hearing his contest against an earlier court order on withdrawing his citizenship. Separately, the administrative court yesterday annulled the former interior minister's decision on referring some public prosecutors to retirement and ordered their return to their posts. The public prosecutors had sued the ministry in this regard.

Corruption

The anti-corruption authority stressed about looking into media reports regarding corruption and investigating them as per article 44 of its charter, the authority's acting secretary general Dr Mohammed Bozobar said

Gulf Road

The Ministry of Public Work's assistant undersecretary for road engineering Ahmed Al-Hessan said 9.5 percent of the Arabian Gulf Road development project has been completed so far. He added that the project's total cost is KD 13.9 million and that it is scheduled to be executed in 24 months with the aim of making traffic flow at the Bidaa roundabout much easier. He also noted that the project includes a 670-m-long flyover above the roundabout linking Taawon Street to Balajat Street.

Quran award

Assistant Undersecretary for Quran Affairs at

the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Waleed Al-Ammar said under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the ministry will hold Kuwait's 8th International Quran Memorization and Recitation Award ceremony in April. Ammar added that one of the main aims of holding this annual competition is to attract Muslims from all over the world to compete in memorizing the Quran.

Development plan

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih received best wishes for retaining her portfolio in the new Cabinet yesterday. Subaih expressed wishes that the development plan achievement rate will increase this year, and stressed that automated systems that are being trialed and will be fully launched in April 2017 to provide better and swifter services in all ministry departments. Regarding referring violations concerning the disabled to the public prosecutor, Subaih said that the latter has requested further documents to commence immediate investigations.

KNPC MANDATES BANKS FOR CLUB LOAN: SOURCES

DUBAI: Kuwait National Petroleum Co (KNPC) has selected 10 international banks to provide a loan facility of more than \$4 billion to back its Clean Fuels project, banking sources said. The loan, which has guarantees from various countries' export credit agencies, is expected to include the participation of BBVA, BNP Paribas, Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Credit Agricole CIB, HSBC, Mizuho, Natixis, Santander Group, Societe Generale and Standard Chartered, the sources said.

The participation of Santander and BBVA is highly likely, but must still be made official, the sources said. KNPC was not immediately available to comment. The debt facility is a club loan, which means it will not be syndicated to other banks, said the sources. NBK Capital has been working with the Kuwaiti company as financial adviser, while HSBC has coordinated the loan.

The state-owned refiner appointed the banks last week and completion of the financing is expected in the first quarter of 2017. The South Korean, Dutch, British and Italian export credit agencies will provide backing to the facility, KNPC's chief executive Mohammad Ghazi al-Mutairi told Reuters in October.

The Clean Fuels project will expand and upgrade two of Kuwait's largest refineries to produce diesel and kerosene for export. The project received a first tranche of financing in April this year, when it obtained a 1.2 billion dollar (\$3.9 billion) loan led by National Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Finance House. A group of 11 banks, including Islamic lenders, took part in that loan. — Reuters



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry hosted a ceremony yesterday where officials bid farewell to former minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah who was appointed as Minister of Defense in the new Cabinet, and welcomed their new minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

KFAS MARKS FOUR DECADES OF SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL BUSINESS

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) is marking its 40th anniversary as a non-profit organization that supports scientific progress in Kuwait in all fields. KFAS was established by an Amiri decree in 1976 with the aim of driving progress in all areas of science and technology while also inspiring a culture of progress and innovation.

The mission of the foundation, chaired by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, is to "stimulate, support, and invest in initiatives and human resources that contribute to the building of a strong STI system and culture, while simultaneously fostering an enabling environment in which innovation can flourish."

Since it was established, KFAS has been supporting scientific knowledge in Kuwait, to help all the relevant institutions achieve their goals, Director General Dr Adnan Shihab Eldin said. KFAS is working on disseminating scientific knowledge among all classes of the society, and its programs and activities have come to play a prominent role in the local scientific system, especially among the youth, besides to backing scientific creativity, Shihab Eldin said.

KFAS achievements include establishing the Scientific Center, Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC), the Dasman Diabetes Institute and Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Center for Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging, he noted. In addition, KFAS has also embarked on work at the Kuwait University digital project, to help the Arab youth willing to continue their education amid the limited capacity at traditional institutions.

Major challenges

Meanwhile, Shihab Eldin said that KFAS is committed to dealing with the major challenges facing the country, making utmost benefit from scientific research for researches and programs on water security, clean and renewable energy and the envi-



Dr Adnan Shihab Eldin

ronment. The foundation carefully selects the research projects that could help develop solutions or policies to address the country's urgent issues, together with providing advanced training programs for the private companies to enable them set new methods of work, thinking and

behavior, besides enhancing the spirit of innovation, the director general said. Referring to the KFAS new strategy that has been approved by the board of directors, Shihab Eldin said that it aims to consolidate cooperation with the local scientific institutions and to increase the spending on scientific research in Kuwait from 0.3 percent to 1 percent of GDP by 2020. Another major goal of the strategy is to speed up the steps for establishing a national council to be entrusted with identifying research priorities and financing them, as well as promoting people's awareness and spreading scientific culture.

Innovation projects

Shihab Eldin pointed to the 'challenge of innovation' program KFAS offers for high-profile CEOs. Through the program, the CEOs take part in developing innovation-based projects through collective activities that lead to real change in their firms. Later, these projects will be submitted to leading world universities for a review.

He also referred to the 'Open Enrolment' professional development initiative for private sector companies. It emphasizes a hands-on approach to inspiring innovative thinking and creative problem solving. In 2015, KFAS financed 203 lots of land for research projects, including 76 donations for new researches, all totaling KD 1 million (about \$3.3 million). KFAS has also financed all research programs at the Dasman Diabetes Institute and international agreements. In 2016, KFAS has financed 46 research projects with international scientific and research institutions with KD 1.5 million, he said. — KUNA



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman speaks during an event to launch the 'TechCamp: Promoting Peace and Tolerance with Technology' program. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

US PROMOTES PEACE THROUGH 'TECHCAMP'

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: To counter technology based terrorism, the US State Department launched the 'TechCamp: Promoting Peace and Tolerance with Technology' program in Kuwait for the first time. TechCamp is an initiative by the bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) at the US Department of State. Through this two-day program, which was held at Dar Al-Athar Islamiyah (Yarmouk Cultural Center), the US continues to work together with countries all over the world to counter online radicalization and the recruitment of youth by extremist groups.

"We welcome opportunities like this, to build power among organizations and groups working together to counter this key social challenge," said US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman, as he inaugurated the TechCamp. According to Silverman, the initiative has two major parts; first, the technology (equipment), and second, the content of the message. "It is the combination of technology and the content related to tolerance and moderation which might prevent people from being swayed by radical ideologies and violence. The TechCamp is about interaction and learning," he said.

More than a dozen people from various agencies have been invited to participate and share their knowledge, skills, and subjects related to TechCamp. The IIP was represented by Deputy Assistant Secretary Nicole Chulick. "This is the Gulf's first regional TechCamp, and we are delighted to host it in Kuwait. The next two days are going to be high in energy, productivity, and collaboration," he said. He also praised the University of Southern California for partnering with the US Department of State to organize a symposium at the Sunnyslands Estate on entertainment and its relevance to television markets worldwide, with regard to the issues we face.

"Television professionals from the Middle East and South Asia met with American counterparts to discuss ways for popular entertainment to inform and inspire audiences to fight intolerance, bigotry, and sectarianism; and counter violent extremism," he said. He also mentioned Sheikhha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, quoting her as saying: "this gathering of mind and spirit has left me both inspired and challenged."

"I wish the same sentiment for you as you participate in TechCamp Kuwait, which has the same aim as the Sunnyslands symposium; you have all come here today to use collective innovation to find beneficial ways to fight a common social foe," said the ambassador, quoting Sheikhha Al-Zain. Ambassador Lawrence said that the multi-faceted campaign to eradicate terrorism and violence in the Middle East continues, and stressed that it has to be done from the security perspective and must be constant.

MNH BOOSTS EXPANSION PLANS: FARAON

KUWAIT: Preparations for the Horeca Kuwait 2017 exhibition are steadily progressing, and the event is attracting more companies to take part, since it is an event which provides a golden opportunity to exchange expertise to meet the local market's needs and future expansion plans. In this regard, Mohammed Nasser Al-Hajery and Sons Company (MNH) recently announced joining the exhibition's list of sponsors, which has been a trend since the event's inception. Commenting on his company's participation, MNH's Executive Director Gabriel Faraon stressed that MNH realizes the significance of maintaining high level of professionalism in order to cope with the rapid changes in the local, regional and international markets. He also noted that MNH is always keen on excelling in serving both its customers and suppliers.



Gabriel Faraon

"Taking part in the Horeca exhibitions is a wonderful opportunity to meet with business peers and display MNH's latest products," he underlined, pointing out that MNH will display its exclusive brands of Illy Cafe, Dilmah tea, Haagen Dazs Ice Cream and Italian Coffee machines in addition to inviting various hotels, restaurants and cafes to a contest in preparing coffee and tea using their brands. "Winners will receive valuable prizes," he concluded.

Horeca Kuwait 2017 has so far attracted over 70 companies due to display their products in the presence of a group of international experts and chefs and a large group of company and hotel owners. The exhibition is organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Company at Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref on January 16-18, 2017.

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- 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.

LEADERSHIP SEMINAR: DISRUPT AND DOMINATE

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: If you want to have a powerful influence over your company and do something extraordinary you have to disrupt the company, and not just sit there and be lazy, a lecturer suggests. "Do something astonishing. Do not stand still; lazy leadership is long gone, you have to be walking on eggshells, taking risks and being careful

all the time, be dynamic," advised Tom McCarthy, an acclaimed consultant and speaker hosted to speak at the 'Disrupt and Dominate' leadership seminar held at the Al-Hamra Tower in Sharq on Sunday. The seminar was organized by Mefazec along with Khalid Al-Zanki's Launch on Fire Company.

"John F Kennedy was able to send a man to the moon, despite the

impossibility at that time," McCarthy said. "Kennedy challenged that within a decade he was going to land a man on the moon. Though it sounded almost impossible, but his words shook engineers and the public, ultimately achieving his goal."

"BlackBerry was once a leading smartphone company all over the world, when iPhone was launched, they said, 'iPhone is not our competitor.' Where is BlackBerry now? If it would have taken iPhone as a threat, it could still have survived," he argued.

Some of the great points discussed in the seminar were how to become a better leader in your company, how to surround yourself with winners and the mindset to control and elevate your employees' success. Essa Al-Essa, founder and chairman of Mefazec, said that he was delighted to host such an acclaimed speaker and consultant as McCarthy. Mefazec was happy to enlighten the entrepreneur's about their businesses and how to reduce their risk of failure. Hosting Tom McCarthy was a great example of how Mefazec supports its community in offering the best advice on how to succeed in the business world.



KUWAIT: Tom McCarthy speaks during the 'Disrupt and Dominate' leadership seminar. — Photo by Ben Garcia



KUWAIT: Officials wearing 'Injaz Superhero' badges pose for a group photo at the event.

— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

INJAZ CELEBRATES ITS 'SUPERHERO' VOLUNTEERS

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Injaz Kuwait celebrated International Volunteer Day by honoring the volunteers of its 'Injaz Superhero 2016' campaign for their efforts in making significant changes in youth's lives. The celebration was held yesterday at the 360 Mall, and was attended by members of Injaz Kuwait, entrepreneurs and volunteers who graduated from Injaz, strategic partners, sponsors, and media. The recently launched volunteering campaign invited professional young people with an experience of two to fifteen years in any profession to exchange their experience and knowledge with students. The celebration included different activities, and there was a 3D model displaying all the schools and universities that the volunteers visited. All 'superheroes' clicked pictures to post it on different social media.

Furthermore, the 'Injaz superheroes' exchanged their experiences with the potential volunteers, who also received a superhero headgear through their registration in Injaz program, which were exhibited on the rotating wall at the event. In addition, all the attendees received 'superhero stickers' for their cell phones which read 'I'm the Injaz Superhero', especially designed for the heroes.

On this occasion, Rana Al-Nibari, CEO Injaz Kuwait noted that the main values

of Injaz Kuwait always focused on empowering the youth and developing them through partnership with both the public and private sectors. "The volunteers are the main pillars of the Injaz program. Their experiences will allow the students to discover the nature of every job, and will help them to successfully choose their career. Also, the students will be capable to predict the expectations and difficulties that they will face in their future, and they will know how to face those challenges, thus making every volunteer a superhero," she added.

The continuous participation and sponsorship of the companies and sponsors have made them partners of Injaz. "Injaz believes in the importance of investing in the future of Kuwait and

empowering the youth to succeed in their career and business. The volunteers who invest their time in training, the university and school students have made this possible," added Nibari.

Nibari also thanked all sponsors including private companies and public institutions who made this volunteering campaign successful in particular, and the educational programs of Injaz in general. "Without your support, we would not be able to make this project a great success," she concluded. Injaz is providing its programs during the 2016-17 academic year with different ways of participation. Interested volunteers can contact Injaz through their email: superhero@injaz-kuwait.org. They can also follow Injaz on Instagram @Injaz_kuwait.



KUWAIT: Officials wearing 'Injaz Superhero' badges pose for a group photo at the event.

KIB SUPPORTS AHMADI SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR ORAL HEALTH

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently sponsored the Ahmadi School Program for Oral Health, an educational program organized by the dental unit at the School Health Department at the Ministry of Education. As part of its partnership with the program, KIB organized several field visits to a number of schools, helping to educate children about the importance of oral health and hygiene. The sponsorship came in line with KIB's ongoing efforts to support healthcare awareness initiatives which target all segments of the population, especially youth and children.

"KIB is keen on promoting the principles of health and wellness amongst children, enhancing their knowledge and understanding of important health issues through a comprehensive program of educational activities and awareness initiatives," said Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate

Communications Unit at KIB. "This program in particular plays an important role in enhancing healthcare awareness amongst children starting from a very early age, as it aims to educate students about the importance of oral health as a specific area, as well as the importance of their overall health and hygiene in a more general sense."

Najia also lauded the Ministry of Education's School Health Department for its efforts in organizing this program, which targets government schools that house permanent dental clinics. He further noted that KIB has been an ardent supporter of the Ahmadi School Program for Oral Health over the years, stemming from the Bank's belief in the importance of the program's goals and objectives.

KIB's leading social responsibility program continuously strives to sup-



Nawaf Najia

port healthcare awareness initiatives which specifically target youth and children. The Bank has always been a firm believer in the importance of promoting health and wellness amongst the younger segments of the population, in order to foster healthier future generations.

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Crime

Report

Homicide suspected in Salmiya man's death

KUWAIT: Hawally prosecutor ordered a homicide investigation in the case of a Filipino man whose body was found recently with a bruise around the eye. A security source said police responded to a call about a man found dead in a Salmiya apartment. They found the victim's body hanging in what initially appeared to be a suicide. Investigations are underway.

Cable theft

An Egyptian man told Mina Abdullah police that five men entered a fenced-off area that belongs to his company, tied him up and stole copper cables that were stored there. When they were done, they only untied his feet. Criminal evidence (forensics) officers inspected the place, and detectives are working on the case.

Domestic violence

A citizen accused her brother of beating her and breaking her finger. The woman handed police a medical report stating she needs treatment for 21 days. A case was filed for investigations, and the woman's brother is being summoned for questioning.

Arrest warrant

Nugra investigator ordered a Western woman to be arrested after failing to contact her following a complaint by a citizen in his 30s, who accused her of attacking him and deliberately damaging his car. The citizen said the incident took place near a private school, and he was unable to deal with her because she is a woman.

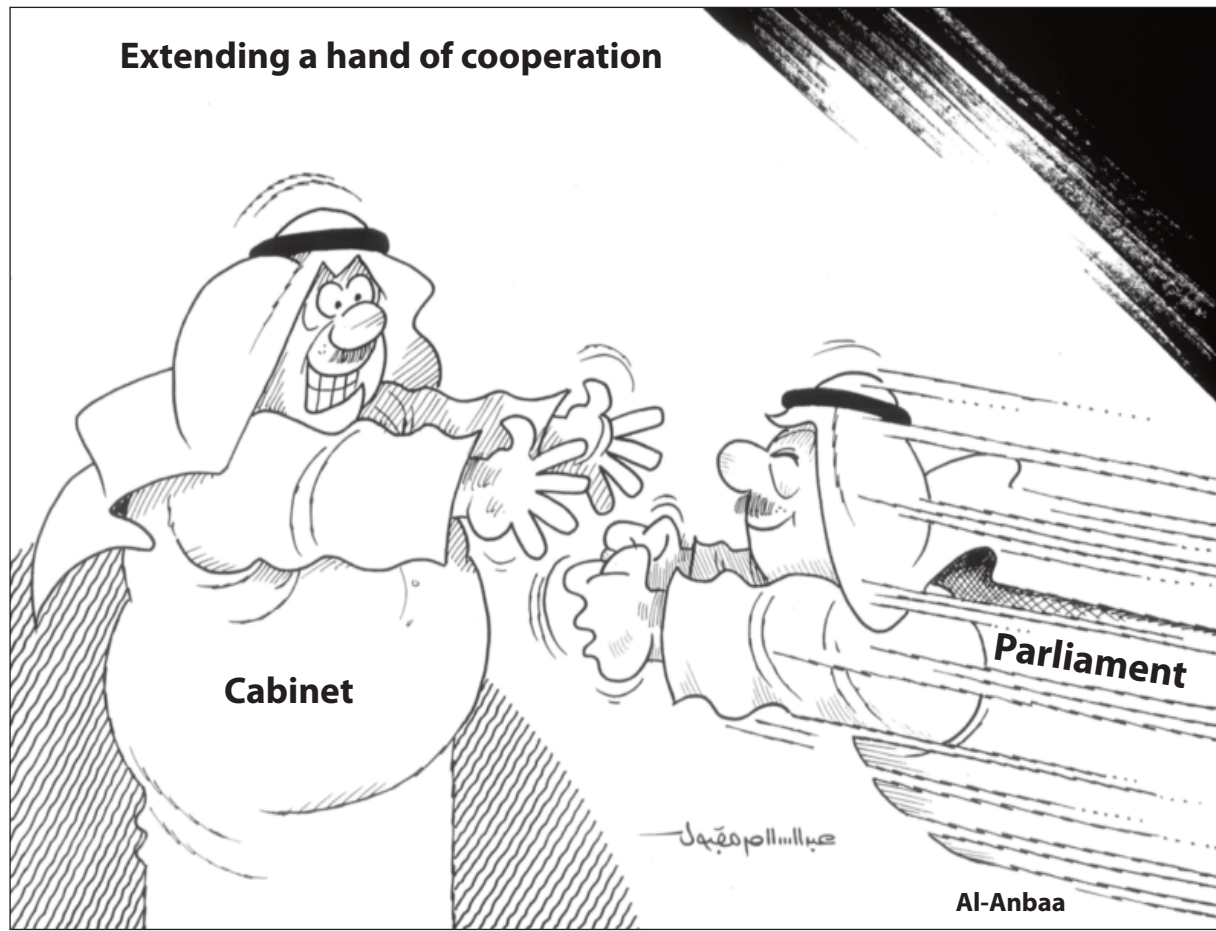
Hospital theft

Hawally detectives are reviewing surveillance cameras at Mubarak Hospital in an attempt to identify a thief who stole from a patient admitted for surgery. The patient told Jabriya police that his wallet was stolen with IDs and KD 240 in it.

Drunk driver caught

Criminal detectives arrested a suspect responsible for multiple hit-and-run cases in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh last week. He was found heavily intoxicated after drinking cologne, and three empty bottles were found in his car. The bedoon suspect said he committed the act because the expats had picked on him and ridiculed him, making him lose control and run them over. The victims did not lodge a complaint. —Al-Anbba

Extending a hand of cooperation



التحسس

Al-Qabas

THE SAD AIRPORT

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

It will take years before we see a solution to end the sad and miserable situation of the rundown Kuwait International Airport's facilities. If I was the airport's manager, I would be ashamed of being at the helm of this important facility while it is in such bad shape. Inappropriate parking lots, careless security, dirty bathrooms, poor treatment and everything else makes it impossible for a person who respects his country to accept such negligence, because the project to establish a new building may take two to three years to be finished. The issue is urgent and requires a personal intervention from the Prime Minister, to give out orders to the interior and finance ministries, customs, ports officials along with any other concerned bodies to find solutions for the airport's

situation. On arriving at the airport few days ago, I was surprised to see the glass door that leads to the airport from the plane was closed, and this has happened twice before. We waited for 10 minutes before the security man arrived and opened it. The men's washroom was surprisingly dirty with water all over the floor, because of which I could not relieve myself. Being a prostate patient, I found it necessary to take pictures and videos of that bathroom and post it on Twitter. Despite of the complaints, the officials have not come up with any solutions and people are expected to remain silent until the new terminal building is completed in some years.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

THEY NEVER LEARN

By Hassan Al-Essa

When states fail, those countries' youth affiliations and tendencies towards religion and sectarian groups get stronger. In 2002, only five Arab countries experienced conflicts, but now the number has increased to 11. The 2016 UN's Arab Human Development Report (AHDR) states that three out of four Arabs will be living in conflict-stricken states by 2020. The scary thing about Arabs is that they are only five percent of the world population and yet, they contribute to 45 percent of terror activities worldwide. They also form 47 percent of displaced people, eight percent of refugees and 68 percent of the victims." The above is an extract from an article published in the recent Economist issue, quoting the AHDR. Without cursing the Western colonial states and blaming them for the failures of Arab regimes and without being reminded of the Arab Leftists' terror in the 1960s and 1970s, why don't we admit the presence of violence and terrorism across the Arab World as a result of poverty, political and economic marginalization and the presence of ignorant and tyrant regimes at the same time? Such terrorism is now expanding daily, taking political infections from one failing repressive state to another.

Why don't we admit that by the continuation of regimes that are rejecting change and openness, we are likely to suffer further major economic setbacks and are expecting the worst to come somewhere down the line? However, violence and terrorism in our fragmented societies are just a part of the story. While talking about the terrorism of radical religious groups, we cannot forget the role played by the UK, the US and the West in general in sowing the seeds in the region when it inherited regional colonial control. Through his books 'Gulf Kingdoms' and 'Shadow Wars', academic researcher Christopher Davidson exposes the underlying patterns behind Middle Eastern strife and traces Britain's history during the period before and after Egypt's July revolution (1952), followed by that of the US in adapting terrorism and using it as a weapon that proved effective in fighting Communism, which later backfired and became a horrible threat and ghoul for them. It was under this pretext that Jihad in Afghanistan was sanctioned and justified where our oil-wealth states funded, armed and mobilized men.

The US sent expensive pills and countries would immediately pay them off. If the Islamic State's brutal terrorism scene sickens us now, we will surely find their roots growing from the Afghan Mujahedeen who used to amputate their opponents' bodies. Christopher says that linking such facts to the story of Frankenstein and his monster who turned up against him, is nothing new. What matters is that he includes documented British reports, statements and interviews with Western officials in the CIA and other bodies in his research. He also moves on to the Arab Spring and its defeat before counter revolutions were sponsored by our conservative regimes. I hope this research will be translated into Arabic though I know for sure that it will be considered an intellectual taboo in our deserts. The economists and the AHDR remarked that after five years since the Arab Spring revolutions, Arab regimes seem to have not learned any lessons, that they are still cruel and repressive with their people and stubbornly reject paying attention to opposition. The abundance we used to have because of the high oil prices were used to silence and calm down angry voices. What will we do now?

—Translated by Kuwait Times

OOREDOO VISITS FM 88.8 'Q8 PULSE' AT THE STATION'S STUDIO IN 360 MALL

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, the fastest network in Kuwait in 2016, visited the studio of FM 88.8 Q8 Pulse last week. The visit comes as part of Ooredoo's ongoing efforts to fortify relations with prominent media channels. Corporate Communications Senior



Director Mijbil Alayoub, Customer Care Senior Director Wael Sultan, and Public Relations and Internal Communications Senior Manager Fatemah Dashti visited the

station's studio, where they met with the station's General Manager Talal Alayagout and radio hosts Khaled Al-Ansari and Hanaa Abdulrahman.

Commenting on the event, Mijbil Alayoub, Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said "We're always happy to be meeting with prominent media channels, as they are our partners in getting closer to our audience. We're confident in FM 88.8's position in the market and their ability to attract more people to their diverse programs."

The frequency FM 88.8 was recently acquired by Blue Agency for KD 5.6 billion. It includes a number of experienced radio personalities such as Khaled Al-Ansari, Oussama Fouda, Waleed Sarab, Homoud Adel, Hanaa Abdulrahman and DJ Bonita, with programs in both Arabic and English.



Sheikha Shaikha Al-Sabah thanking Sahar Al-Therban from ABK in the presence of Suad Al-Faris (KSFIDP), Kholoud Al-Ali (KSFIDP) and Fajer Al-Kandari (ABK).

ABK SUPPORTS WORLD DISABLED DAY IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Kuwait Society for the Follow-up Issues of Disabled People (KSFIDP) marked World Disabled Day on December 3, 2016 with a short season of different activities and events held over a period of six days. The whole season was sponsored by Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) as part of its program to support Kuwait's community and in line with the Bank's Corporate Social Responsibility focus on special needs.

Under the theme of 'My Beloved Country', the events began with a wel-

come and grand opening ceremony at Bastaki Hotel, which was attended by member and guests of the KSFIDP and representatives from ABK. Other events, including lectures, open days, workshops and exhibitions followed daily. Events were held at a variety of centers across Kuwait, including Al-Nada Nursery for Special Needs in Mansouriya and The Kharafi Center in Mishref. For more information about ABK please visit eahli.com or contact an ABK customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A boy is silhouetted by the sunset while fishing at a beach in Kuwait. —KUNA



Bahrain upholds jail sentence for opposition chief

WHY IS INDONESIA'S CHRISTIAN GOVERNOR ON TRIAL FOR BLASPHEMY?

TEARFUL CHRISTIANS MOURN BLAST VICTIMS
 ANGRY SURVIVORS ACCUSE EGYPT AUTHORITIES OF SECURITY LAPSES

CAIRO: Mourners packed an Egyptian church yesterday for a funeral service for 24 people killed in the bombing of Cairo's main Coptic cathedral, while angry survivors accused authorities of security lapses. Tearful Christians gathered at the Virgin Mary and St Athanasius Church in Cairo where Coptic Pope Tawadros II prayed over the wooden coffins of the victims of Sunday's bombing, one the deadliest attacks on the Christian minority in recent memory. On the walls hung banners bearing the names of the dead, many of them women. Several

Security sources said at least six children were among the dead, with a bomb containing at least 12 kg (26 pounds) of TNT detonating on the side of the church used by women. The chapel's floor was covered in debris from shattered windows, its wooden pews blasted apart, its pillars blackened. Here and there lay abandoned shoes and patches of blood. "God protect Egypt from evil and protect all Egyptians," Pope Tawadros told state television on Sunday, after cutting short a visit to Greece. "In times like this we lean on each other, stand

immediate claim of responsibility, but exiled Brotherhood officials and other militant groups joined the international community in condemning the attack.

The United States said it would work with its partners to "defeat such terrorist acts". The UN Security Council urged all states to cooperate with investigators to find the culprits. But Islamic State supporters celebrated on social media. "God bless the person who did this blessed act," wrote one supporter on Telegram. Though Copts have traditionally supported the government, crowds gathered outside the cathedral on Sunday demanding revenge for the attack that took place on a Muslim holiday marking Prophet Mohammad's birthday and weeks before Christmas.

Scuffles broke out as protesters accused police of security failures and demanded Sisi sack the interior minister. Some chanted "the people demand the fall of the regime", the rallying cry of the 2011 revolt that ended Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule. At Demerdash hospital, relatives sat outside the operating theatres dressed in black, tears streaming down their cheeks. The Health Ministry revised down the death toll from 25 overnight, but doctors said it was likely to rise as many people had suffered serious injuries and hospitals lacked drugs and equipment.

Regular attacks

Orthodox Copts, who comprise about 10 percent of Egypt's 90 million people, are the Middle East's biggest Christian community. They face regular attack by Muslim neighbors, who burn their homes and churches in poor rural areas, usually in anger over an inter-faith romance or church construction. The last major attack on a church took place as worshippers left a New Year's service in Alexandria weeks before the start of the 2011 uprising. At least 21 people were killed. The circumstances remain a mystery and no one was punished.

Egypt's Christian community has felt increasingly insecure since Islamic State spread through Iraq and Syria in 2014, ruthlessly targeting religious minorities. In 2015, 21 Egyptian Christians working in Libya were killed by Islamic State. "There

were police cars stationed in front of the church gates .. I'll tell you what they were doing, they were too busy eating breakfast and drinking tea

and soda. They weren't doing their job, they weren't asking people going in and coming out," said Hani Gaballah, 43, a retired military offi-

cer. "We have an incompetent government, look at the economy, we are surviving only because God is supporting us." —Reuters



CAIRO: Egyptian mourners react at the end the funeral of the victims of a bomb explosion that targeted a Coptic Orthodox Church. —AFP

hundred people gathered in the Madinat Nasr area furious at being denied entry to the church, where admittance was by invitation only for the families of victims.

There was also anger at hospitals treating the wounded. Five survivors at Dar Al-Shefa hospital said police did not conduct the usual checks as the cathedral was particularly busy for Sunday's mass. "There were large numbers so people entered without being searched," said Mina Francis, who was in the cathedral with his mother who was killed in the blast. At least 24 people died and 49 were wounded when a bomb exploded in a chapel adjoining St Mark's Cathedral, Cairo's largest church and seat of the pope.

together and offer condolences to each other. This grief we will share together."

Christian anger

President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who announced three days of mourning and vowed justice, is to attend a public ceremony later. Sisi is fighting battles on several fronts. His economic reforms have angered the poor, a crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood has seen thousands jailed and an insurgency rages in Northern Sinai, led by Islamic State's Egyptian branch. The group has also claimed attacks in Cairo and urged its supporters in recent weeks to launch attacks around the world as it goes on the defensive in its Iraqi and Syrian strongholds. There was no

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IRAQ CHRISTIANS CONFRONT THEIR PAINFUL MEMORIES

MILITANTS DESECRATED CHURCH, USED YARD FOR PRACTICE

QARAQOSH: For decades, the Immaculate Conception Church in Qaraqosh was the heart of Iraq's largest Christian town. After two years under Islamic State rule, it lies scarred and desecrated. In the church's inner courtyard, Islamic State fighters set up a shooting range for target practice, leaving behind bul-

still hangs at an angle, its inside is blackened by fire and its walls are daubed with Islamic State slogans and militant names scrawled on its pillars. Mass has been held in the Immaculate Conception for the first time in two years and Christians are visiting to see what remains. But few think of returning for

October as part of the campaign to recapture nearby Mosul, Islamic State's largest Iraqi stronghold, two years after the group swept across the north of the country to form its self-declared "Caliphate" there and over the border in Syria.

Families come briefly to Qaraqosh to check

Qaraqosh under the auspices of the Iraqi army. Christianity in northern Iraq dates back to the first century AD. The minority gradually fled the violence after the 2003 overthrow of Saddam Hussein. When Islamic State arrived, many abandoned their homes and fled to Kurdistan.

New defenses

General Behnam Aboush, who helped form the NPU to fight for Qaraqosh, said his units were protecting the Christian town to free up the Iraqi forces trying to take back Mosul, 30 km to the northwest. He said Christians would return to their towns and villages only if Christian forces provided security rather than Iraqi Arab or Kurdish forces like before, and if they had some guarantees of international protection. "Always we have lost our land. We will stay if we guide our own security," he said. The NPU is funded by the central government and gets its weapons from the Iraqi army.

A newly bulldozed earthen barrier surrounds the town as protection against Islamic State infiltration from the Nineveh plains. Residents say two men on motorbikes were stopped recently, suspected of being Islamic State suicide bombers. But even victory against Islamic State and the possibility of a permanent Christian force in the town will not be enough for many. Alhan Mansour returned to Qaraqosh just for a second time to pack more clothes and her son's toys from the family home into their car. Her sister's home was used by the militants and later destroyed, she said. But memories are too much now.

"We're going to emigrate. We just came to see our home and our memories, it's too sad," she said before driving away. "It's hard to leave your memories, but I don't trust living here anymore." At the Immaculate Conception, one of several churches in the town centre, the clean up is only just beginning inside its charred and wrecked nave. On one wall black militant graffiti still reads: "Islamic State is here to stay despite the Crusader coalition thanks to the blood of our martyrs." Nearby someone has scrawled a defiant reply: "Jesus remains in our hearts." —Reuters



MOSUL: Iraqi families, who fled their homes in the Iraqi town Shwah west of Mosul due to the fighting between government forces' and Islamic State (IS) group's jihadists, are being escorted, from their makeshift camp to safer areas by Shiite fighters from the Hashed Al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation) paramilitary forces yesterday. —AFP

let-riddled female mannequins and hard-board figures when they were driven out. The yard's arches and walls are cratered. At one end, empty shell casings carpet its flagstones near piles of trash and sheets of hymn music; a wooden pulpit for sermons sits pockmarked and cracked by bullets at the other, now with a small pink "Hallelujah" flag posted on top.

More than a month after Iraqi forces regained Qaraqosh, the church's spire cross

good to Qaraqosh, which once had 50,000 residents but is now all but a ghost town.

"Perhaps they should leave it like this and people visit and see what Islamic State did," said Aram Alqastoma, a student who came from a nearby Christian enclave in Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region with friends to help clean up the church. "They destroyed everything. And it destroyed my heart to see this." The army retook Qaraqosh in late

on burned out homes and collect belongings from a town that was one of the earliest sites of Christianity. Mechanical diggers sit ready in the town centre to help rebuild, and main streets have been cleared of rubble. But many of its shops are burned out and ransacked. Water or electricity have yet to return. Walls in the town centre are sprayed with "NPU" - the 500-strong Christian paramilitary brigade Nineveh Plains Protection Units that protects



ALEPPO: A Syrian pro-government fighter carries a wounded woman who was reportedly shot by rebel sniper while fleeing with her family Aleppo's eastern Al-Salihin neighborhood yesterday after troops retook the area from rebel fighters. —AFP

SURPRISE RECAPTURE OF PALMYRA GIVES IS BOOST

BEIRUT: The Islamic State group's surprise recapture of Syria's famed ancient city of Palmyra has given the jihadist group an important propaganda boon as it comes under attack elsewhere. Here are some questions and answers about the group's attack on the city:

How did IS capture Palmyra?

The jihadist group began an assault on government positions in Homs province, where Palmyra is located, last week. It quickly overran army checkpoints and seized oil and gas fields until it reached the city's edge. The jihadists briefly entered the city on Saturday before being forced to withdraw after government ally Russia launched intense air strikes. But despite the raids and the arrival of Syrian army reinforcements, IS seized control of the city hours later, a monitoring group and the jihadist-linked Amaq news agency said. Experts said several factors explained IS's shock recapture of the city, including its isolated location in the eastern desert of Homs province, where the group was able to overrun territory quickly.

"The geography of the city, which is surrounded by mountains, makes it very difficult to defend," said Romain Caillet, an expert on jihadist groups. Government and Russian forces, on the offensive elsewhere in Syria, may also have been vulnerable to a surprise attack, a favored IS tactic. "One of the key things IS is very good at is launching surprise attacks from desert positions," said Charlie Winter, a senior fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence at Kings College London.

"They have a high level of operational security so they are able to essentially launch shock attacks and gain lots of ground." The Kremlin blamed the United States, saying that IS's advance could have been stopped if Washington had coordinated better with Moscow. "We also regret that there still is a lack of coordinated action and real cooperation with other states-with the United States first and foremost-that do not want to cooperate, and this cooperation could allow us to avoid such attacks by terrorists," said spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

Why is Palmyra important?

Despite its relatively small size, Palmyra is considered symbolically important and of international interest because of its ancient ruins, which are a UNESCO World Heritage site. IS ravaged the ruins during the 10 months it held Palmyra from May 2015 to March 2016, systematically blowing up ancient temples in attacks that provoked worldwide horror. Russian forces played a key role in Palmyra's capture, which Moscow celebrated by flying in Russian musicians to perform a classical concert in the city's ancient theatre, where IS had staged mass executions of government troops.

IS's win in Palmyra at the weekend comes as the jihadist group faces major offensives against its two most important bastions-Syria's Raqa city and Iraq's Mosul. In both cities, the group has been forced to issue daily denials about its losses, so the Palmyra advance gives it a chance to change the narrative, Winter said. "It really feeds their ability to engage in a triumphalist propaganda frenzy... They want to show that they are still a potent military actor," he said.

What will IS do now?

The group's fighters have continued to push forward, advancing towards Al-Qaryatayn, a village that the jihadists also ravaged during an eight-month rule. But they have come under heavy Russian air strikes, and it was unclear how long they could hold on to the territory they have captured in recent days. Winter said Russia and Damascus were likely to push hard to force IS out of Palmyra, "because it is a symbolically potent site". But with key battles raging elsewhere, mainly government operations to recapture rebel east Aleppo, a major push to expel IS could be delayed until more resources are available. Caillet said IS would continue pushing to take additional territory. "It's a mistake to think that they will stop at local objectives, they will continue to the maximum of their abilities, even if their operations... sometimes appear irrational," he said. "With their capture of Palmyra, despite Russian bombardment, jihadist morale has been boosted for at least another six months," he added. —AFP

BAHRAIN UPHOLDS NINE-YEAR JAIL SENTENCE FOR OPPOSITION CHIEF

DUBAI: Bahrain's Appeals Court yesterday upheld a nine-year jail sentence against opposition chief Sheikh Ali Salman, a judicial source said, the latest move in a crackdown on the Shiite majority. The sentence against Salman, for inciting hatred and calling for regime change by force, had been overturned by the court of cassation in October. Salman, 51, is considered a moderate who has pushed for a constitutional monarchy in Bahrain.

His arrest in December 2014, in connection with speeches he had given, sparked protests in Shiite-majority Bahrain. Human Rights Watch said he was arrested and charged "despite the fact Salman renounced violence and called for peaceful protest in his speeches". The charismatic Shiite cleric was sentenced in July 2015 to four years in jail after being convicted of inciting hatred in the Gulf kingdom. But the appeals court in May more than doubled his jail term to nine years after reversing an earlier acquittal on charges of calling for regime change by force.

Jails 'filled'

The court of cassation overturned that sentence on October 17 and ordered a retrial before the appeals court. It also rejected a request to release the cleric. In July, a court ordered the dissolution of Salman's Al-Wefaq movement for "harboring terrorism", inciting violence and encouraging demonstrations which threatened to spark sectarian strife. The decision drew strong criticism from UN chief Ban Ki-moon, Bahrain's allies in Washington and London, and Shiite-dominated Iran. Al-Wefaq had the largest bloc in parliament before lawmakers walked out in February 2011 in protest over a deadly crackdown on Arab Spring-inspired protests.

Bahrain has harshly cracked down over the past five years on dissent by the Shiite

majority, which they accuse of being manipulated by Iran. The number of arrests and trials have spiraled. The kingdom stripped 31 Shiite activists of their nationality in October 2012 for breaching state security, and Human Rights Watch says most of them have been left stateless. Bahrain has repeatedly arrested and detained other opposition leaders, including Nabil Rajab, the founder of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights.

Rajab was most recently arrested on June 13 for comments on his Twitter account that criticized the kingdom's role in Saudi Arabia-led military operations in Yemen, according to HRW. The New York-based rights watchdog yesterday issued a statement calling for Rajab's immediate release, saying the charges against him "inherently violate the right to free expression". It has in the past criticized the silence of Bahrain's Western allies as the kingdom has "filled its jails with the people who hold the key to the political solution the UK and US claim to support". Salman holds a bachelors degree in mathematics from Saudi Arabia and in 1987 headed to Iran's holy city of Qom to study Islamic Studies at the Shiite school of clerics.

He was widely considered one of the leaders of an uprising in the 1990s and he was arrested several times by the authorities. After six years in exile, he returned to Bahrain in 2001 under a general amnesty. Upon his return home, Salman set up Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society with other Shiite opposition figures and was elected secretary general in 2006. Al-Wefaq boycotted elections in 2002 but ran in 2006, winning almost half the seats of the 40-member parliament. It held onto its seats in the next polls in 2010, but Al-Wefaq lawmakers withdrew in 2011 in protest at the "repression" of the Shiite-led protests. The movement is appealing against its dissolution. —AFP



AZ ZINJ, Bahrain: A Bahraini man holds a placard bearing the portrait of Sheikh Ali Salman, head of the Shiite opposition movement Al-Wefaq, during a protest against his arrest, in the village of Zinj on the outskirts of the capital Manama. —AFP

News

in brief

Abu Sayyaf militants free two Indonesians

MANILA: Abu Sayyaf gunmen have freed two Indonesian tugboat crewmen kidnapped by the ransom-seeking militants six months ago and held in the jungles of the southern Philippines, the military said yesterday. Regional military spokesman Maj. Filemon Tan said the militants released Mohammad Nazer and Robin Peter to a rebel commander belonging to the Moro National Liberation Front near Sulu province's Indanan town amid pressure from military assaults. The Moro rebel front is engaged in peace talks with the government and often acts as an intermediary for the release of Abu Sayyaf hostages. It was not immediately clear if a ransom was paid. The two hostages were abducted from a tugboat off Sulu's Simisa Island in June and taken to the Abu Sayyaf's jungle camps. After being freed, the captives were handed over to Sulu officials yesterday and then taken to a military trauma hospital for a checkup.

Sudan's President vows to crush opposition protests

KHARTOUM: Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir vowed yesterday to brutally crush anti-regime protests, warning the authorities will crack down on demonstrators as they did in 2013 when dozens were killed during clashes. Bashir's warning came as opposition activists issued a new call to hold a two-day nationwide strike next week against a government decision to cut fuel subsidies that has led to rising prices for goods including medicines. "In the past few days we have heard some people, who are hiding behind their keyboards, calling for the overthrow of the regime," Bashir told supporters gathered in the eastern town of Kasala. "We want to tell them that if you want to overthrow the regime, then face us directly on the streets. I challenge you to come out onto the streets. But we know you will not come because you know what happened in the past... This regime will not be overthrown by keyboards and WhatsApp," Bashir said in a speech broadcast live on state television.



LYON: An investigating French police officer takes photographs on the highway where thieves robbed an armored truck loaded with gold yesterday in Dardilly, near Lyon, central France. —AP

Robbers grab 70kg of gold in a dramatic French heist

LYON: Thieves held up a van transporting 70 kilograms (154 pounds) of gold in a dramatic heist near the French city of Lyon yesterday, police sources said. Four robbers used two cars to block the van at a motorway exit leading to an industrial estate north of Lyon, the sources said. After grabbing the gold and loading it into their getaway car, they locked the two security guards in the back of their van. Before making off, they set fire to their abandoned vehicle. The fire gutted the car and spread to nearby vehicles but police arrived on the scene before it engulfed the van, freeing the two guards who escaped unharmed, the investigators said. The robbery took place at an exit from the A6 motorway that connects the city with Paris. Police were hunting the assailants. France has experienced a growing number of motorway hijackings in recent years.

Japan criticizes China over 'untrue' claims

TOKYO: Japan has lashed out at China over claims its fighter jets obstructed Beijing's military aircraft, saying the allegation was "clearly untrue". China's defense ministry said two Japanese F-15s launched "decoy flares" in international airspace over the East China Sea on Saturday, actions it called "dangerous and unprofessional". Tokyo denied anything was fired during the encounter, and said it had protested to Beijing over the allegation. "It is extremely regrettable that the Chinese defense ministry one-sidedly made a clearly untrue announcement," Japan's top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga told reporters on Sunday. The two countries intermittently spar over claims of air and sea misconduct in and above the waters of the East China Sea, where they are engaged in a row over the ownership of uninhabited islands. China did not give details about its maneuvers, but said its aircraft had been carrying out "routine far seas training" when they passed through the Miyako Strait in the Okinawan chain.

Couple decorates their house with over 100 Christmas trees

RINTELN: For one German couple, putting up the Christmas decorations takes eight long weeks. With around 16,000 baubles needed to be placed on over 100 Christmas trees, Thomas and Susanne Jeromin's annual winter wonderland at their house in the small German town of Rinteln has become a seasonal labor of love. "We started off with a normal Christmas tree in the living room as you'd expect and then we thought we could put one in the hallway, one in the kitchen, and over the last five years it's exploded," Thomas Jeromin said. The Christmas-obsessed couple began decorating the 105 square meters of space in their home, 60 km south west of Hannover, in early October, with lights, ornaments and Father Christmas decorations dotted throughout. The Jeromin's bedroom is the only festive-free zone. "It's our retreat for when we've had enough of Christmas," Susanne Jeromin said.

Turkey arrests Kurds, hits militants after bombings

ANKARA: Turkey arrested nearly 200 officials from a pro-Kurdish party and struck Kurdish militants in Iraq yesterday in response to this weekend's twin bombings claimed by a radical Kurd separatist group. The toll from Saturday's attacks, which struck an Istanbul football stadium and a nearby park, rose to 44 yesterday, Health Minister Recep Akdag said. Turkish jets pounded targets in northern Iraq, with the military saying it had hit "separatist terrorist organization members", referring to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

ENGLISH SWORN IN AS NEW ZEALAND PM AFTER KEY EXIT

STATE SERVICES MINISTER NAMED AS DEPUTY LEADER

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's socially conservative finance chief Bill English was sworn in as the country's new prime minister yesterday following last week's shock resignation of his popular predecessor John Key. The centre-right National Party caucus unanimously backed English at a meeting yesterday morning and he travelled to Government House in Wellington a few hours later to officially take over. State Services Minister Paula Bennett was named as deputy leader.

English, 54, said he was "excited and humbled" to take the top job after eight years as Key's deputy and finance minister. "This will be a government supporting economic growth and ensuring that the benefits of growth are widely shared," he told reporters. National Party president Peter Goodfellow said English and Bennett offered "a good mixture of experience and fresh thinking". "Under their leadership, New Zealanders will continue to benefit from the stable government they expect, along with a dedicated focus on delivering results for families and businesses," he said.

A former farmer with degrees in commerce and literature, English has been in parliament since 1990 and was previously leader of the

National Party in 2002 when it suffered its worst election defeat. "You learn more from losing than you do from winning," said English, who will seek National's fourth straight election win in late 2017. He was Key's preferred successor after returning New Zealand's budget to surplus and keeping the economy ticking over at about three percent.

Social conservative

English said New Zealand's prosperity meant the country did not have the pool of disaffected voters responsible for Brexit and US President-elect Donald Trump's victory. And he said a priority for his government was ensuring the most needy were given opportunities. "We have a strong economy, almost unique in the developed world, and most New Zealanders would expect to be able to share in that," he said.

A committed Catholic with six children, English is regarded as far more socially conservative than Key, opposing the 2013 legalization of same-sex marriage and speaking out against abortion and voluntary euthanasia. "It doesn't define me but it is an important influence," he said when asked about his faith Monday,

adding that he now supported gay marriage after seeing its positive impact.

Key, who resigned for family reasons after eight years and prime minister and 10 as party leader, said he was looking forward to becoming an anonymous backbencher. He congratulated English and Bennett, saying he did not expect the government's direction to change under the new team. "I don't think it will be a radically different agenda under Bill English," he told reporters.

"It gives a sense of newness (to the government) that the public probably do want." Opposition Labor Party leader Andrew Little said English's leadership meant more of the same for voters. "New Zealand has moved on, but Bill English hasn't," he said. "The right-wing rump of National under English is now reasserting itself." Bennett, 47, revealed she had struggled as a teenage single mother and said the fact that she was given a second chance and had become deputy prime minister was "a credit to New Zealand".

"There was a moment when I was a 17-year-old Maori solo mum in Taupo, I'd left school with no qualifications, I didn't have a job and it looked pretty bleak," she said. — AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: This file photo shows rescuers searching for survivors from the wreckage of the LAMIA airlines charter plane carrying members of the Chapecoense Real football team that crashed in the mountains of Cerro Gordo, municipality of La Union, on November 29, 2016. — AFP

CRASH EXPOSES GULF BETWEEN BRAZILIANS AND THEIR LEADERS

RIO DE JANEIRO: As Brazilians mourned the recent plane crash that killed 71 people, including almost an entire soccer team, President Michel Temer spent days publicly wavering about whether to attend the memorial service in the southern city of Chapeco. His allies in congress were even less tactful: They launched an around-the-clock session seeking to gut anti-corruption legislation on the same day people learned of the disaster, spurring violent protests in the capital of Brasilia.

Coming from an already deeply unpopular government, the bungled response to what is seen as a national tragedy has angered Brazilians to the point where analysts say it has put Temer's ambitious plans to cut spending and overhaul the pension system in jeopardy. And there are increasing calls, mostly from opposition politicians but also ordinary citizens, for Temer to be impeached just like his predecessor. "The tragedy of the Chapecoense team was not only a missed opportunity for the president, it was also damaging," said Carlos Manhanelli, chairman of the Brazilian Association of Political Consultants. "Once more it gave the impression that politicians don't care about normal people."

The plane crashed outside Medellin, Colombia, late on the night of Nov 28. The next morning Brazilians woke up to the shocking news, including that 19 players on the Chapecoense soccer club were among the dead. Temer, the former vice president who took over the top job in August after President Dilma Rousseff was removed from office for breaking fiscal responsibility laws, called for three days of national mourning. But Temer's solemn words were not heeded by his legislative allies.

Unpopular spending-cut

That night one chamber of congress rushed through an unpopular spending-cut measure, while the other moved to weaken anti-corruption legislation and even add penalties for prosecutors and judges who overstep their power. The measure on corruption was particularly galling for many Brazilians as about 60 percent of sitting lawmakers are under investigation or already charged with wrongdoing - mostly graft, according to local watchdog groups. A sweeping probe into a kickback scheme at state oil company Petrobras has snared dozens of top politicians and business executives in recent months.

Television stations, which had been broadcasting the latest news on the crash all day, switched to the rowdy protests that erupted outside congress during the sessions. Several thousand demonstrators overturned and burned cars during an hours-long standoff with riot police. "The public wasn't so distracted by the tragedy that they missed that unsavory act," said James Bosworth, a Washington-based risk analyst. "In fact, the congressional vote strengthened the public's view that the

country's politicians are more interested in helping themselves than helping the country."

Presidential aides initially said Temer, who has been booed the rare times he appeared in public, would not attend the memorial in Chapeco on Dec 3. Then, under heavy pressure, they said he would go to the city but only meet with grieving families at the airport. Osmar Machado, a shoe salesman whose soccer player son Felipe was killed in the crash, became a national hero when he blasted Temer and other politicians for their response.

Families and the victims

"What are these politicians thinking? The important people here are the families and the victims," a tearful Machado said at the stadium where the memorial was to take place. "This Temer guy wants families to go to the local airport of Chapeco to see him and get some medal. But he is the one that had to come here and talk to us." "Doesn't he get that?" Machado said. Temer, a 75-year-old career politician nicknamed the "butler" for his dour manner, eventually did attend the memorial. But the president, Cabinet ministers and allies who accompanied him were largely ignored by the 22,000 people in the stadium.

Leading columnist Clovis Rossi called on Temer's office to reveal which adviser persuaded him to attend. "That way we would know that there is at least one person in the presidential palace who understands the stature of the job and the obligation of not hiding," Rossi wrote in the newspaper Folha de S Paulo. The day after the memorial, in more than two dozen cities, hundreds of thousands protested against Temer's and congress' attempts to defang the anti-corruption legislation.

So great was the uproar that the measure has been put on hold, at least for now. Political risk consultancy Eurasia has raised from 10 percent to 20 percent its estimate on the likelihood that Temer will not last in office through the end of his term in 2018. Temer is facing allegations that he received illegal campaign donations - something he denies - and his administration has lurched from one scandal to the next, losing six Cabinet ministers amid a steady stream of accusations of wrongdoing.

The turmoil in Brasilia, coupled with Temer's inability to connect with ordinary Brazilians, makes his prospects of winning support for contentious legislation like pension reform all the more unlikely. A poll published Sunday by DataFolha said 63 percent of Brazilians want Temer to resign. The survey interviewed 2,828 people Dec. 7-8 and had a margin of error of two percentage points. "We need someone who can fix things, not create more problems," taxi driver Marcelo Veloso said.

"I had some hope after Rousseff was removed, but now I think we need a man of the people to sort this out." — AP



WELLINGTON: New Zealand Prime Minister Bill English (left) stands with the Governor-General, Dame Patsy Reddy, after being sworn-in at Government House in Wellington, New Zealand yesterday. — AP

DEATH TOLL FROM KENYA TANKER FIREBALL HITS 40

NAIROBI: The death toll from a fireball caused by a crash involving a tanker carrying flammable materials rose to 40 yesterday, as Kenya faced calls to improve safety on its perilous roads. The east African nation was left reeling by devastating scenes from the crash late Saturday in which the tanker ploughed into 11 vehicles, leaving a trail of incinerated wreckage and bodies along the main road leading west from Nairobi towards Uganda.

Officials initially put the death toll at 33, but after scouring the scene, rescue workers-some in hazmat suits-found six more bodies in the bush of people who tried to flee the scene, a senior police officer told AFP. And one of the injured succumbed to their wounds in hospital. "We have 34 bodies at Chiroko mortuary and six at Kenyatta University mortuary," said Nathaniel Kigotho, director of the National Disaster Operations Centre.

He said all of the victims would have to undergo DNA testing to be identified. The dead include 11 officers of the General Service Unit, a paramilitary police force. "Scenes from hell" was the headline on Kenya's Daily Nation newspaper which ran stories of brave rescues and daring escapes from the inferno. One motorist called Kamau said he managed to jump out of his car just in time, but witnessed grisly scenes including a man running for his life as flames consumed him. "I am not sure if he survived," he said.

Road notoriously dangerous

Kenya's Red Cross said the driver had lost control of the tanker which then crashed into 11 other vehicles and "burst into flames". Police and witnesses have blamed new speed bumps which have appeared along the notoriously-dangerous highway without any warning

signs-a common occurrence on Kenyan roads."The disaster once again demonstrates the perils on our roads which have persisted despite interventions to make travel safer," read an editorial in the Daily Nation, which highlighted confusing traffic rules which are often not enforced.

Large trucks are supposed to be banned from travelling along certain roads at night. Traffic rules are often flouted in Kenya where corruption and the bribing of police officials is rife. The busy Nairobi-Nakuru highway is notorious for deadly accidents. In 2009, over 100 people were killed and 200 injured after a petrol tanker overturned and local people gathered to collect the leaking fuel then a fire broke out. According to Kenya's traffic department, some 3,000 people die annually on the country's roads. But the World Health Organization (WHO) believes the figure could be as high as 12,000. — AFP

EU, CUBA NORMALIZE TIES AFTER DECADES-LONG RIFT

BRUSSELS: The European Union and Cuba yesterday signed a deal to normalize ties that had been blocked for decades by human rights concerns under revolutionary icon Fidel Castro. Cuba was the only Latin American country not to have a "dialogue and cooperation" deal with the 28-nation EU covering issues such as trade, human rights and migration. But EU ministers last week dropped a policy in place since 1996 which stated that Cuba first had to improve its human rights record before getting closer links with the bloc.

Yesterday's accord was signed by Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, EU foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini and repre-

sentatives from the EU member states at a Brussels ceremony capping years of difficult negotiations. Mogherini offered condolences on Castro's death, telling reporters it was "only natural that we are closer to Cuba as it undergoes profound change."

She said she was also "very encouraged" by dialogue with Havana on human rights and the accord would help foster Cuba's social and political modernization. Castro died last month after more than 50 years at the helm of a self-styled Socialist paradise reviled by the West, with Cuba gradually opening up to the world, including bitter foe Washington. In 2003, the EU imposed

sanctions on Cuba and suspended cooperation over a crackdown on journalists and activists and it took until 2008 to get talks going again.

Trump election, no impact

Rodriguez Parrilla said "we have had a few differences on the way but the removal of the (1996 EU) common position re-establishes normal relations based on mutual respect." Asked what impact Donald Trump's election might have on US policy, he noted angrily that despite easing tensions, Washington had kept its economic embargo against Cuba. "EU-Cuba relations do not go via Washington," he added.

Mogherini said she saw no reason for concern although Trump's shock election victory has stoked doubts in Europe about Washington's global stance and its crucial security guarantee. "Developments in Washington will not affect in any way relations between the EU and Cuba," she said, stressing Brussels had and would continue to raise concerns about the impact of the US economic blockade on other countries. She also highlighted Europe's wider ties with the region as a whole. "We are talking about a transatlantic link not only with the United States, but also with Cuba and Latin America."

On the campaign trail, Trump had threatened to end the thaw in US ties backed by President Barack Obama unless Havana made concessions on human rights and opened up its still largely state-run economy to private business. "Economic links with Europe will continue to be a priority for Cuba as we build a socialist economy," Rodriguez Parrilla said at the signing ceremony. He recalled a speech in 2003 in which Castro hailed the historical importance of the EU as a counterweight to the United States which imposed the trade embargo and other sanctions on Cuba after it sided with Moscow in the Cold War. — AFP



BRUSSELS: Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla (left) shakes hand with EU foreign affairs and security policy chief, Federica Mogherini after signing an EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement in Brussels yesterday. — AFP

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SIX MONTHS ON, BREXIT RIFT AMONG BRITONS REMAINS WIDE

LONDON: One campaigned to leave the European Union, the other to stay. Now, nearly six months after Britain's shock referendum vote for Brexit, two thirty-somethings prove the debate is still very much alive, and just as painful. "I'm very, very excited about the future," says Chris Mendes, a 31-year-old software engineer who supports the anti-EU, anti-immigration UK Independence Party (UKIP), which helped drive the "Leave" vote.

But Thomas Cole, a 33-year-old political analyst who used to work at the European Commission in Brussels, says the future is still up for play. Since the vote on June 23, many Britons have had to wrestle with some of the stark and unsettling realities of what "leaving Europe" actually means. And, for Cole and others who voted "Remain", this jolt gives cause to stay in the fight. "Just because the referendum has taken place doesn't mean you say, 'OK, I give up now,'" he says.

Outwardly similar, the two men are passionately divided on Brexit, reflecting the split that saw Britons vote 52 percent to leave the EU and 48 percent to stay. Introduced by AFP, they traded views at a cafe in London's St Pancras station, the gateway for travelers arriving from and leaving to continental Europe. Mendes, sporting a brown T-shirt and a three-day-old beard, acknowledges there are challenges to leaving the EU, not least pro-European MPs seeking to



BRUSSELS: European Council President Donald Tusk (left) walks with European Parliament President Martin Schulz (center) and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker at the European Council building in Brussels. The 28-nation EU has been rocked by the British exit referendum last year, and acrimonious relations with some eastern members on migration and constitutional law. — AP

delay or soften the divorce. "There's obviously a clear resistance to Brexit, there's no question about that, but we expected that," he says.

But Cole, wearing a smart jumper

and striped scarf tied at the neck, argues that the referendum was "legally not binding". He came home to campaign against Brexit and is a member of the pro-EU, centrist Liberal Democrats,

who want a second referendum on the final terms of the exit deal. Cole suggests that if the exit negotiations "become complicated", then the 2020 general election could be effectively run as a second referendum. "I couldn't disagree more," chips in Mendes, accusing Cole of a "morally bankrupt" position. Cole hits back: "You have to pass things through parliament, I think that's normal."

Taking back control

Under pressure from members of her Conservative party and EU leaders, Prime Minister Theresa May has promised to begin formal exit talks by the end of March. But she is fighting a legal challenge against calls for MPs to take the final decision on triggering Brexit, amid concerns that parliament, which overwhelmingly wanted Britain to stay in the EU, will try to block it. Meanwhile the cabinet itself appears divided on the key issue of whether or not to stay in the single market.

Remainers say quitting the world's biggest trade bloc will destroy swathes of British jobs. Brexit supporters say Britain will forge new trade deals with the rest of the world. For Mendes, a principle is at stake. "We want to come out of the single market, we voted to take back control of our laws completely, we voted to take back control of our borders completely," he says.

He reflects the government's outward confidence that it will get the "best

possible deal" for Britain—even if it has yet to set out how this will happen. Unsurprisingly, Cole says he would like to stay in the single market—and would be unhappy with some of the proposed compromises. One option is for Britain to leave the market of 500 million consumers but continue to pay for access, while being unable to shape its rules. "From a democratic point of view it's frankly terrible," he says. An upside of a clean break with Brussels is that "you wouldn't have somebody else telling you what to do. Having said that, for the economy, would it be good? No."

Healthy debate?

"In an ideal scenario, I want things to be as they are," Cole admits, before he is cut off by Mendes, insisting: "That's not going to happen." The discussion is lively but good-natured, although elsewhere in Britain tensions are high, with reports of an increase in hate crime after the vote, and death threats against leading campaigners on both sides. Mendes says the national debate is "very healthy", adding: "We have not discussed these things for about 40 years—and now, for the first time, we are." The natural consequence of that is an explosion, a massive clash, a violent clash, intellectually speaking, of ideas." Cole agrees, and notes the recent election of Donald Trump as US president. "Ignoring people's concerns is essentially dangerous," he says. — AFP

UNCERTAINTY AFTER ROMANIA LEFTISTS' ELECTION COMEBACK

CORRUPTION-TAINTED LEFTISTS BACK INTO POWER



BUCHAREST: Romanian Prime Minister Dacian Cioloș touches his forehead during an interview with the Associated Press in Bucharest, Romania. —AP

BUCHAREST: Romania faced fresh political uncertainty yesterday as a thumping election comeback by the corruption-tainted left put them on collision course with the centre-right president. A year after anger over a deadly nightclub fire drove them from office, partial official results showed the Social Democrats (PSD) won 45.3 percent of the vote in Sunday's election.

Their centre-right rivals National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Save Romania Union (USR), newly created by a mathematician-turned-activist, trailed on a combined 29.5 percent. "There is no doubt who the winners are," PSD head Liviu Dragnea said late Sunday. "Romanians voted for economic growth, more money in their pockets and for well-paid jobs." The PSD's likely coalition partners, the liberal ALDE party, cleared the five-percent hurdle needed to enter parliament, likely giving them a combined majority in the parliament.

However, it was unclear who will become prime minister of the European Union's second-poorest country and succeed caretaker premier Dacian Cioloș, 47, a former European commissioner. As chief of the biggest party the logical choice would be Dragnea and comments late Sunday from the 54-year-old suggested that he wants the job. "I do not intend to gift my votes to someone else, whether it be a person or an institution. I ran the campaign, the party, it was an enormous responsibility," he said.

However Dragnea is serving a suspended sentence for electoral fraud, which in theory under Romanian law bars him from office. The PSD may seek a way around this but centre-right President Klaus Iohannis has also refused to appoint anyone with legal problems. Political expert Cristian Parvulescu said he expects Iohannis to stick to his guns. "Dragnea has an enormous problem. He runs the risk of losing this battle," Parvulescu said. But he said there was also the possibility that the PSD may try to suspend Iohannis, as happened with his predecessor Traian Basescu twice.

'Dare to believe'

The left's triumph was remarkable, coming barely a year after tens of thousands of people took to streets in the wake of the October 30, 2015 disco blaze. The inferno was blamed on corrupt officials turning a blind eye to an absence of fire precautions, and the sorry state of Romanian health care exacerbated the death toll. The outrage prompted a push to tackle graft, something Brussels has long complained about, and there are concerns that the left's comeback may reverse progress in this area. But the well-organized PSD, which has strong support among older, rural voters, sought to turn attention away from corruption by focusing on the economy. With the slogan "Dare to Believe", Dragnea vowed to create 45,000 new jobs with a "national reindustrialisation" plan and to slash the flat income tax rate from 16 to 10 percent.

This went down well in a country where half of rural households have no running water, one in four people lives in poverty and scores of schools can't afford heating. However, voter apathy remains rife. Turnout on Sunday was just 39.5 percent, one of the lowest in the 27 years since the execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and the end of Communism. "In 1989 I was full of hope," newspaper vendor Nicolae Popescu said yesterday. "But I can't be very optimistic as long as I see there is no improvement in the people who govern us." — AFP



ROME: Italy's newly named Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni arrives for a press conference in Rome. Gentiloni was named as Italy's new prime minister following reformist leader Matteo Renzi's resignation in the wake of a crushing referendum defeat. — AFP

ITALY'S GENTILONI RACES TO FORM A NEW CABINET

ROME: New Italian premier-designate Paolo Gentiloni raced to put together a cabinet team yesterday as the market welcomed the apparent rapid resolution of the country's political and banking crises. Gentiloni, 62, was asked by President Sergio Mattarella on Sunday to form a new centre-left government that will guide Italy to elections due by February 2018, following the resignation of outgoing Prime Minister Matteo Renzi.

Opposition parties slammed the softly-spoken former foreign minister as little more than a Renzi puppet, but Milan's FTSE Mib saluted the move, up 1.22 percent at 1030 GMT. Silver-haired Gentiloni, a one-time student radical from an aristocratic family, is expected to keep the cabinet largely untouched and present his final list to the president later. He will then seek parliamentary approval of his new government today or tomorrow. The biggest cabinet seat to fill is the one left vacant by Gentiloni himself, that of foreign minister.

Reshuffle

Political watchers say it could go to Piero Fassino, a member of Renzi's centre-left Democratic Party (PD) who has previously held the justice and foreign commerce portfolios. Interior Minister Angelino Alfano, who was Renzi's deputy and heads the New Centre-Right (NCD) party, is also tipped for the post. Should it go to Alfano, the interior portfolio could be handed to Domenico Minniti, the state secretary with responsibility for the security services under Renzi.

Analysts say Gentiloni could also keep the foreign minister job for himself, at least in the short term. Pier Carlo Padoa-Schioppa is expected to stay on as finance minister to

reassure Europe that the euro-zone's third-largest economy is on solid ground. Among the most pressing issues facing the new government is the fate of Italy's Monte dei Paschi di Siena (BMP) bank. The institution, the third largest in Italy, had requested extra time from Europe to plug a gaping hole in its finances, but reports on Friday that the European Central Bank had refused, spooked the markets.

'Super speed'

But just hours after Gentiloni was named as prime minister, the bank said it could avoid appealing for a government bailout, with BMP shares up 7.18 percent in mid-morning trading yesterday. He is now rushing to resolve the political crisis sparked by Renzi's crushing referendum defeat and downfall in time for Italy to attend the European Council meeting in Brussels on Thursday, where the pressing issue of migration is on the table. Italy is on the frontlines of the migrant crisis, with a record 175,000 people landing on its shores this year alone.

"The Gentiloni-Padoa government is coming together at a super speed to prevent the implosion of the Siena bank (BMP) and to make sure Italy does not turn up at the European Council with an incomplete government," the Stampa daily said. Renzi may be down and out for now, but analysts said he had tapped Gentiloni to replace him because he trusts him to keep his seat warm for the next general elections, which could be brought forward to early next year. "Gentiloni will be trying to maintain a direct line to his friend Matteo in order to take decisions together," the Stampa said. — AFP

SOUTH KOREA INTERIM LEADER FACES BIG AND THORNY ISSUES

SEOUL: South Korean Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn, who had a largely ceremonial job, now has to face off against North Korea and deal with edgy relations with Japan after becoming the country's interim leader following President Park Geun-hye's impeachment last week. After meeting with government officials and visiting the military headquarters, Hwang told fellow Cabinet members yesterday that there are no unusual security or economic developments. But critics say he'll soon face a slew of big, thorny issues that will test his leadership while the Constitutional Court reviews whether to endorse Park's impeachment to formally end her rule. Here is a look at several major issues that lie ahead for Hwang:

North Korea

Hwang's first move as interim leader was to tell his defense minister to bolster readiness against any possible provocation by North Korea. North Korea hasn't made international headlines since its fifth and biggest-ever nuclear test in September. That could just be in line with its nuclear development timetable, but given that Park and North Korea had terrible relations, Pyongyang might also want to avoid doing anything that could unite conservatives in South Korea behind Park.

In a sign of the ongoing tensions, the North's state media on Sunday released photos showing a smiling leader Kim Jong Un watching a practice attack on a replica of Park's presidential Blue House. A team of commandos parachuted, shot at the Blue House model with rifles and left it

engulfed in flames and black smoke. There are also worries about any actions by the North after it was slapped with tougher UN sanctions this month and by what some analysts think will be its desire to test the incoming US government of President-elect Donald Trump.

History textbooks

It's probably the first major, hot-button issue that Hwang will face. Park's government had been pushing to require schools to use state-authored history textbooks from next year, saying current textbooks published by private companies are too left-leaning and sympathize with North Korea. But in the wake of massive anti-government protests touched off by the political scandal involving Park's longtime confidante, the government took a step back, saying it wants to hear various opinions before making a final decision Dec 23. The liberal opposition is pressuring the government to scrap the textbook plan, calling it a move to beautify past authoritarian leaders, including Park's late father Park Chung-hee.

The elder Park is a deeply divisive figure, with critics calling him a horrible human rights abuser who imprisoned and tortured dissidents, while supporters call him a national hero who guided the country out of poverty. Hwang, a former justice minister, is a strong supporter of state-authored textbooks. But South Korean media say it could be difficult for him to stand up to opposition parties that have gained a greater say over state affairs after impeaching Park. — AP



South Korea's Prime Minister and acting President Hwang Kyo-Ahn

HONG KONG FINANCE CHIEF QUILTS

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's finance chief resigned yesterday ahead of what is widely expected to be a tilt at the city leadership. John Tsang-nicknamed "Mr Pringles" by local media for his resemblance to the crisp brand's mascot—is seen as a more moderate alternative to current leader Leung Chun-ying, who said Friday he would step down in July. The city has become sharply divided under Leung, whose term has been marked by anti-Beijing protests. Opponents cast him as a puppet of the Chinese government squeezing the semi-autonomous city's freedoms. Tsang confirmed to reporters Monday evening that he had resigned after more than nine years, but stopped short of announcing he would run for the leadership. "I shall think through this in the coming days and make an announcement," he said.

He used the opportunity to thank the Chinese government for their "support and encouragement" as well as the people of Hong Kong. Tsang recapped how he had witnessed

the city returned to "our motherland" referring to the handover of Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997. He also said that Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy had been "successfully implemented". The finance secretary's resignation is being seen as a signal that he will stand in the leadership elections in March. Candidates are not allowed to hold a government office if they want to stand for chief executive.

Skewed system

Although Tsang has a better public image than Leung, he is still an establishment figure. Pro-democracy campaigners have warned the next city leader will simply be another Beijing yes-man as the vote system is skewed. The chief executive is chosen by an electoral committee made up of representatives of special interest groups, weighted towards Beijing. Mass rallies in 2014 called for fully free leadership elections, but failed to win concessions on reform.

Special interest groups voted for members of the election committee on Sunday of almost 1,200 only around a quarter come from the pro-democracy camp. Speculation that Tsang would run for office intensified last year after China's President Xi Jinping shook his hand during a meeting in Beijing. There was another handshake between the two in September at the G20 in Hangzhou. Former security minister and current senior lawmaker Regina Ip is also expected to announce her candidacy this week. Ip is hated by the pro-democracy camp for supporting controversial anti-subversion law Article 23 when she was minister in 2003. It was dropped after hundreds of thousands of residents protested.

However, she has a strong support group in the establishment camp—in recent legislative elections Ip was one of the most popular candidates receiving 60,000 votes. Current government number two Carrie Lam has also said she will consider running. —AFP

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NEW THAI KING PARDONS PRISONERS IN 'FIRST SHOW OF MERCY'



BANGKOK: File photo shows Thailand's Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn attending the annual royal ploughing ceremony at Sanam Luang in Bangkok. Thailand's new King Maha Vajiralongkorn has issued a mass prisoner pardon, a first act of 'mercy' as monarch as he reaches out to his subjects following the death of his beloved father. —AFP

BANGKOK: Thailand's new King Maha Vajiralongkorn has pardoned tens of thousands of prisoners, a first act of "mercy" as monarch as he reaches out to his subjects following the death of his beloved father. Revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej died in October aged 88 after a seven-decade reign, leaving the politically feeble nation without its unifying figure. His only son, 64-year-old Vajiralongkorn, was proclaimed king in early December. But the thrice-divorced monarch is yet to draw the same level of devotion from a public well-versed in rumors over his private life even if any criticism of him is illegal. The prisoner pardon was Vajiralongkorn's "first chance since he succeeded the throne to show

the king's mercy", according to a statement published Sunday in palace mouthpiece the Royal Gazette.

Pardons were annual events under Bhumibol. Women jailed for first offences, some inmates who have served one third of their sentences, and prisoners with disabilities or serious illness were among those pardoned. The decree did not say how many prisoners will be freed. However the Bangkok Post, quoting Corrections Department chief Kobkai Kasiwat, said as many as 30,000 qualified for release, with another 70,000 expected to have their sentences reduced.

Ritual, propaganda and law underpin the status of Thailand's monarchy. Thai

schoolchildren are taught the primacy of the institution, while huge portraits of key royals adorn virtually every main street. Like his father, Vajiralongkorn is shielded from criticism by a harsh royal defamation law that carries up to 15 years in jail per charge. That has forced a culture of self-censorship upon the media, academia and the arts. The prisoner pardons follow a slew of public appearances by the new king, whose four decades as designated heir were characterized by public-shyness and long trips overseas. Since he was proclaimed King Rama X, the new monarch has offered flood relief, opened a town hall and been honored in a video tribute played in cinemas. —AFP

BEIJING WARNS TRUMP ON 'ONE CHINA POLICY'

ASIAN GIANT COULD BACK 'FORCES HOSTILE TO US'

BEIJING: Beijing issued its first clear warning yesterday over Donald Trump's fiery rhetoric, as state media said the Asian giant could back "forces hostile to the US" if the president-elect follows through with threats to drop Washington's One China policy. It was the strongest signal yet from Chinese authorities that abandoning the One China policy, which guides relations with self-ruling Taiwan, would upset decades of carefully managed Sino-US relations and end cooperation between the world's top two economies.

Beijing has not controlled Taiwan for more than 60 years but foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said it considered the island a "core interest" that affected China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The One China policy

was the "political bedrock" for relations with the US, he added, and if it was "compromised or disrupted", sound and steady growth in China-US relations and cooperation in major fields would be "out of the question", he told reporters. The comments came in response to Trump's remarks in an interview Sunday that he did not see why Washington must "be bound by a One China policy unless we make a deal with China having to do with other things, including trade".

He vehemently defended taking a call earlier this month from Tsai Ing-wen, the democratically elected president of Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a rogue province awaiting unification. Although the United States is Taiwan's main ally and arms supplier, Washington has not had official diplomatic relations with Taipei since 1979,

when it switched recognition to Beijing. Trump's decision to take the call broke with protocol, and seemed to catch China's Communist Party leadership by surprise.

The official response was initially muted, and state media largely blamed Taiwan for the phone call and advocated a wait-and-see response. But the remarks yesterday were more pointed, and a commentary in the nationalistic Global Times offered a more menacing warning to Trump, calling him "as ignorant of diplomacy as a child", in its Chinese-language version. If the US openly supports Taiwan's independence and ramps up arms sales to the island, it threatened. China could aid "forces hostile to the US". "In response to Trump's provocations, Beijing could offer support, even military assistance to US foes," it said. "China would introduce a series of new Taiwan policies, and may not prioritise peaceful reunification over a military takeover."

'Novice'

Despite the escalation in official rhetoric, many Chinese analysts still offer a note of restraint, emphasizing Trump's background in business, not politics, and the possibility his actions in office will take a softer line. "I think this could be his negotiating technique because he knows the Taiwan issue is an extremely sensitive issue, an issue China is very concerned about," Wu Xinbo, director of the Center for American Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai said. Trump was playing the card in hopes of winning concessions on trade, he said, adding that China should not be "too nervous" nor should it react "too fiercely". "We have to wait until after he takes office, then look again at his concrete actions."

Trump last week appointed Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, who is personally acquainted with Chinese President Xi Jinping, as ambassador to Beijing, which hailed the nominee as a "friend of China". A commentary on the official Xinhua news service yesterday compared the two countries' relations to people who "want to be close friends". The US must know "where to draw the line", it said, noting that previous presidents have set good examples and "now the ball is in President-elect Donald Trump's court". —AFP



BEIJING: This combination of two photos shows US President-elect Donald Trump (left) and Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen. An official Chinese newspaper yesterday called Donald Trump "as ignorant as a child" after the president-elect again suggested that he was reconsidering how America deals with Taiwan, one of the most sensitive issues in the relationship between the US and China. —AP

SCHOOLS SHUT, THOUSANDS EVACUATED AS CYCLONE BARRELS TOWARDS INDIA'S SOUTH

FLIGHTS AT CHENNAI AIRPORT DELAYED OR CANCELLED

CHENNAI: Authorities in India evacuated tens of thousands of people from low-lying areas and closed schools and colleges yesterday, as a cyclone barreled towards the south-eastern coast. Cyclone Vardah is moving westwards over the Bay of Bengal and is expected to hit Chennai, the capital of southern Tamil Nadu state, as well as neighboring Andhra Pradesh in the next few hours, said the Indian Meteorological Department, describing it as a "very severe storm". Rain began battering the dense-

ly populated coast ahead of the storm's landfall, while fierce winds uprooted trees and electricity pylons. Flights at Chennai airport were delayed or cancelled. Vardah is forecast to weaken gradually as it moves west but the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said wind speeds had picked up to around 140 kmph (87 mph), with heavy rain expected when the storm reaches land.

A "storm surge" will be about one meter (three feet) high. More than 23,000 people in Tamil Nadu have

been moved to relief centers, with plans for tens of thousands more to be evacuated, a senior state official, K Satyagopal said.

More than 10,000 people from two districts in Andhra Pradesh have also been moved, its disaster management commissioner, MV Seshagiri Babu, said. The NDMA warned fishermen not to venture to sea for the next 36 hours, and urged residents to stay in safe places.

Navy ships and aircraft, as well as 30 diving teams, were on standby to help move people and deliv-

er aid if needed, a navy spokesman said. India's cyclone season usually runs from April to December, with storms often causing dozens of deaths, evacuations of tens of thousands of people and widespread damage to crops and property.

Wind speeds topped 300 km per hour (186 mph) in an Indian "super-cyclone" that killed 10,000 people in 1999, while a cyclone packing speeds of more than 200 kph (124 mph) lashed the east coast in 2013. — Reuters



CHENNAI: A ripped up tree lays across a street in Chennai as Cyclone Vardah approaches the Indian coast. — AFP



Jakarta's governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama

WHY IS INDONESIA'S CHRISTIAN GOV ON TRIAL FOR BLASPHEMY?

JAKARTA: Jakarta's Christian governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is being prosecuted for blasphemy, an offence that carries a five-year jail term in Indonesia, over remarks he made about the Quran. The comments sparked widespread anger in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country and the case is now seen in part as a test of religious tolerance in Indonesia. But critics say it is also about politics as the governor's foes whip up anger to reduce his support.

Who is on trial?

Purnama, better known by his nickname Ahok, is Jakarta's first non-Muslim governor for half a century and a member of the country's tiny ethnic Chinese minority. The 50-year-old has won huge popularity with his no-nonsense style and determination to clean up Jakarta, an overcrowded, disorganized and polluted metropolis of 10 million. But he has also faced constant opposition from hardline Islamic groups, who dislike a non-Muslim being in charge of Indonesia's capital. He is running for election in February.

How did this start?

During a campaign stop in September, Purnama told a crowd they had been "deceived" by his opponents who used a Quranic verse to try to put them off voting for a Christian. The speech went viral, angering moderate and conservative Muslims alike who considered the remarks offensive. Purnama apologized but Indonesia's top Islamic clerical body declared the remarks blasphemous. In November more than 100,000 Muslims swarmed Jakarta in one of the largest mass demonstrations seen in the capital in years as hardliners burnt cars and clashed with police, demanding Purnama face justice. President Joko Widodo vowed to swiftly resolve the case, and police officially declared Purnama a suspect for blasphemy.

Why blasphemy?

Indonesia's constitution guarantees freedom of religion but officially only six faiths are recognized. Under tough laws dating back to 1965, anyone who insults these religions or deviates from their beliefs can be charged with blasphemy and jailed. Critics say today the laws are exploited to persecute minorities, like Shia and Ahmadi Muslims, and in some cases, even atheists have fallen foul of the legislation. In 2012, a man was sentenced to two-and-a-half years prison for writing "God does not exist" on Facebook.

Who else is involved?

The race to run Jakarta-Indonesia's financial and political capital has been a launch pad for the presidency and is always closely watched. But this election, fuelled by the blasphemy controversy, is shaping up as a key battleground for Indonesia's most powerful political factions. Purnama is running against two Muslim opponents: the son of former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and a popular education minister backed by 2014 presidential runner-up Prabowo Subianto. Another key player is the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), a hardline Muslim group that has spearheaded the grassroots campaign against Purnama. Their political heft and credentials as moral enforcers has been tarnished by the scandal.

What next?

The FPI and other Islamic groups have vowed to maintain pressure until Purnama is prosecuted. While rights groups fear the campaign against Purnama could further erode Indonesia's reputation for pluralism and have urged police to drop the case. Widodo too is feeling the pressure. He has blamed "political actors" for the instability and staged high-profile visits with military and political leaders to broadcast an image of control. But in the hours before a December rally, 10 people were detained on murky allegations of treason. — AFP

DEMOLITION IN DELHI LEAVES SHANTY DWELLERS IN THE COLD

MUMBAI: City officials in New Delhi have demolished hundreds of shanties in the past week, leaving up to 1,500 people homeless for winter, in the latest of several such evictions this year across the country as officials race to upgrade cities. The demolition of the decade-old informal settlements happened with no notice, activists said, with residents unable to retrieve their belongings and not offered alternative accommodation.

A city official said 300-350 shanties were demolished with hundreds placed in temporary accommodation, but a local non-government organization estimated 1,500 were left homeless. "It is a matter of great concern when the government destroys homes that people have built ... and renders them homeless without any recourse or access to remedy, especially in the winter," said Shivani Chaudhry, executive director of advocacy Housing and Land Rights Network. Officials said the land belonged to the city and that residents were asked to clear the area several times. After the demolition, they were given food and temporary shelter, one official said.

"They were accommodated in tents, and senior officials visited the site and informed them about alternate accommodation," said Bhaskar Sharma, a spokesman for the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board. More than a quarter of Delhi's population of about 18 million lives in slums and informal set-

tlements, according to some estimates. About a third of India's 1.25 billion population lives in cities, with numbers rising every year as tens of thousands of migrants leave villages to seek better prospects in urban areas. Many end up in overcrowded slums lacking basic amenities.

But the government has unveiled a plan to provide housing for all by 2022 that will create 20 million new housing units and rehabilitate existing slums. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed to create 100 Smart Cities in India by 2022 that will have internet connectivity, uninterrupted power and water supply, efficient public transport and living standards comparable to Europe. Activists have voiced concerns that the drive to modernize cities will force tens of thousands of such people from their homes as city planners spruce up central business districts and build metro train lines.

Evictions are increasingly carried out in extreme weather conditions, without notice, and with large numbers of police, Chaudhry said. Residents, who are largely daily wage earners, lose their belongings and their livelihood, and children are forced to drop out of school, she said. "How can the government be committed to providing housing for all, if it demolishes existing homes of lower income groups?" Chaudhry said. "The state must stop all evictions across the country." — Reuters



People enjoy a day on the ice of Bianco Lake yesterday near Poschiavo, Switzerland. — AP

ALEPPO BATTLE IN 'FINAL PHASE'

Continued from Page 1

The rebels withdrew from six more districts in the face of advancing government troops, the Britain-based Observatory said. The retreat leaves opposition fighters confined to just a handful of neighborhoods in southeast Aleppo, the largest of them Sukkari and Mashhad. "The battle of Aleppo has reached its end. It is just a matter of a small period of time... it's a total collapse," said Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahman.

In the Mashhad neighborhood, residents fleeing the army advance crowded the streets, witnesses said. Displaced civilians - many hungry after fleeing without food - sat on pavements or lay on the street with nowhere else to go, they said. An AFP correspondent in the government-held west of Aleppo said the bombardment of rebel areas could be heard and was among the heaviest in recent days. "The regime is advancing in east Aleppo under gunfire, missiles and shelling," Bassam Mustafa from the political office of the Nureddin al-Zenki rebel group in Aleppo told reporters. "The fighters

(rebels) are retreating under pressure and the situation is very bad," he said.

State television also aired live footage from inside Salhin district, one of the areas fully retaken yesterday, showing widespread destruction. Buildings were missing entire sections, and roads were littered with rubble and pitted with enormous craters. Terrified residents have poured out of rebel-held neighborhoods as the army advanced since beginning its operation on Nov 15. The Observatory said yesterday another 10,000 people had fled rebel areas in the previous 24 hours, bringing the total number of those who have left - mostly to government-held territory - to 130,000.

Syria's rebels seized control of east Aleppo in 2012, a year into an uprising that began with anti-government protests but spiralled into a civil war after a regime crackdown. The war has become a complex multi-front conflict, drawing in proxy powers and jihadists such as the Islamic State group, which on Sunday retook the symbolically important city of Palmyra nine months after being expelled. — AFP

OPPOSITION DISUNITY EXPOSED AFTER...

Continued from Page 1

However, Harbath later told the house that the constitutional court ruled in 1996 that a blank ballot should be counted as absent, which means that Harbath should have been declared the winner in the first round of voting, as his 32 votes would have been an absolute majority.

However, the speaker and several MPs said that after that ruling, the law was changed in which the blank ballot was considered part of those present. Constitutional experts are divided on the issue, with some supporting Harbath's view and other experts backing the opposing view.

Opposition MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said yesterday that he will demand forming a temporary panel to review legislations passed by the previous Assembly that are rejected by a majority of opposition lawmakers. Kandari said that he will submit a proposal to amend a number of freedom-curbing laws passed by the previous Assembly, including an amendment to reduce the preventive detention period to just 48 hours instead of four days. The previous Assembly increased the detention period to four days at the request of the interior ministry, after the 2012 Assembly had reduced the period.

Kandari also said he will propose that the DNA test law be completely abolished and that the new juvenile law to reduce a minor's age to 16 should not be implemented early next year. The lawmaker recalled that the previous Assembly "was in the hands of the government, and now this Assembly is in the hands of the people", and warned that opposition MPs will deal with the government in the same way it deals with the

Assembly. Opposition MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf yesterday praised a decision by the new Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah that the names and images of defendants will not be published until the court convicts them. He said the decision is contrary to wrong practices introduced by previous minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, who was moved to the defense ministry, apparently to avoid criticism by the opposition.

Separately, well-known constitutional expert Mohammad Al-Moqate expected yesterday that the new Assembly will likely be dissolved by the constitutional court for breaches of the law. He did not explain the reason in detail, but said there are four major issues that could lead to the dissolution of the Assembly.

Moqate said he has reviewed the 52 petitions against the results of the elections filed at the constitutional court, adding that he believes the lifespan of the Assembly will be short. One of the petitions was filed by former justice minister Yaqoub Al-Sane, who failed in the election, claiming that the decree to set the election date was not in line with the constitution.

Former Islamist MP Bader Al-Dahoum, who was barred from contesting the polls because he was convicted by a court, challenged that the reason for barring him was not in line with the constitution. Others also challenged that the formation of the election committee by the interior minister was unconstitutional. Many others challenged the election results, claiming there were many counting errors. The constitutional court is likely to rule on the petitions in January.

SAUDI PASSION PARADES AT CITY TRACK

Continued from Page 1

crowd of dozens has gathered for a 10-race card. Single men get in free and families pay only 10 riyals (\$2.67), a bargain in an economy whose collapsed oil revenues have led to widespread cutbacks. "This is a beautiful place to be" in a city that otherwise lacks excitement or charm, says Ben van der Klift, a Dutch financial director working in the kingdom.

"And if you bring your friends, you can have lunch... watch and have some fun," says the 57-year-old, who with neighbours has set up a picnic on tables between the grandstand and the track. For a more high-brow atmosphere, a glassed-in clubhouse allows horse owners and royals to watch races in cinema-style seats while being served traditional Arabic coffee. Among the guests is Prince Miteb bin Abdullah whose father, the late king Abdullah, kept his own horses and founded the Equestrian Club of Riyadh more than 50 years ago. After he assumed the throne in 2005, the king ordered the construction of the current facility, which was named after the founder of modern Saudi Arabia, the club's website says.

Horses have been central to Saudi life for centuries and the kingdom is famed for its strong desert-bred Arabians - from which the thoroughbreds are descended. Racing is in the blood of Saudis like Faris Al-Thiyabe, 28, whose fondness for horses has translated into a job at the track. Thiyabe announces the races in English as they are replayed on a giant screen near the finish line, just moments after the live race call in Arabic ends with congratulations to the winner. "My father had a stable," he says, explaining how he inherited his passion for horses.

Standing in the concourse as mounted jockeys parade before the next race, the lively Thiyabe boasts that he is "the youngest race caller in the world". Later, on a high floor inside the clubhouse, he holds a racing guide in one hand and shouts into his headset as the fourth race reach-

es a climax. "Indelible Ink on the outside. Indelible Ink is trying to make it. And Indelible Ink... wins it with a great performance. What a photo finish on the last stages!" Between races, as Thiyabe catches his breath, water tankers spray the track's red-brown soil and tractors drag rakes to ready it for the next contest.

"This is a first-class facility," says Turman. "The track itself is beautiful. The racing surface is the best that I've ever worked with. It really has the best sand in the world, as you can imagine." Most of the horses are Saudi-bred. Their owners and trainers "are from all walks of life, from princes to a normal guy with a family that's got a few horses," Turman says. One owner, Mamdouh Alarafshah, has spent the afternoon in the quiet clubhouse. His horse Alahmaaj was supposed to run in the day's first race - a 1,200-metre event with a total purse of 70,000 riyals put up by a local petrochemicals firm - but was scratched last minute.

Alarafshah says he hopes the horse will "be getting better" soon, without adding why he was pulled from the race. Although there is no betting, race fans can make online picks for winners prior to the opening bell each race day. Only a few stand a chance at prizes, which range between 3,000 and 10,000 riyals. Riyadh's race season builds up towards the King Abdulaziz Cup, a Group One event over 1,600 m with a purse of 600,000 riyals in late February.

Some trainers also come from France, the United States or Britain, while jockeys include Saudis and foreigners. "It's an opportunity for them to come and build up some wins and some experience" in races with a large field of typically 18 horses, Turman says. In the absence of gambling, which boosts incomes in American and European racing, Turman says the Saudi sport is fuelled by something more fundamental. "That's where the passion for the horse racing really comes in," he says, as jockeys ride their mounts towards the starting gate for another race in a long Saudi tradition of horsemanship. — AFP

QATAR 'TWEAKS' KAFALA SYSTEM FOR EXPATS

Continued from Page 1

Although the statement suggested the policies took effect yesterday, the government subsequently confirmed they would only become law today - a year after the emir signed off on the change. Under the new law, workers will generally be free to leave Qatar so long as they inform their employer first. Employees whose bosses refuse can appeal to a government committee that must address requests within three days.

Workers who have unsettled debts - potentially anyone who has taken out a local credit card, mortgage, or car or personal loan - or those wanted as part of a criminal case can be forced to stay. The law allows workers to change jobs, but only after they complete an existing fixed-term contract or have worked five years on an open-ended one. The new reforms impose fines of up to 25,000 riyal (\$6,865) on businesses who confiscate employees' passports. "The new law is the latest step towards improving and protecting the rights of every expatriate worker in Qatar," Nuaimi said. "It replaces the kafala system with a modernized, contract-based system that safeguards workers' rights and increases job flexibility."

Rights activists that have examined the reforms say they continue to leave workers ripe for exploitation by unscrupulous employers. "This new law may get rid of the word 'sponsorship' but it leaves the same basic system intact," said James Lynch, Amnesty International's deputy director for global issues. He urged football's world governing body FIFA, its sponsors and those seeking to do business with it or Qatar to "not use this reform to claim that the problem of migrant labor abuse has been solved".

Human Rights Watch echoed that sentiment. "The message this law sends is that Qatar doesn't really care much about migrant workers," said Joe Stork, the group's deputy Middle East director. "Its sponsorship system remains a serious stain on Qatar's international reputation." World Cup organizers say some 36,000 people will work on its projects next year. Many more workers toil away on other job sites such as roads, hotels and public transportation links that will cater to fans attending the games.

Yesterday's announcement sits alongside previous reforms which shows Doha is responding to its critics, officials say. But what of the views of those on the front line, the laborers helping to build the infrastructure which the world will see in six years' time? "I've heard about a change in the law, but what the change will be I

don't know," said Girijesh, an Indian electrician, during his hour-long lunch break in downtown Doha.

Girijesh is just one of hundreds of blue and yellow-overalled workers resting after a morning's work in Mshereib, where an estimated \$5.5 billion project to convert a rundown part of Doha into a gleaming financial and tourist center is under way. Here, where stray cats now scavenge skips for food, traders sell tobacco for five Qatari riyals and workers sit on the steps of a run-down mall housing computer and clothing shops, will be built Doha's very own "Wall Street" financial district.

As Girijesh speaks, a crowd gathers, eager to voice their own concerns about working conditions. Most concern pay - either not receiving their monthly salary or only finding out once they were in Qatar that the money they were promised before leaving is a fraction of what they actually earn. "My work is really hard and really dangerous as well, but I only earn 600 Qatari riyals a month," says Nazamudin, a Nepalese marble fitter. That works out at around \$165. He was promised double that amount before leaving home and paying more than \$1,100 to get a visa into Qatar. "I don't want to be here," he says sadly.

Similarly Ibrahim, an electrician from Bangladesh, says he receives a salary of 810 riyals, despite being promised 1,200 a month. To compound matters he has not been paid for months. What these workers say they want - whether under a sponsorship or contract system - is wage security. "All laborers have a problem in Qatar," says Ibrahim, who has to pay off 30,000 Qatari riyals to an agent who helped him secure work in the Gulf. "If the Qataris are implementing this new law, hopefully it will be better for us," he tells AFP through an interpreter. "The main thing is the contract. My contract is my security and I need to be secure."

Scaffolder Saddulhaq from Bangladesh says laborers are exploited by unscrupulous agents, and not only over pay. He says many cannot read, so they have no idea what they are signing up to, or even for the amount of time they will be in Qatar. "We do not know how long we are going to work for," Saddulhaq says. At its worst, the uncertainty over pay can lead to workers paying the ultimate price, says Amir, a Nepalese carpenter. "Many people choose suicide," said the father-of-four. "Some months we don't get paid. Your family is starving, your kids are starving, there's no food at home... that's why people choose suicide." Asked how often colleagues take their own lives, Amir says there are cases every month. — Agencies

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Focus

GUARDIOLA STRUGGLES TO TACKLE CITY SLUMP

Pep Guardiola faces one of the biggest challenges of his glittering managerial career as the Manchester City boss tries to stop his side's surprising slump. As Guardiola paced the touchline during Saturday's chastening 4-2 defeat at Leicester, the exasperated Spaniard's message to his players appeared to fall on deaf ears as the hosts ran rings around his bewildered team. It was a shocking sight for City fans who had expected Guardiola to bring the swaggering style that won him plaudits and prizes in equal measure during his spells at Barcelona and Bayern Munich.

Less than three months ago it was easy to imagine Guardiola would soon be making room for more medals in his packed trophy cabinet as free-scoring City reeled off 10 successive wins in all competitions. Yet that blistering start has proved something of a false dawn for Guardiola, whose arrival from Bayern in pre-season for his first experience of English football was heralded as the start of another dominant period for the serial silverware collector.

Having won three Spanish league titles and two Champions League crowns with Barca and then led Bayern to three Bundesliga triumphs, few were willing to bet against Guardiola conquering the Premier League in similar fashion. Any doubters wondering how the 45-year-old would cope with having to rebuild an ageing and underachieving City squad in a league far stronger from top to bottom than those he dominated in Spain and Germany were widely dismissed by his advocates. But there are growing signs that Guardiola isn't going to find his City experiment all plain sailing.

Flustered

The first cracks appeared in a 3-3 draw against a passionate but painfully limited Celtic in the Champions League and those defensive flaws were laid bare by Tottenham a few days later as Guardiola suffered his first City defeat. Guardiola's response has been unexpectedly flustered. He has constantly tinkered with his team line-up, making an incredible 46 changes in City's first 14 league games - 12 more than any other manager in the top flight this season.

All the alterations have left City badly lacking continuity, chemistry and coherence, with the result that they fall apart all too soon once events conspire against them. Kevin De Bruyne, the brilliant Belgian playmaker, has been used as a central midfielder, attacking midfielder, winger and a striker as Guardiola searches for his best role. In defense, center-backs John Stones and Nicolas Otamendi have looked baffled by what Guardiola asks of them and, while that doesn't reflect well on the players, it is also a manager's job to extract maximum performance from the tools at his disposal.

Against Leicester, he went with a three-man defense comprised of Stones and two full-backs in Bacary Sagna and Aleksandar Kolarov. Unsurprisingly, the makeshift line-up was brutally exposed by the pace and direct running of Leicester striker Jamie Vardy, who feasted on City's confusion to end his goal drought with a hat-trick. City have kept just two clean sheets in 15 league games, yet Guardiola gave a curious response when asked if his players needed to work on tackling after being beaten to the punch time and again by Leicester.

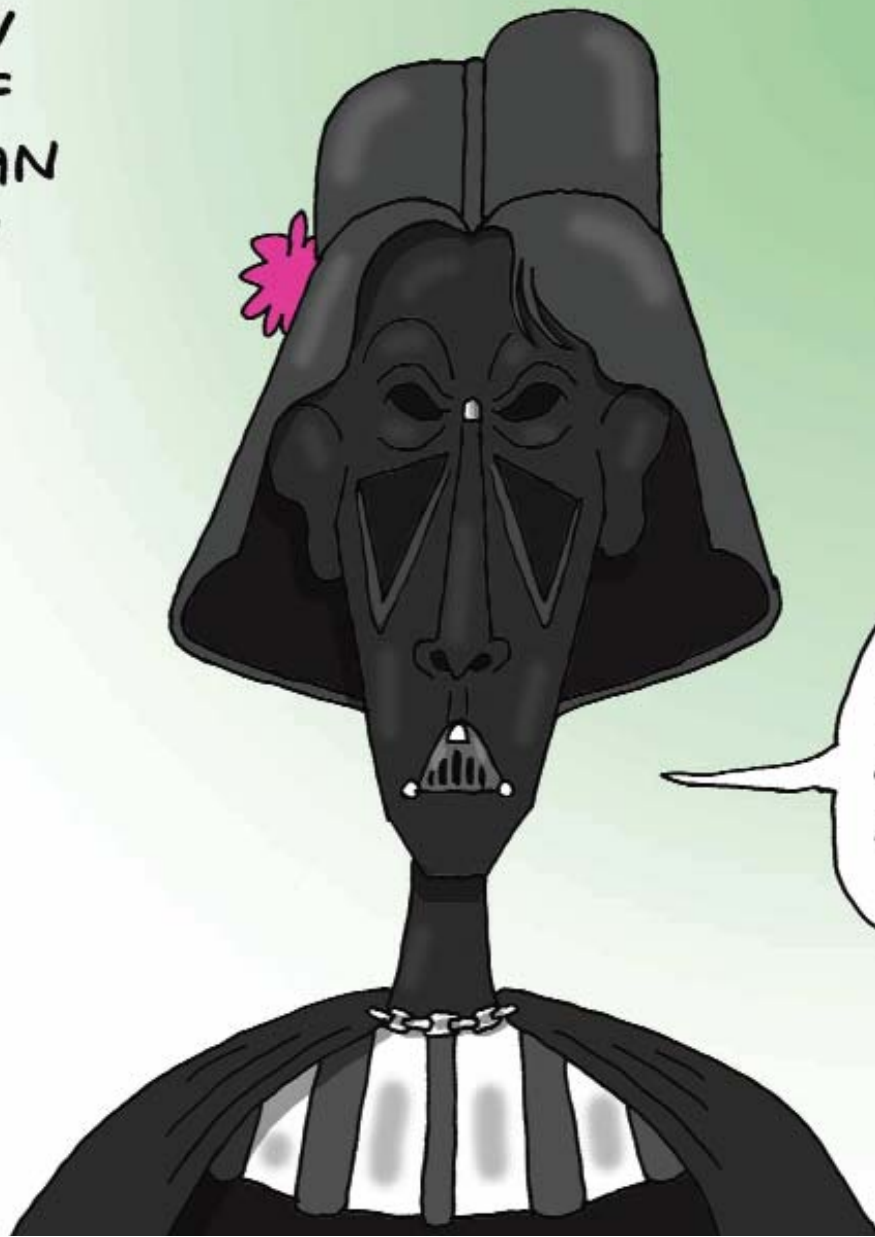
"It's typical here in England when they talk a lot about the tackles. I'm not a coach for the tackles. So I don't train the tackles. What I want is to try to play good, score goals, arrive more," Guardiola said. "It's another aspect of football, but we're not going to win or lose because of the tackles." Guardiola's commitment to his purist principles is commendable, but on the evidence of the last few weeks he must adapt to the unforgiving Premier League quickly to quash a growing crisis of confidence. — AFP



Pep Guardiola

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THE NEW FACE OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI



(HEAVY BREATHING)...
THERE IS NO ETHNIC
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MUSLIMS IN MYANMAR...
(HEAVY BREATHING)...

STEPHANO

HOW CHINA MILLENNIALS THINK ABOUT MONEY

Ma Yiqing, 24, is typical of China's younger generation - he uses his credit card frequently and borrows from online platforms to fund his shopping habits. In a pinch, he is happy to fall back on a lender closer to home - his mum and dad. Interviews with Ma, a single-child, his mother and grandmother, show how rapidly attitudes towards credit are changing as the millennials generation - roughly those aged between 18 and 35 - embraces debt like never before.

The frugal attitude of previous generations produced the bedrock of China's credit worthiness - household savings equal to some 50 percent of GDP, one of the highest levels globally. Ma and his cohorts are changing that equation. Their willingness to borrow has driven up household lending - the fastest growing area of China's debt. They are among the most indebted of their peers in Asia, taking on debt 18.5 times their income, significantly higher than their parents' generation, a report from insurer Manulife shows.

While their spending and borrowing is an opportunity for lenders, brands and economic growth, it is also a risk as they add to China's fast-growing debt. Right now, Ma has a safety net - well-heeled and doting parents who can pick up the tab. He lives in a one-bed flat in Lhasa, the capital of China's Tibet region. His parents are in nearby Shannan. "I'll generally turn to mum and

dad. They've always been able to help me financially," said Ma. In May, he asked his parents for financial support to open a restaurant. "I just need to ask and they'll give me (money)."

Clear gap

Parents paying off the credit card bills of their millennial children is not unusual in China, but it could have ramifications, said Rui Yao, an associate professor in personal finance at the University of Missouri. "They don't see the consequences of not paying. The thinking is 'my mom has it covered'," she said. "They're not prepared for an economic downturn for sure."

The next generations may not be so lucky either. They will have to support longer-living parents and potentially more children as China relaxes its one-child policy. China's ageing population is already shrinking, which means greater financial pressure on those working to support those who are not. Ma says he is more frugal than his friends. He uses his bank card and Ant Check Later, a popular online lending platform owned by tech giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.

This is a far cry from his parents' generation. Ma's mother, who is 49, only started using a credit card three years ago. "They couldn't spend on overdraft, so they really didn't squander any money," he said. The gap is clear: Consumer credit is up nearly

300 percent over the last six years alone, hitting around 23.5 trillion yuan (\$3.41 trillion) in October. This is set to more than double over the next five years to nearly 53 trillion yuan, according to consultancy Mintel.

While mortgages are the lion's share of household debt, credit card and consumer loans have shot up from just 4.6 percent of household debt in 2015 to 16 percent now, BMI Research shows. "The young generation today has a totally different attitude to my generation," said Ma's grandmother, Wei Chunyin, 76. She grew up in the 1960s and said she was in debt just once - for 100 yuan, the equivalent today of \$14.50. "We were very economical and hardworking," she said. "Clothing was just to wear, and we wouldn't even really eat snacks, just food from our unit," she said, referring to her workplace.

Growing force

Ma's generation is the first in China's modern history to be raised in relative prosperity and social stability. They are better educated and already more affluent than their elders. Boston Consulting Group and AliResearch said they are expected to drive 65 percent of consumption growth until 2020, when they will make up around 53 percent of total consumption spending, up from 45 percent now. "Understanding their mindset is critical and anybody ignores them at their peril," Yum China Holdings Inc

head Micky Pant said in an interview.

Their potential has not been lost on the banks, with some specifically targeting them for loans. "Internally our appraisals are skewed towards the young consumer groups. For example, frontline sales staff get a bonus 1.3 times the normal level if they sign a young customer," said a banker in the credit card department of China Merchants Bank, a leading credit card provider. "So everyone is out looking for youngster to sign up."

When asked about the strategy, CMB said it has many credit card products that are welcomed by young people. Bankers said lenders often know millennials have doting parents to fall back on in a pinch. "Taking a darker read on it, the parents of the post-90s generation - who were born in the 60s or 70s - haven't yet retired, and are financially pretty secure," said a debt collector in the credit card department of a listed city bank.

Like other parents in China, Ma's mother and father, a nurse and government officer at the local Meteorological Administration respectively, are resigned to supporting their son financially for now - even if he defaults. Ma's mother, Zhen Yinchun, said that when she was young she saved around one-third of her income because there was little to spend it on, in contrast to her son. It is a running joke in the family whether Ma will return any money he has borrowed, she said. "I'll say it's a loan and he'll agree. But up to now he's never paid anything back," she said. —Reuters

MIGRANTS FORCED TO HELP, FACE ARREST

All migrant Marc Samie has of his fiancée is a picture in his mind. Louise, seven and a half months pregnant, is standing silently on a beach in Libya, tears rolling down her face as traffickers force him at gunpoint into a rubber dinghy with a compass. The armed men had ordered Samie to hold the compass and a satellite phone for navigation on the journey to Italy. He refused. So they fired a Kalashnikov at the ground between his legs, and told him to take the compass or they would kill the couple. They said she would be on the next boat.

That was last July, and he hasn't laid eyes on her since. But instead of being treated as a victim in Italy, Samie was arrested by police and charged with facilitating illegal immigration. Samie, a 21-year-old from Togo, is one of hundreds of migrants who are caught up in the Italian legal system as police, prosecutors and judges struggle to combat human trafficking. They are the victims of a new tactic where professional smugglers avoid being caught by forcing migrants, many of them minors, to take the helm of the boats.

Almost every day, Italian officials detain men accused of driving the boats, but don't know if they are traffickers or migrants. While overall numbers are not available, 179 smugglers - 26 of them minors - were detained this year at the port of Pozzallo alone, where Samie came in. That compares to 147 last year. In another port, Augusta, more than 190 smugglers have been arrested so far this year, according to police. And in Catania district, trafficking arrests have risen dramatically from 13 in 2013 to 79 as of August.

Police are well aware that they aren't reaching the criminals who are behind the trafficking and reaping the profits. To date, Italian police haven't obtained the arrest of a migrant trafficker in Libya, said Andrea Bonomo, deputy prosecutor for Catania. "(We are) making the arrests at what I would define as the lowest level, the so-called smugglers, the ones who drive the boats and who are often migrants," he said. "They risk their lives together with the others."

There are no numbers on convictions. But smugglers can get five to 15 years in prison, Bonomo added. In early November, police stood in the port of Augusta watching hundreds of migrants disembark from a navy rescue ship. Interpreters interviewed them to try to figure out who was driving the boats and holding the compasses. Trafficking organizations in Libya now make cheap dinghies that can only last for eight to nine hours in the water before they sink, Marshal Tonio Panzanaro said. The traffickers then take what he calls "last-minute" smugglers, migrants who are sometimes given a free ride, and make them drive the boat. Behind it all is a "huge movement of money," he noted, with professional traffickers earning €100,000 (\$105,000) from a dinghy that costs just €2,000 (\$2,100).

Smugglers or survivors?

"Our problem is that we know how they are operating in Libya, but since there is no government we can't take the final step, that of arresting the organizers," he said. Not all boat drivers and navigators are treated as smugglers. On Sept 7, Gigi Modica, a judge in Palermo threw out the case against two accused smugglers, a Somali and a Gambian. The men were driving and holding the compass on a rubber dinghy with 118 migrants on board. A dozen passengers died, and the men were accused of multiple manslaughter.

Modica concluded that the two presumed smugglers were actually migrants forced by armed Libyans to drive the boat. Neither seemed to have any experience, they spoke different languages and they couldn't communicate with one another. In his statement, he wrote that they had been threatened with death, and he ordered them to be freed immediately. Modica said Libyan traffickers are choosing sub-Saharan Africans to drive the boats and take

the compasses. He said defendants had told of friends being killed by traffickers because they refused to lead the boats. He added that it is clear when those directing the boat aren't the real smugglers. "They are weak. They are fragile. They are scared. They can only talk with lots of difficulty," he said. "It's evident that they aren't part of the problem. They are a victim of the problem." In the small Sicilian town of Pachino, eight young African men live in a home run by an organization called Open Europe. Like Samie, many of them were accused of either driving the boat or holding the compass. Several received expulsion orders.

The organization allowed AP to talk to a Gambian who says he is 15 years old, on condition that his name not be used because he is a minor. He was on the beach in Libya waiting to climb into a dinghy when armed men told him he had to hold the compass. He replied that he didn't even know how to use a compass. They threatened to kill him, and beat him with a pipe. He slides up the sleeve of his green sweat suit to reveal a 6-cm scar. — AP



In this photo taken on Nov 11, 2016, Dampha (left) and Marc Samie, who were forced to hold the compass and then accused of being smugglers after arriving to Italy, write in Italian on a blackboard in the kitchen of their home in Pachino, Sicily. — AP

FRANCE'S SLIMANI PENS CLERMONT DEAL UNTIL 2020



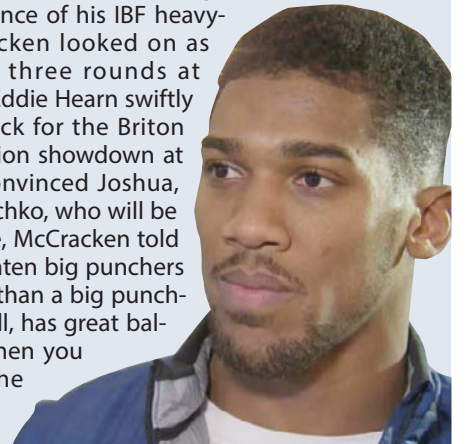
PARIS: France prop Rabah Slimani has signed a three-year contract with Clermont, the Top 14 leaders confirmed yesterday. Slimani, 27, will join Clermont from Stade Francais next season and his deal also includes an option for a fourth year. The front-rower is the club's second major recruit for 2017 after also signing Scotland captain and scrum-half Greig Laidlaw from Gloucester in the English Premiership. "It's a big change, but I know the club and the area will bring me a lot personally and from a sporting perspective," Slimani told Clermont's website. Slimani won the Top 14 title with Stade in 2015 but announced his departure at the start of this season, with Raphael Lakafia, Geoffrey Doumayrou, Hugo Bonneval and coach Gonzalo Quesada all since revealing they too will leave the Paris-based outfit. —AFP

KUWAIT OLYMPIC COMMITTEE TO HOLD SPORTS GALA ON SATURDAY

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) will be putting together a national sports day on Saturday, KOC Deputy President Duajj Al-Otaibi announced yesterday. Speaking in a press conference, Al-Otaibi, who is President of the Kuwaiti and Arab Shooting Federations and heads the organizing committee for this sporting extravaganza, said that the event at the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium will feature participation of a myriad of sports clubs and federations. Moreover, he said that the event which is sponsored by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, will give Kuwaiti youth the opportunity to compete to help propel the sports sector to new heights. On activities included in the event, he noted that the sports run the gamut from soccer and basketball to powerlifting and martial arts, adding that a number of governmental booths will be set up before festivities kick off at 7 PM Saturday. Meanwhile, Al-Otaibi also highlighted that the Kuwait Disabled Sports Club (KDSC), which has recently amassed several regional and international accolades, will be among the participants in the event as part of efforts to assimilate this segment of the population into society. — KUNA

JOSHUA CAN STUN KLITSCHKO: TRAINER

LONDON: Anthony Joshua can stun Wladimir Klitschko to become the undisputed world heavyweight champion, according to the British fighter's trainer Rob McCracken. Former Olympic gold medalist Joshua linked up with McCracken on a full-time basis before beating Eric Molina in a second successful defence of his IBF heavyweight title on Saturday. McCracken looked on as Joshua stopped Molina within three rounds at Manchester Arena, with promoter Eddie Hearn swiftly announcing a deal had been struck for the Briton and Klitschko to meet in a unification showdown at Wembley Stadium on April 29. Convinced Joshua, 27, can topple giant Ukrainian Klitschko, who will be 41 by the time the fight takes place, McCracken told BBC Radio Five Live: "Klitschko's beaten big punchers before, but I think Anthony's more than a big puncher. "Anthony can box, can move well, has great balance. Speed is the key as well - when you have his speed, they don't see the punches coming." —AFP



MAGNIFICENT SEVEN FOR KATINKA HOSSZU AT SHORT COURSE WORLDS

MONTREAL: Katinka Hosszu brought the curtain down on a week of dominance at the Short Course World Swimming Championships on Sunday by clinching her seventh gold medal of the meet. The Hungarian swimming star, affectionately known as the "Iron Lady" surged to victory in the 100m butterfly to cap a superb campaign at the championships in Windsor, Ontario. Hosszu touched the wall 55.12sec, taking gold ahead of Kelsi Worrell of the United States (55.22) and Japan's Rikako Ikee 55.64. The 27-year-old Hosszu had already stamped her class on the championships with wins in the 100m, 200m and 400m medley as well as the 200m butterfly and 100m and 200m backstrokes. Sunday's final win at the WFCU Centre completes a phenomenal 2016 for Hosszu, who also lit up the Rio de Janeiro Olympics with three gold medals. There was more gold too on Sunday for South Korea's Park Tae-Hwan, who added the 1,500m title to the 200m and 400m crowns won earlier in the week. The win ensured Park finishes the year on a triumphant note after a tumultuous season which saw him battle to compete in Rio after serving a drugs ban only to come away from Brazil empty-handed. Park finished well clear of his rivals in 14:15.51, ahead of Italy's Gregorio

Paltrinieri, who clocked 14:21.94 for silver and Poland's Wojciech Wojdak, who took bronze in 14:25.37. Elsewhere Sunday, South Africa's 2012 Olympics breaststroke champion, Cameron van der Burgh, won gold in the 50m discipline. Van der Burgh took the title in 25.64sec, finishing ahead of Peter Stevens of Slovenia (25.85) and Brazil's Felipe Lima (25.98). But there was more disappointment for US teenager Lilly King. King, one of the rising stars of US swimming who won gold in the 100m breaststroke at the Rio Olympics, finished outside the medals in the 200m breaststroke. King, pipped for gold in the 100m breaststroke on Saturday, finished fourth in a race won by Britain's Molly Renshaw, who clocked 2:18.51. Canada's Lauren Wog took silver in 2:18.52 while another Briton, Chole Tutton, won bronze with a time of 2:18.83. Triple Olympic champion Ranomi Kromowidjojo meanwhile won gold in the 50m freestyle. The Dutch sprinter, who winner of Olympic gold in the 4x100m freestyle relay in the 2008 Games before a 50m/100m double in London four years later, took first in 23.60sec. Italy's Silvia Di Pietro won silver in 23.90 with Madison Kennedy of the United States bronze in 23.93. —AFP



DETROIT: Philadelphia Flyers left wing Michael Raffl (12), of Austria, cannot control the puck as it gets past Detroit Red Wings goalie Jimmy Howard (35) during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Detroit, Sunday. — AP



WINDSOR: Gold medalist Katinka Hosszu of Hungary shows off her medal along with silver medalist Ella Eastin, left, and bronze medalist Madisyn Cox during medal ceremonies for the women's 200-meter individual medley at the FINA World Swimming Championships short-course in Windsor, Ontario. — AP

SCHENN SCORES TO BACK STOLARZ, FLYERS WIN NINTH STRAIGHT

DETROIT: Brayden Schenn scored 2:44 into overtime and Anthony Stolarz got his first shutout in his second career start, lifting the Philadelphia Flyers over the Detroit Red Wings 1-0 on Sunday night for their ninth consecutive win. Stolarz made 28 saves, helping Philadelphia outlast Jimmy Howard and the Red Wings. Howard made 34 saves in his first start since Nov. 23. Schenn cut in from the left wing, skated across the top of the crease, faked a backhand shot and then slid the puck in for his eighth goal of the season and fourth in two games. Howard stopped Pierre-Edouard Bellemare from the bottom inside edge of the right circle 1:53 into overtime.

time win against Chicago on Friday, got his sixth career shutout and improved to 8-1-0 with a 1.65 goals-against average in 10 starts this season. Cory Schneider finished with 25 saves for New Jersey, which lost its third straight. The Devils had an early goal disallowed after a review and another didn't count because it came after a whistle.

earned an assist on a goal by Justin Williams with just under 15 minutes left. Tom Wilson scored into an empty net with 52 seconds remaining to seal the Capitals' fourth straight victory. Washington killed five Vancouver power plays to complete a two-game season sweep. Holtby was rarely tested in his 25th career shutout, the second this season.

BLACKHAWKS 3, STARS 1

Marian Hossa, Artem Anisimov and Artemi Panarin scored to lead Central Division-leading Chicago over Dallas. Chicago's Scott Darling made 23 saves in his fifth straight start while No. 1 goalie Corey Crawford recovers from an appendectomy. Darling has permitted just seven goals during the stretch, but the Blackhawks have scored only nine while going 2-2-1. Devin Shore scored for Dallas, which lost its second straight and third in four. Dallas' Kari Lehtonen blocked 24 shots while making his fifth straight start. The 37-year-old Hossa scored his team-leading 15th goal and has three in three games. Blackhawks captain Jonathan Toews missed his ninth game and defenseman Brent Seabrook his second with upper-body injuries.

WILD 3, BLUES 1

Matt Dumba, Nino Niederreiter and Mikael Granlund scored, Devan Dubnyk made 22 saves and Minnesota held on to beat St. Louis for its fourth straight win. Dumba scored for the second straight game in the second period and Niederreiter got his eighth goal about seven minutes later. Granlund added an empty-net goal. Vladimir Tarasenko scored his 14th goal of the season for St. Louis. Jake Allen stopped 22 shots for the Blues, who had won five of their past seven games.

DUCKS 5, SENATORS 1

Antoine Vermette and Corey Perry each had a goal and an assist and Anaheim scored a season-high three power-play goals to beat Ottawa. Joseph Cramarossa, Nick Ritchie and Sami Vatanen also scored, and John Gibson made 21 saves. Ryan Dzingel scored for the Senators, who lost their second straight game in Southern California. Mike Condon made 10 saves before being removed for Andrew Hammond in the second period. Hammond stopped 16 shots. —AP

CAPITALS 3, CANUCKS 0

Alex Ovechkin scored a power-play goal in the first period and Braden Holtby made it stand up, stopping 20 shots to help Washington beat weary Vancouver. Washington nursed a 1-0 lead until Ovechkin

OILERS 3, JETS 2

Patrik Laine shot the puck into his own net midway through the third period, costing Winnipeg in a loss to Edmonton. Edmonton's Mark Letestu was credited with his second goal of the game when Laine fired the rebound of Letestu's slap shot directly into his own wide-open goal. Captain Blake Wheeler put an arm around Laine to console him when the Finnish rookie returned to the bench. The 18-year-old ranks third in the NHL with 17 goals and is an early front-runner for the Calder Memorial Trophy as the league's top rookie. Oscar Klefbom also scored and Cam Talbot made 29 saves for the Oilers. Mathieu Perreault and Chris Thorburn had goals for the Jets, who have now lost four straight games. Connor Hellebuyck stopped 27 shots.

AVALANCHE 3, MAPLE LEAFS 1

Semyon Varlamov made 51 saves, helping Colorado rebound from a miserable loss with a victory over Toronto. The Avs lost 10-1 to Montreal on Saturday night but rebounded on the back of their Russian goaltender. Mikko Rantanen, Nathan MacKinnon and Blake Comeau scored, helping last-place Colorado get its second win in nine games. Antoine Bibeau made 26 saves in his first NHL start, and Jake Gardiner scored for Toronto. The Leafs, who won 4-1 in Boston on Saturday, are now 0-5-1 in the second half of back-to-backs this season.

RANGERS 5, DEVILS 0

J.T. Miller and Brady Skjei scored 3:50 apart late in the second period, Antti Raanta stopped 19 shots for his second straight shutout and New York beat New Jersey. Chris Kreider had a goal and an assist, and Brandon Pirri and Jimmy Vesey also scored to give the Rangers their first three-game winning streak since Nov. 12-15. Raanta, starting for the third time in four nights and coming off a 1-0 over-

ENGLAND GATECRASH SOUTH AFRICA'S SEVENS PARTY

CAPE TOWN: England stunned South Africa 19-17 to win the Cape Town Sevens on Sunday after the hosts missed a last-gasp conversion. Werner Kok scored a try in the final seconds while England were down to six men, but Justin Geduld couldn't convert as England claimed a first World Series win since Tokyo in 2015. "It was a tough tournament," said England captain Tom Mitchell, whose side finished third at the season-opening Dubai Sevens last weekend, which South Africa won. "We trained all summer and this makes it all worth it. We were a bit disappointed last weekend and we wanted to put it right. It's been a bumpy road, but it always is." Chris Dry outpaced Mitchell to the line for the first try of the match before Richard de Carpentier hit back to give England a 7-5 lead. Dan Norton added another try for England for a 12-5 lead at the break. But Rosko Specman drew the Blitzboks level early in the second half before man-of-the-match Ruaridh McCloskey restored England's lead.

In a tense finale, Norton was sin-binned in the last minute and Kok pounced to score in the corner. However, Geduld missed the tricky conversion to give England the win. "We played well in Dubai and made the final in Cape Town, although we're very disappointed that we could not win this for the wonderful local supporters," said South Africa coach Neil Powell. "We have won 11 of our 12 matches in the last two weeks and that is something we are proud of and pleased about. We did not play well enough in the final though and England managed to close our space down." South Africa made the final on Sunday with a 14-7 win over New Zealand while England swept past Scotland 33-14. England are now second in the World Series standings on 39 points, two behind South Africa. Olympic and World Series champions Fiji are third with 32 points while Scotland and New Zealand have 27. The third leg of the tournament takes place in Wellington on January 28-29. —AFP



MONTPELLIER: Montpellier's Fijian Timoci Nagusa (L) runs with the ball next to Castres' Afusipa Taumoeapu during the European rugby champions cup match between Montpellier and Castres on Sunday at the Altrad stadium in Montpellier, southern France. — AFP

NHL Results/Standings

Edmonton 3, Winnipeg 2; Chicago 3, Dallas 1; Colorado 3, Toronto 1; NY Rangers 5, New Jersey 0; Minnesota 3, St. Louis 1; Philadelphia 1, Detroit 0 (OT); Washington 3, Vancouver 0; Anaheim 5, Ottawa 1.

Western Conference					Central Division					Metropolitan Division							
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Chicago	18	8	4	81	70	40	Ottawa	16	11	2	70	78	34				
St. Louis	16	9	4	79	79	36	Boston	15	12	2	69	70	32				
Minnesota	15	8	4	75	56	34	Tampa Bay	14	13	2	81	81	30				
Winnipeg	13	16	3	82	96	29	Florida	13	12	4	70	77	30				
Nashville	12	11	4	78	78	28	Detroit	13	12	4	70	77	30				
Dallas	11	13	6	75	96	28	Toronto	11	11	5	79	84	27				
Colorado	11	15	1	60	86	23	Buffalo	10	11	6	56	72	26				
Pacific Division					Atlantic Division					NY Islanders							
Anaheim	15	9	5	81	75	35	NY Rangers	20	9	1	105	70	41				
Edmonton	15	11	5	93	85	35	Pittsburgh	18	7	3	97	84	39				
Calgary	16	13	2	81	86	34	Philadelphia	18	10	3	101	94	39				
San Jose	16	11	1	68	61	33	Columbus	17	5	4	87	56	38				
Los Angeles	14	11	2	71	70	30	Washington	17	7	3	72	59	37				
Vancouver	12	15	2	67	86	26	New Jersey	12	10	6	69	82	30				
Arizona	9	13	5	62	83	23	Carolina	11	11	6	69	76	28				
Eastern Conference					Atlantic Division					NY Islanders							
										Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)							
Montreal	19	6	3	91	62	41											

CHINESE SWIMMER BANNED TWO YEARS FOR DOPING

BEIJING: Chinese swimmer Chen Xinyi has been banned from competition for two years, the swimming federation FINA announced, after she failed a doping test at the Rio Olympics. The 18-year-old tested positive for hydrochlorothiazide, a diuretic, on August 8, the same day she took part in

the women's 100m butterfly final, finishing fourth. She is banned from competing for two years, from August 11 this year to August 10, 2018, FINA said in an announcement Saturday. Diuretics increase urination rates and can be used as "masking agents" to hide the presence

of performance-enhancing substances that are screened for in doping tests. Chen first made headlines when she won gold in the 100m butterfly and 50m freestyle events at the 2014 Asian Games, with times that set championship records. She also won gold at the 2015 World

Championships with the Chinese 4x100m medley relay team. The country's swimmers have previously been embroiled in doping controversy, with athletes at Rio calling China's star swimmer Sun Yang a "drugs cheat". Sun served a three-month doping ban in 2014, which was only announced

respectively by Chinese authorities. In March, the Chinese Swimming Association revealed that six of the country's swimmers had tested positive for drugs in the preceding months, including three for hydrochlorothiazide. Two of the six athletes received only warnings. — AFP



EAST RUTHERFORD: Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Dez Bryant (88) fumbles the ball during the second half of an NFL football game as New York Giants' Janoris Jenkins (20) and Keenan Robinson (57) defend Sunday, in East Rutherford, N.J. — AP



CHARLOTTE: San Diego Chargers' Philip Rivers (17) is sacked in the end zone for a safety by Carolina Panthers' Mario Addison (97) in the second half of an NFL football game in Charlotte, N.C., Sunday. — AP

GIANTS SNAP COWBOYS' 11-GAME WINNING STREAK

EAST RUTHERFORD: With a no-huddle offense and no-fooling-around defense, the New York Giants snapped the Cowboys' 11-game winning streak with a 10-7 victory Sunday night, preventing Dallas from clinching the NFC East. Dallas (11-2) hadn't lost since the season opener against the Giants (9-4), who solidified their position in the NFC playoff chase as the top-wild card team. New York still hopes to catch Dallas in the division, and it can thank a stingy, aggressive defense for still having that opportunity. Missing star defensive end Jason Pierre-Paul, the Giants couldn't stop rookie sensation Ezekiel Elliott from rushing for 107 yards. But New York's pressure stymied the other Cowboys rookie standout, quarterback Dak Prescott, blanked receiver Dez Bryant until 2:13 remained - he fumbled away the ball on that play - and held Dallas to one conversion in 15 third-down attempts. The Giants had three sacks, continually made Prescott uncomfortable, and he threw two picks. New York's offense was unsightly much of the night, blanked at halftime with only 84 net yards. Then it switched to the no-huddle and put together a short drive to Robbie Gould's 39-yard field goal, making it 7-3. But Odell Beckham Jr., stepped up, as he often does, and sped through the Cowboys on a 61-yard touchdown play. Beckham caught Eli Manning's pass at the Giants 48 and raced all the way to the end zone for the lead the defense preserved. Manning was 17 for 28 for 193 yards, one TD, one interception and two fumbles. His main adversary was linebacker Sean Lee, who had 18 tackles. Prescott finished 17 for 37 for 165 yards and a touchdown.

TITANS 13, BRONCOS 10
DeMarco Murray ran for 92 yards and a touchdown, and the Titans held on to and keep a piece of first place in the AFC South. With the win, the Titans (7-6) also climbed above .500 for the first time all season. The Titans came in with the NFL's third-best rushing offense and the AFC's top runner in Murray, and they ran right over a Denver defense that came in 28th in that category. By halftime, the Titans ran 26 times for 138 yards - the second-most rushes by any team in the first half this season and most allowed in the first half by Denver since 2014. Tennessee then had to hold on as Trevor Siemian tried to rally Denver (8-5) despite a sprained left foot that kept him out last week. He threw a 3-yard TD pass to Emmanuel Sanders with 9:58 left and drove the Broncos to first-and-goal at the Tennessee 7 before rookie Aaron Wallace sacked him. Coach Gary Kubiak settled for a 34-yard field goal by Brandon McManus on fourth-and-goal at the 16 with 4:28 left. Siemian was driving the Broncos again when A.J. Derby fumbled after a catch. Safety Daimion Stafford recovered with 53 seconds left, and the Titans finished off their biggest win in years.

PACKERS 38, SEAHAWKS 10
Aaron Rodgers passed for 246 yards and three touchdowns and Green Bay routed Seattle. Seattle's Russell Wilson threw a career-high five interceptions and the Packers (7-6) won their third straight game to keep their

win for Washington (7-5-1), which remained in the middle of a jumbled playoff race. The Eagles (5-8) have lost four in a row and eight of 10 after a 3-0 start. Jackson made a twisting, over-the-shoulder catch and spun away from Leodis McKelvin before slowing down and jogging into the end zone to give the Redskins a 14-13 lead in the third quarter. McKelvin intercepted Cousins and returned it 29 yards for a TD early in the fourth quarter, but Wentz's pass to Jordan Matthews was knocked down on the 2-point conversion. Cousins then connected with Pierre Garcon on a 15-yard TD pass to extend the lead to 21-13.

STEELERS 27, BILLS 20
Le'Veon Bell scored three times and set a franchise record with 236 yards rushing in finding traction on a slick, snow-covered field. The Steelers overcame three interceptions thrown by Ben Roethlisberger to win their fourth straight and improve to 8-5 and keep pace in the AFC playoff race. The loss all but mathematically eliminated the Bills (6-7) from contention, and puts them in jeopardy of extending the NFL's longest active playoff drought to 17 years - the longest since New Orleans ended a 20-year drought by reaching the postseason for their first time in 1987. After scoring in the first half on 3- and 7-yard runs, Bell put the game away on the opening drive of the third quarter. He had nine rushes for 72 yards alone and capped the 82-yard drive by waltzing into the end zone

fumbled by Rams rookie Michael Thomas and recovered at the Los Angeles 3.

VIKINGS 25, JAGUARS 16
Matt Asiata scored on a short touchdown run, Kai Forbath kicked four field goals and the Vikings won for just the second time in nine weeks. Asiata had a chance to score three times, but he was stopped on a fourth-and-goal run in the second quarter and fumbled at the goal line in the fourth. Those mistakes hardly hurt against the hapless Jaguars (2-11), who dropped their eighth consecutive game and fell to 0-6 at EverBank Field this season. Minnesota (7-6) hadn't won on the road since Sept. 25 at Carolina. A loss to the Jaguars would have weakened their playoff chances. Sam Bradford completed 24 of 34 passes for 292 yards and a touchdown. His 3-yard TD toss to Kyle Rudolph with 2:13 remaining sealed the victory. Vikings coach Mike Zimmer returned after a one-game absence and was on the sideline. Zimmer missed last week's game against Dallas because of a detached retina and was unsure earlier in the week whether he would be on the field or in an upstairs box. Zimmer, who needed a doctor's clearance to fly to Jacksonville, was wearing a patch over his right eye. He also had protective glasses on beforehand, but ditched those when the game started.

TEXANS 22, COLTS 17
Lamar Miller scored Houston's only touch-

down. Jonathan Stewart ran for 66 yards and a touchdown and Graham Gano had four field goals. But it was Carolina's defense that set the tone early - and later put the game away. Despite playing without middle linebacker Luke Kuechly and defensive end Charles Johnson, the Panthers had four sacks on Rivers and forced three turnovers in the first half to build a 23-7 lead. One of those turnovers, a strip-sack by Kawann Short, proved extra costly for the Chargers (58). Running back Melvin Gordon, who came in averaging 117.5 yards from scrimmage and had scored 12 touchdowns, was carted off with a hip injury after his left leg twisted under a pile while attempting to recover the loose ball. He did not return. The Chargers later lost defensive end Joey Bosa to a neck injury.

DOLPHINS 26, CARDINALS 23
Ryan Tannehill threw three touchdown passes before being sidelined with a knee injury, and Andrew Franks kicked a 21-yard field goal as time expired. Tannehill limped to the locker room late in the third quarter after being hit around the legs by defensive tackle Calais Campbell as he released a completion. The Dolphins led 21-9 when Tannehill departed, and backup Matt Moore failed to lead Miami to a first down in his first three series. The Cardinals mounted touchdown drives of 99 and 50 yards to tie the game, but Miami forced a punt to start at the Arizona 47 with 1:29 left. Moore threw a 12-yard completion to Kenny Stills for a first down, and then threw long to Stills for 29 yards to set up Franks' winning kick. The Dolphins (8-5) won for the seventh time in the past eight games and helped their bid to end an eight-year playoff drought. The Cardinals (5-7-1) fell further behind in the race for the final NFC wild-card berth.

LIONS 20, BEARS 17
Matthew Stafford ran for a go-ahead, 7-yard touchdown with 3:17 left after throwing two interceptions in the fourth quarter, one that was returned for a score on the previous possession. Matt Barkley completed two passes that put the Bears in a position to at least attempt a tying field goal in the final minute, but both were negated by penalties, before Chicago turned over the ball on downs from the Detroit 44. The NFC North-leading Lions (9-4) have won five straight and eight of nine, moving them a step closer to winning a division title for the first time in 23 years. Chicago (3-10) has lost four of five. Stafford was picked off twice after he threw only one interception the previous eight games. Demontre Hurst intercepted Stafford's pass in Chicago's end zone after it ricocheted off teammate Bryce Callahan and receiver Golden Tate early in the fourth quarter. Cre'Von LeBlanc returned an interception 24 yards midway through the fourth to put Chicago up 17-13.

JETS 23, 49ERS 17, OT
Bilal Powell ran for 145 yards, including the game-ending 19-yard touchdown in overtime, to help Bryce Petty and New York rally from 14 points down. Petty threw an interception on his first pass of the game and the Jets (4-9) trailed 14-0 less than 5 minutes into the game. San Francisco (1-12) led 17-3 at halftime, but fell flat after that and lost a franchise-worst 12th straight game. Powell took over from there and scored his second TD of the game on New York's first possession of overtime after Petty's scramble and 26-yard pass to Robby Anderson put the Jets in field goal range. Petty, who went 23 for 35 for 257 yards in his second career start, rallied the Jets back from a 17-3 deficit in the first half by leading two fourth-quarter scoring drives. New York used a 15-play, 66-yard drive to cut the deficit to 17-14 with 5:04 left when Powell bowled his way in for a 5-yard run and Petty ran in the 2-point conversion. New York then forced a punt and Petty led the Jets 33 yards to tie the game on Nick Folk's 50-yard field goal with 38 seconds left. —AP

NFL Results/Standings

NY Giants 10, Dallas 7; Atlanta 42, Los Angeles 14; Green Bay 38, Seattle 10; Tampa Bay 16, New Orleans 11; NY Jets 23, San Francisco 17 (OT); Pittsburgh 27, Buffalo 20; Tennessee 13, Denver 10; Washington 27, Philadelphia 22; Miami 26, Arizona 23; Carolina 28, San Diego 16; Cincinnati 23, Cleveland 10; Detroit 20, Chicago 17; Houston 22, Indianapolis 17; Minnesota 25, Jacksonville 16.

American Football Conference							National Football Conference								
AFC East							NFC East								
	W	L	T	OTL	PF	PA	PCT								
New England	10	2	0	0	319	207	.833	Dallas	11	2	0	0	340	238	.846
Miami	8	5	0	0	281	301	.615	NY Giants	9	4	0	0	255	244	.692
Buffalo	6	7	0	0	325	301	.462	Washington	7	5	1	0	330	317	.577
NY Jets	4	9	0	0	229	324	.308	Philadelphia	5	8	0	1	290	272	.385
								NFC North							
								Detroit	9	4	0	0	295	268	.692
Pittsburgh	8	5	0	0	317	256	.615	Minnesota	7	6	0	1	258	225	.538
Baltimore	7	5	0	0	256	207	.583	Green Bay	7	6	0	0	333	312	.538
Cincinnati	5	7	1	0	268	269	.423	Chicago	3	10	0	0	221	290	.231
Cleveland	0	13	0	1	207	375	.0	NFC South							
								Atlanta	8	5	0	1	428	345	.615
								Tampa Bay	8	5	0	1	293	296	.615
Houston	7	6	0	0	229	274	.538	New Orleans	5	8	0	0	358	351	.385
Tennessee	7	6	0	0	321	306	.538	Carolina	5	8	0	0	311	337	.385
Indianapolis	6	7	0	1	328	333	.462	NFC West							
Jacksonville	2	11	0	0	240	338	.154	Seattle	8	4	1	0	274	232	.654
								Arizona	5	7	1	0	299	277	.423
Kansas City	10	3	0	0	302	255	.769	Los Angeles	4	9	0	0	194	304	.308
Oakland	10	3	0	0	358	320	.769	San Francisco	1	12	0	1	251	393	.077
Denver	8	5	0	1	296	242	.615								
San Diego	5	8	0	1	350	347	.385								

BENGALS 23, BROWNS 10
Robert Griffin III returned from injury but couldn't keep Cleveland from falling closer to infamy as the Cincinnati Bengals built a big early lead and held off the winless Browns in the snow. Andy Dalton threw two touchdown passes to Tyler Eifert as the Bengals (5-7-1) kept their playoff chances pulsating for another week. Griffin started for the first time since getting hurt in the opener. He couldn't produce a win for the Browns (0-13). RG3 did score on a 1-yard sneak in the third quarter, but the Browns lost their 16th straight dating to Dec. 13 last season. Cleveland has lost 23 of 24 and 31 of 34 since the end of 2014. The Browns have three games left to avoid joining the 2008 Detroit Lions as the NFL's only 0-16 teams. They are making history with every loss. They are the seventh team since 1962 to start 0-13, joining the '08 Lions, 1980 Saints, 1976 Buccaneers, 2011 Colts, 2007 Dolphins and 1962 Raiders. Griffin finished 12 of 28 for 104 yards. Isaiah Crowell was a bright spot for Cleveland, rushing for 113 yards on 10 carries. Dalton, who has had some of his best games against Cleveland, connected twice in the first half with Eifert as the Bengals bullied the NFL's worst team for 30 minutes.

BUCCANEERS 16, SAINTS 11
Streaking Tampa Bay bolstered its playoff hopes by building an early lead and holding off Drew Brees and New Orleans for its fifth straight victory. Doug Martin scored on a 1-yard run, Roberto Aguayo kicked three field goals and an improving defense intercepted Brees three times while holding the NFL passing leader without a touchdown pass. Brees began the day leading the league in completions, attempts, completion percentage, passing yards and TD passes, but failed to throw for a touchdown for the second straight week, the first time he's done that in consecutive games since 2009. Safety Keith Tandy picked off the quarterback's final pass on fourth-and-1 from near midfield in the final minute. The Bucs (8-5) have won five straight for the first time since 2002, the season they went on to win their only Super Bowl. New Orleans (5-8) entered hoping to tighten the NFC South race, but instead dropped three games behind division co-leaders Atlanta and Tampa Bay.

playoff hopes alive. They're two games back of first-place Detroit in the NFC North, but play division opponents in the last three weeks of the season. Green Bay gained more than 300 yards in the first game for the Seahawks (8-4-1) without former All-Pro safety Earl Thomas, who is out for the season with a broken leg. Rodgers set the tone on the opening drive after connecting with receiver Davante Adams on a perfectly-thrown pass down the right sideline for a 66-yard touchdown. Cornerback Jeremy Lane slipped on the play.

REDSKINS 27, EAGLES 22
Chris Thompson's 25-yard touchdown run with 1:54 remaining lifted Washington. Kirk Cousins threw two touchdown passes, including an 80-yard toss to DeSean Jackson, and had a pick-6. The Eagles took a 22-21 lead when Caleb Sturgis hit a 41-yard field goal with 4:59 left after holder Donnie Jones got the high snap from third-string long snapper Trey Burton down in time. Carson Wentz drove Philadelphia to the Redskins 14 in the final minute, but Ryan Kerrigan sacked him to force a fumble and seal

from 5 yards. Bell also had 62 yards receiving to account for 298 of the 460 yards gained by Pittsburgh. It was the second three-TD game of his career, and first in which he scored three times rushing. Bell broke the franchise rushing record set by Willie Parker, who had 223 yards against Cleveland on Dec. 7, 2006.

FALCONS 42, RAMS 14
Matt Ryan passed for 237 yards and three touchdowns and Atlanta forced five turnovers to beat the Los Angeles. Deion Jones returned an interception 33 yards for a touchdown, and Vic Beasley forced a fumble by Jared Goff and returned it for another TD during Atlanta's comprehensive pummeling of the Rams (4-9), who have lost four straight and eight of nine in their increasingly miserable homecoming season. Tevin Coleman caught a TD pass and rushed for another score for the Falcons (8-5), who opened up a 42-point lead in the third quarter and stayed atop the NFC South with their fourth win in six games. Even without injured receivers Julio Jones and Mohamed Sanu, Atlanta had little trouble from the opening kickoff, which was

down and the Texans defense stopped Andrew Luck on Indy's final drive. Houston (7-6) retained a share of the AFC South lead with Tennessee by ending its three-game losing streak. The Texans won for the second straight year in Indy, have won nine straight against division foes and got their first sweep of the Colts in franchise history. Luck drove the Colts (6-7) to the Texans 42-yard line with 1:24 left. But on fourth-and-1, a blitz forced an errant screen pass to Robert Turbin. Miller finished with 21 carries for 107 yards, while Brock Osweiler was 14 of 24 for 147 yards with one interception. Luck was 24 of 45 for 276 yards with two TD passes, two interceptions and one fumble. T.Y. Hilton had nine catches for 115 yards and a 35-yard TD catch that closed Indy's deficit to 19-17 early in the fourth quarter.

PANTHERS 28, CHARGERS 16
Carolina's defense forced five turnovers by Philip Rivers and had five sacks and a safety. Cam Newton was a pedestrian 10 of 27 for 160 yards with one touchdown pass and one interception for Carolina (5-8), which slipped a two-game losing streak and kept its slim playoff hopes

KOHLI TURNS PEACEMAKER TO DOUSE ASHWIN-ANDERSON FIRE

MUMBAI: Virat Kohli adopted an uncharacteristic role as peacemaker yesterday when the India captain acted to pacify an angry exchange between off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin and England paceman James Anderson on the final day of the fourth test.

The incident occurred when England number 11 Anderson walked out to bat and was greeted by a volley of angry words by Ashwin, whose views were echoed by his team mates in the innings and 36 runs victory for the hosts.

Ashwin appeared irked by Anderson's comments on Sunday that Kohli's technique was not being thoroughly tested on the docile pitches in India after he hit 235 at the Wankhede Stadium for his third double hundred of 2016.

England's record wicket-taker in tests dismissed Kohli four times during India's tour of England in 2014 but the batsman has played Anderson and his bowling partners this time, already amassing 640 runs in the ongoing series at an average of 128. "For the first time I was

trying to calm things down in the middle at a time when James Anderson is involved," a grinning Kohli, who is often very demonstrative on the field, told reporters after India moved 3-0 ahead in the five-match series.

"Ashwin wasn't pleased with what he (Anderson) said in the press and I didn't even know about it. He told me on the ground. "So I didn't know what to make of it, I was laughing about it, Ashwin wasn't too impressed and he let him know without using any bad words, honestly," Kohli added.

"I think he (Ashwin) told me he was pretty disappointed with what he said and it is important to accept defeat as it is. Later on, I told James these things happen and let's move on."

Anderson has a history of disputes with India and the team filed a charge against him for pushing Ravindra Jadeja during the Trent Bridge test in 2014.

He was later cleared by the governing body International Cricket Council (ICC). Yesterday, the contretemps between Ashwin and Anderson threatened to boil over with England captain

Alastair Cook saying it was unnecessary and left a "sour" taste.

"It was a bit of a sour end really. A disappointing end in terms of how well the spirit's been between both sides," Cook said. "It was clearly reference to what Jimmy said yesterday which has kind of been blown out of all proportions, which it can do here. He was just stating a fact which if you asked Virat is probably quite true."

"But yes it was obviously just sticking up for their captain which I thought was slightly unnecessary." — Reuters

COOK BEMOANS WEAKENED SPIN OPTIONS IN MUMBAI LOSS

MUMBAI: England no longer have the world class spin options available to them that they enjoyed when they stunned India in 2012, captain Alastair Cook said after his side fell 3-0 behind the hosts in the five-match series yesterday.

England are the last team to win a series in India when they beat the hosts 2-1 four years ago with spinners Graeme Swann and Monty Panesar revelling in the conditions, and ably supported by prolific wicket-taking paceman James Anderson.

During that series, Panesar took 11 wickets at the Wankhede Stadium while Swann picked up eight more to help England thrash India by 10 wickets.

However, leg-spinner Adil Rashid, who is England's highest wicket-taker in the ongoing series with 22 victims, and off-spinner Moeen Ali have failed to match those performances.

"No disrespect to Mo and Rash but Graeme Swann and Monty Panesar were world class bowlers in 2012," Cook told reporters after England's defeat by an innings and 36 runs. "In these conditions you need that."

"Mo and Rash have bowled well but they are not yet in that league... I do not mean that disrespectfully at all and that is why we need a slightly different balance to the side. "In 2012, we could play the four

bowlers, two seamers and two spinners, but in this side we need more options."

Cook admitted England had erred by picking an extra seamer in Jake Ball while overlooking Gareth Batty as the pitch had nothing in it for the quicker bowlers.

"Here we knew it was going to spin," Cook said. "But one thing we have strength in depth in is our seamers and we can get control with our seamers if it is not spinning a huge amount."

"Generally here in Mumbai it spins slightly later on in the game but it spun pretty much from ball one and last time in 2012 it didn't and the pitch looked exactly the same."

Cook was also left to rue England's failure to take the chances that came their way. Jonny Bairstow missed a stumping opportunity of Murali Vijay on 45, while Rashid dropped a difficult return catch from India captain Virat Kohli on 68 and Joe Root also put down Jayant Yadav at slip on eight. Vijay scored 136, Kohli went on to make 235 and Yadav 104. "We missed three good chances to take wickets and they made us pay," Cook said. "Missing Kohli, missing Vijay and Yadav cost us dearly."

"It is just frustrating. To beat India in these conditions you have to play the perfect game and we haven't managed to do that." — Reuters



MUMBAI: India captain Virat Kohli (L) celebrates with Ravindra Jadeja (2nd L), Ravichandran Ashwin (3rd R) and their teammates during a victory lap after winning the fourth Test cricket match against England at the Wankhede stadium in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP

ASHWIN LEADS INDIA TO SERIES WIN OVER ENGLAND

MUMBAI: Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin blew away England's lower order resistance to spin India to a crushing series-clinching victory on the final day of the fourth test at the Wankhede Stadium yesterday.

The touring side, who resumed the final day on 182 for six, were only able to add 13 runs to their total as Ashwin (6-55) took all four remaining wickets in a little more than half an hour and the hosts won by an innings and 36 runs. The five-wicket haul was the 24th for the world's top-ranked test bowler and his seventh 10-wicket haul, after the 30-year-old also took six wickets in England's first innings, inspired India to an unassailable 3-0 lead.

England had beaten India in their last three test series including a 2-1 triumph on their last visit to the South Asian country in 2012 but the tourists have been thoroughly outplayed by the hosts since drawing the opening match in Rajkot.

"This series win is probably the sweetest of all we've won so far in the past 14-15 months," India captain Virat Kohli said at the presentation following his side's fifth series victory in a row. "It could not get any better."

"To win at Wankhede, going three-nil against a top quality side that has beaten us convincingly last two times, it feels really good." Trailing by 49 runs entering the final day, England's hopes of making India bat again rested on a pair of wicketkeeper-batsmen-Jonny Bairstow, who was unbeaten on 50 overnight, and Jos Buttler.

Bairstow, however, misread Ashwin's 'carrom' ball, a finger-spinner delivered with the

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI: Scoreboard on the final day of the fourth Test between India and England in Mumbai yesterday.

England 1st innings 400 (K. Jennings 112, J. Buttler 76; R. Ashwin 6-112)	J. Buttler not out	6
	C. Woakes b Ashwin	0
India 1st innings 631 (V. Kohli 235, M. Vijay 136; Rashid 4-192)	A. Rashid c Rahul b Ashwin	2
	J. Anderson c Yadav b Ashwin	2
England 2nd innings 195	Extras (b15, lb2, nb2)	19
A. Cook lbw b Jadeja	Total (10 wickets, 55.3 overs)	195
K. Jennings lbw Kumar	Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Jennings), 2-43 (Cook), 3-49 (Ali), 4-141 (Root), 5-180 (Stokes), 6-182 (Ball), 7-185 (Bairstow), 8-189 (Woakes), 9-193 (Rashid), 10-195 (Anderson)	
J. Root lbw J. Yadav	Bowling: Kumar 4-1-11-1, U. Yadav 3-0-10-0, Jadeja 22-3-63-2 (1nb), Ashwin 20.3-3-55-6, J. Yadav 6-0-39-1 (1nb)	
M. Ali c Vijay b Jadeja	Result: India win by an innings and 36 runs.	
J. Bairstow lbw Ashwin		
B. Stokes c Vijay b Ashwin		
J. Ball c Patel b Ashwin		

knuckle, to be struck in front of the wicket after adding just a run to his overnight score and was unable to overturn the leg before decision on review.

ANGRY EXCHANGE

Ashwin then claimed a wicket in each of his next three overs to bring about a quick end to proceedings as England's lower order capitulated meekly. There were some angry words exchanged between James Anderson and the India players when the England number 11 walked in to bat with the umpires forced to intervene to prevent the incident from escalating further. On what has been a generally dismal tour for England, they also picked up an unwelcome statistic of becoming just the third side in test history to compile 400 in the

first innings and still lose by an innings.

"Historically on this ground 400 is a good score in the first innings and in the second innings, we had our chances," rued England captain Alastair Cook. "We've just not taken those chances. "We were in the game for three days but not good enough to take those opportunities and that's what cost us." Ashwin, who has won the man of the series awards in each of India's last four test series, took his tally to 27 wickets from the four matches against England.

Man of the match Kohli, who hit 235 in India's massive first innings total of 631 for his third double century of the year, leads the run-scoring list with 640 at an average of 128.

The fifth and final Test will be played in Chennai from Friday. — Reuters



MUMBAI: India's captain Virat Kohli (R) greeting England's Joe Root after India won the fourth Test cricket match between India and England at the Wankhede stadium in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP

ROOT 'READY' TO CAPTAIN ENGLAND

MUMBAI: England captain Alastair Cook said yesterday Joe Root was ready to take over as skipper but that no decision on his own future would be taken until the new year.

India humiliated England in the fourth Test in Mumbai to clinch the series 3-0 with a match to spare, raising questions about how long Cook can remain in the job. His future was called into question just before the tour started when he admitted he could quit at the end of the series and he was finding it difficult to be apart from his family for long periods.

"Those comments I made don't change," Cook told reporters following England's innings and 36-run loss at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium. "It sticks true to the end of this series. Then I'll sit down with Strauss (England's Director of Cricket Andrew Strauss) in the new year, like we made that pact to always talk openly and honestly about stuff." Indian spinner Ravichandran Ashwin claimed four wickets in just half-an-hour yesterday morning to send England crashing to 195 all out, meaning the hosts won without having to bat a second innings. It was the tourists' third heavy defeat in a row in the series after the drawn first Test in Rajkot.

"My position hasn't changed whether we won this game or lost," said Cook, 31, who admitted though that the nature of the defeat could influence his thinking.

"You start having questions, of course you do. Naturally you look at stuff. Clearly it's a hard place to come on tour

with the balance of our squad," he added, referring to England's lack of world-class spinners.

RESPECT IN DRESSING ROOM

Root has been widely tipped to succeed Cook and the veteran left-hander said the 25-year-old was the ideal candidate to step into his shoes. "I think Joe Root is ready to captain England. He's ready because he's a clued on guy, he's got the respect of everyone in the changing room. "He hasn't got much captaincy experience but that doesn't mean he can't be a very good captain," Cook added, saying the magnitude of the task should not be underestimated.

"You're thrown in at the deep end and you kind of sink or swim. Nothing can really prepare you for it."

"You are the forefront of the team and it comes onto your shoulders when you win or lose."

"In the heat of the battle you make those decisions. You either make good ones or bad ones and you have to live with that," said Cook. Cook, who recently overtook Michael Atherton's record of 54 Tests as England captain, said a lack of world class spin bowlers had hurt his side in India.

"This is no disrespect to Mo (Moeen Ali) and Rash (Adil Rashid) but Graeme Swann and Monty Panesar were world class bowlers in 2012," when England won a series in India, said Cook. "I think Mo and Rash have bowled well but they're not yet in that league." — AFP



DHAKA: In this Dec. 9, 2016, photo, Rajshahi Kings's Mehedi Hasan Miraz dives unsuccessfully to try and take a catch during the Bangladesh Premier League cricket T20 final match against Dhaka Dynamites in Dhaka, Bangladesh. — AP

ISINBAYEVA URGES IAAF TO REACH COMPROMISE ON RUSSIA BAN

MOSCOW: The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) must reinstate Russia as soon as possible to prevent the country's athletes from stagnating, Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA) chair Yelena Isinbayeva has said.

The Russian Athletics Federation was banned in November 2015 after an independent World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) study exposed widespread state-sponsored doping and the IAAF confirmed last week that the ban will run into next year.

"I want to believe soon they will find a compromise. We have done everything

they asked—we did it even before Rio 2016," the Russian former pole vaulter told insidethegames.biz, a sports website focused on the Olympic Movement.

"I hope soon that we can compete internationally otherwise we will have no chance to develop the sport in Russia, we lose visibility otherwise," the double Olympic champion and world record holder added. The suspension was upheld following an appeal earlier this year, ruling all but one Russian track and field athlete, long-jumper Darya Klishina, out of the Rio Olympics.

"We must find a solution as the worst

thing has happened already—we missed the Olympic Games. Russia must be allowed back," the 34-year-old Isinbayeva said.

"A line needs to be drawn under the situation, otherwise it could go on for years." In the latest blow to the country, an independent WADA report said on Friday that more than 1,000 Russian competitors across more than 30 sports were involved in an institutional conspiracy to conceal positive drug tests.

Isinbayeva, who also won three world championship golds and set 28 world records, also lashed out at IAAF

President Sebastian Coe and called for any doping investigations to be expanded globally. "How could IAAF consider athletes who have been suspended twice for doping clean and allow them to compete while I was not?" Isinbayeva said in a separate interview with French sports daily L'Equipe, referring to American sprinter Justin Gatlin.

"When Coe asked my support at the beginning of his campaign to become IAAF president, I gave it to him without asking questions. Then he put me on the list with everyone else. He did not take into consideration who I am, my history,

the absence of doubts (on my performances)... Sebastian Coe has had no respect for me and it hurt me.

"Yes, Russia is poisoned by doping... but to focus the investigations on one country is a political act. I hope that Mr McLaren's investigation will be extended worldwide."

As well as her role with RUSADA, Isinbayeva was elected as a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Athletes' Commission during Rio 2016 and has also been appointed to the Executive Board of the Russian Olympic Committee. —Reuters

FORMER FA CHIEFS HIT OUT AT GOVERNING BODY

LONDON: Five former English Football Association bosses have hit out at the governing body and urged the British government to reform an "out of balance" organisation filled with "elderly white men".

David Bernstein, David Davies, Greg Dyke, Alex Horne and David Triesman grouped together to write to Damian Collins, chairman of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee.

They say the "well-meaning individuals" in charge of the FA are "collectively unrepresentative of English society" and "under-qualified" to deal with modern football. The group also called for legislation to be passed, blaming the FA's "inability to reform and modernise in a fast-changing world". The letter said the FA lacks independence and makes decisions based on vested interests due to a lack of checks and balances.

It also said the FA was resistant to change and that parliament needs to step in. The letter concluded: "Football is a much-loved sport enjoyed by millions, and it has genuine cultural significance in the country which first codified what is now a global sport."

"A focused intervention can undoubtedly build on these attributes, as has been recognised in many past inquiries and reports. It would give millions of players and fans confidence they will no longer be marginal to the future of their sport."

"It may well move us to redressing the woeful lack of English players or managers and the embarrassing failures of our national team for the past 50 years."

SPECIAL ACTIVITY

Responding to the letter, Collins

wrote: "The select committee shares your concern that the current structure of the FA makes it impossible for it to reform itself. As such, there is currently no effective governing body for football in England that is capable of responding to the challenges that face the modern game." Collins said the committee is working to prepare a draft Bill which would reform the structure of the FA.

He also said the committee would ask for a debate in the House of Commons calling for a vote of no confidence in the FA. "We cannot afford to wait any longer," he said. A statement from the FA in response to the letter to Collins read: "The FA is currently working on governance reforms to adhere to Sport England and UK Sport's Governance Code for Sport which was released in October this year."

However, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said football must be allowed to get its own house in order without government interference because sport and politics should not mix.

"Football and politics should not deal together. Football is a very special activity that should be ruled by football people," he said.

"Our target is to be adult enough to rule our own activity." Pressed on whether the government should step in to address the failure of the England national team and the current sexual abuse scandal, Wenger said: "No, no, because when you look at the history of sport being linked with politics, it was not always for the benefit of sport."

"I don't know what their frustration is. What we want is that the values of our sport are respected. I don't see that football is in a crisis in this country." — AFP



OKLAHOMA CITY: Boston Celtics forward Jae Crowder (99) drives to the basket as Oklahoma City Thunder guard Victor Oladipo (5) defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, Sunday. — AP

NO TRIPLE-DOUBLE AS WESTBROOK LEADS THUNDER PAST CELTICS

OKLAHOMA CITY: Russell Westbrook scored 37 points to lead the Oklahoma City Thunder to a 99-96 victory over the Boston Celtics on Sunday, though his streak of consecutive triple-doubles ended at seven games. Westbrook shot 14 of 26 to go along with 12 rebounds and six assists. He hit 1 of 2 free throws in the final seconds to push the margin to three points before Boston's Marcus Smart missed a 3-point attempt that would have tied the score. Steven Adams finished with 16 points and eight rebounds, and Enes Kanter came off the bench to score 14 points for the Thunder. Al Horford paced the Celtics with 19 points and six rebounds, and Boston's Jae Crowder and Avery Bradley each posted 18 points.

WARRIORS 116, TIMBERWOLVES 108

Golden State rallied past Minnesota to preserve its NBA-record, 111-game streak without consecutive losses. One night after a road loss to the Memphis Grizzlies, the Warriors put together a big fourth quarter to fend off the Timberwolves. The Warriors trailed by 10 after three quarters but outscored Minnesota 38-20 in the fourth. Klay Thompson scored 12 of his 30 points during a 25-4 Golden State spurt to start the final period. Kevin Durant added 22 points and eight rebounds, Stephen Curry had 22 points and nine assists, and Draymond Green scored 18 for the Warriors. Karl-Anthony Towns tallied 25 points and 18 rebounds, and Andrew Wiggins and Zach LaVine also scored 25 points for the Wolves.

76ERS 97, PISTONS 79

T.J. McConnell was one assist shy of a triple-double in his first start of the season as Philadelphia beat. Starting in place of Sergio Rodriguez, McConnell had 12 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists for the 76ers, who won back-to-back games for only the second time this season following a win at New Orleans on Thursday. Robert Covington added 16 points and seven rebounds for the 76ers. Marcus Morris scored a game-high 28 points in defeat for the Pistons.

PELICANS 120, SUNS 119 (OT)

Jrue Holiday scored 16 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter and overtime, and Tim Frazier posted his first career triple-double with 14 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists as New Orleans rallied from 15 points down in the third quarter to beat Phoenix. The Pelicans snapped a five-game losing streak and won for the first time since Nov. 29 despite getting only 14 points from Anthony Davis, well below his league-leading average of 31.4 per game. Davis added a team-high 12 rebounds. Eric Bledsoe had 32 points and eight assists before fouling out in overtime for the Suns, who missed a chance at their

NBA results/standings

New Orleans 120, Phoenix 119 (OT); Oklahoma City 99, Boston 96; Golden State 116, Minnesota 108; Philadelphia 97, Detroit 79.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB						
Toronto	16	7	.696	-	Oklahoma City	15	9	.625	-
NY Knicks	14	10	.583	2.5	Utah	15	10	.600	0.5
Boston	13	11	.542	3.5	Portland	12	13	.480	3.5
Brooklyn	6	16	.273	9.5	Denver	9	15	.375	6
Philadelphia	6	18	.250	10.5	Minnesota	6	18	.250	9
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	17	5	.773	-	Golden State	21	4	.840	-
Chicago	13	10	.565	4.5	LA Clippers	17	7	.708	3.5
Detroit	13	13	.500	6	LA Lakers	10	16	.385	11.5
Indiana	12	12	.500	6	Sacramento	8	15	.348	12
Milwaukee	11	11	.500	6	Phoenix	7	17	.292	13.5
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Charlotte	14	10	.583	-	San Antonio	19	5	.792	-
Atlanta	12	12	.500	2	Houston	17	7	.708	2
Washington	9	13	.409	4	Memphis	17	8	.680	2.5
Orlando	10	15	.400	4.5	New Orleans	8	17	.320	11.5
Miami	7	17	.292	7	Dallas	5	18	.217	13.5

second set of back-to-back wins this year. Tyson Chandler had 14 points and 21 rebounds for Phoenix.

KNICKS 118, LAKERS 112

Derrick Rose returned to the New York lineup and torched the Los Angeles backcourt for 25 points. Rose missed the previous two games with back pain but hit 12 of 16 shots from the field against the Lakers. On an

off night for Carmelo Anthony (13 points on 4-of-16 shooting), Kristaps Porzingis led the Knicks in scoring with 26 points, adding 12 rebounds and seven blocked shots. Brandon Jennings came off the bench to score 19 crucial points for the Knicks (14-10). It is the first time New York is four games over .500 since Phil Jackson was hired as president of basketball operations in March 2014. Lou Williams led the Lakers with 24 points. — Reuters



DOHA: The cup of the friendly football match between FC Barcelona and Saudi's Al-Ahli is displayed during a press conference in Doha yesterday, on the eve of the match. — AFP

QATAR SAYS ADIOS TO BARCELONA

DOHA: Barcelona play Saudi champions Al-Ahli in a friendly in Doha today, the Spanish club's last major obligation of its four year shirt sponsorship deal with Qatar Airways. Stars including Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luiz Suarez—all of who have featured in Qatar Airways' adverts—are in Doha and are expected to play some, if not all of the match.

It is an extremely rare chance for Gulf fans to see some of the biggest names in world football, at least before the 2022 World Cup, and brought about because of the Gulf carrier's sponsorship deal with Barcelona. "It has been very successful for us, you know that we were part of Barcelona for the last three years, and this the fourth year," said Qatar Airways chief executive Akbar Al-Baker on Monday. "It has been a very good brand and reflection of Qatar Airways." All 25,000 seats at the Al-Gharrafa stadium in the north-west of Doha have been sold out for days, something Paris Saint-Germain could not manage at a smaller Doha stadium when they played a friendly against Inter earlier this year.

But as excited as the fans will be to see their favourites in the flesh, Qatar is also saying goodbye to Barcelona. Next June the club's sometimes turbulent sponsorship deal with the airline, worth around 35 million euros annually, ends. From next season the "Blaugranas" will play their football with Japanese online retailer Rakuten splashed across their shirts, in a deal worth at least 55 million euros (\$59 million) a year.

Noticeably, at a time when gas-rich Qatar is making spending adjustments due to lower energy prices, the nation's airline could not match the price of its Japanese competitors.

"We have lost it unfortunately because somebody had more cash than us," admitted Al-Baker.

'BARCELONA PUT QATAR ON MAP'

They may have also lost out because of another reason—television. Barcelona may be a global brand but one thing holding back the commercial push of La Liga, especially in Asia, was kick-off times in the Spanish league. Traditionally they played late at night local time, which meant they lost the audience in Asia and possibly Asian sponsors. But now, either Barcelona or Real Madrid play every week at 4.15pm local time on a Saturday, meaning their matches can be watched in Asia. Vicente Casado, La Liga's managing director of international development, told a Doha conference earlier this month that the desire to build up worldwide audiences was behind the change in kick-off times. "This is one of the big reasons," he said.

La Liga is targeting a global television audience of three billion people by the end of next season—the same as their rivals, the English Premier League.

Last season, "just" 1.2 billion fans globally watched La Liga games on TV, said Casado. The deal with the Gulf carrier has been marked by negotiations over money — leading to a belated one year extension to the contract announced earlier this year—and arguments over Qatar's treatment of the migrant workers building the infrastructure for the World Cup.

The row even saw Joan Laporta pledge to end the deal with Qatar if he was re-elected as club president.

But he failed and the shirt deal continued, and it has proved worthwhile for all parties, especially the airline says sports marketing expert, Antony Marcou. "To be associated with Barcelona in this period, they have done exceptionally well," said Marcou, boss of London-based marketing company, Sports Revolution.

"This sponsorship was about credibility, Barcelona put them on the map." — AFP



DOHA: CEO of Qatar Airways, Akbar Al-Baker (L), and Secretary General of the Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee, Hassan Al-Thawadi, hold a press conference in Doha yesterday, on the eve of the friendly football match between FC Barcelona and Saudi's Al-Ahli. — AFP

IBORRA HAT-TRICK KEEPS SEVILLA CLOSE TO THE LEADERS IN SPAIN

MADRID: Vicente Iborra ended his scoring drought in style, coming off the bench to score a second-half hat-trick in Sevilla's 3-0 win over Celta Vigo in the Spanish league on Sunday.

Nearly seven months after his last goal, the midfielder found the net three times after entering the game at halftime to keep Sevilla close to the leaders atop the standings. "I'm taking this (ball) home," said Iborra, celebrating his first hat-trick with Sevilla. "And it's not to let my kids play with it, it's to save it. I want to remember this when I retire."

The 28-year-old Iborra entered the

match because of an injury sustained by Argentine defender Nico Pareja. Sevilla coach Jorge Sampaoli took the opportunity to change the team's formation by adding the more offensive Iborra, and it worked perfectly.

"With the structural change we started controlling possession," Sampaoli said. "Vicente was crucial for us." Iborra, who had last scored in a 2-1 loss at Sporting Gijon in April, became the first Sevilla player to score a hat-trick away from home since Julio Baptista in 2004.

He jumped high among three defenders to open the scoring with a header off

a corner kick in the 51st minute, then doubled the lead from inside the area in the 84th. Iborra closed the scoring by converting a penalty kick two minutes into injury time.

"It's difficult to win here and this comes as a relief for us after the loss to Granada (in the previous round)," Iborra said. "It allows us to stay near the top in La Liga." Sevilla stayed in third place after 15 rounds with 30 points, one point behind Barcelona and seven behind leader Real Madrid. Celta, which had won five straight at home, stayed on 21 points. On Saturday, Barcelona won 3-0 at

Osasuna with two goals by Lionel Messi and one by Luis Suarez, while Madrid edged Deportivo La Coruna 3-2 at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium thanks to an injury-time winner by defender Sergio Ramos. Real Sociedad moved to fourth by beating Valencia 3-2 at home.

Fifth-placed Atletico Madrid plays at Villarreal later.

OTHER GAMES

Eibar and promoted Alaves drew 0-0 in their first Basque derby in the top flight, a result that left both clubs from the northern Spanish region near the

middle of the table. Eighth-placed Eibar has been in the first division for the past three seasons, but Alaves - 13th in the 20-team standings - hadn't made it to the top tier since 2005-06.

In Barcelona, ninth-placed Espanyol defeated Sporting Gijon 2-1 to extend its unbeaten streak in the league to nine games. The result left Sporting, which has lost four of its last five games, in the relegation zone. In Seville, Real Betis defeated Athletic Bilbao 1-0 with a goal by forward Ruben Castro in the 18th minute to move six points away from the demotion zone. Athletic is seventh. — AP

BOUFAL DELIVERS ON PROMISE IN SAINTS WIN

JOHANNESBURG: Morocco's Sofiane Boufal grabbed his first Premier League goal as Southampton rebounded from their Europa League disappointment with a 1-0 win over Middlesbrough at the weekend. Riyad Mahrez and Alex Iwobi were among other African stars on the winning side in England, while Sadio Mane shone for Liverpool but couldn't help the Reds collect all three points in a 2-2 draw against West Ham. Gabon's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang endured a quiet afternoon as Borussia Dortmund drew 1-1 with Cologne to lose further ground in Germany.

ENGLAND

RIYAD MAHREZ (Leicester)

Prior to the 4-2 humbling of Manchester City on Saturday one could have been forgiven for thinking the Riyad Mahrez who starred in last season's title-winning exploits had been replaced by a less-talented lookalike on his return for this campaign. The 25-year-old's level plunged so much that a week ago Claudio Ranieri hinted he might drop him. Whether that sparked a reaction or not, Mahrez was in far better form against City and his delightful pass to set up Jamie Vardy sealed a strong performance by the Algerian.

ALEX IWABI (Arsenal)

The 20-year-old Nigerian international showed a cool head when he took possession after Arsenal team-mate Alexis Sanchez was fouled on the edge of the Stoke penalty area and scored with a right-footed shot to establish a crucial match-winning two-goal cushion a quarter of an hour from time.

VICTOR WANYAMA (Tottenham)

Spurs could well have deservedly gone home with honours even against Manchester United but the Kenyan midfielder enforcer got the execution horribly wrong having ghosted in for a free header. For some reason the 25-year-old didn't head goalwards but across goal when an equaliser looked on the cards.

SOFIANE BOUFAL (Southampton)

Nerves were beginning to fray over whether Moroccan international Sofiane Boufal was worth the record fee of £16 million (\$20 million, 18 million euros) paid out by Saints in August. He had found the net just once prior to Sunday-and that was in an EFL Cup game-but it was worth the wait for the 23-year-old's first Premier League goal as he rifled home from the edge of the area after a sublime five-man move.

SADIO MANE (Liverpool)

The Senegalese has been one of Liverpool's standout performers this season since his move from Southampton, equally as good at finding the net as creating goals for his team-mates. The 24-year-old was in creative mode against West Ham United, teeing up Adam Lallana for their opening goal. His dazzling footwork in the box then bamboozled the Hammers defence and led to Divock Origi's equaliser early in the second half.

GERMANY PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG (Borussia Dortmund)

The Bundesliga's top scorer had an afternoon to forget in Borussia Dortmund's 1-1 draw at Cologne on Saturday as Marco Reus's 90th-minute equaliser rescued the visitors. Aubameyang had the ball in the Cologne net with just nine minutes gone, but his effort was ruled out for offside and, unusually for the Gabon striker, that proved to be his only shot on goal for the entire match. It was a poor performance from Dortmund, only compensated by Reus's late equaliser after Artjoms Rudnevs gave Cologne a first-half lead.

ITALY

KALIDOU KOULIBALY (Napoli)

Napoli on Sunday confirmed their recent purple patch-which has seen the southerners rout Inter Milan 3-0 and beat Benfica in the Champions League to secure top spot in their group-but Sunday's 5-0 rout of Cagliari came at the cost of losing Koulibaly to injury. Koulibaly hobbled off after just 20 minutes at the San Paolo after going in for a tackle that earned him a booking and a sore knee to boot. Coach Maurizio Sarri said afterwards the injury "did not look serious" but pending scans on Monday Sarri will certainly be hoping that is the case. Koulibaly has been a rock at the back for the Italians in what is another promising season, all in spite of injury to Polish striker Arkadiusz Milik.

KEITA BALDE (Lazio)

Keita started on the bench at Sampdoria amid reports he could be the subject of a winter transfer to La Liga side Valencia, who are coached by ex-Fiorentina and Italy boss Cesare Prandelli, and did not make an appearance until the 65th minute when he replaced Lucas Biglia. Lazio had built a comfortable 2-0 lead by the time the Senegal striker arrived, thanks to first-half goals from Sergej Milinkovic-Savic and Marco Parolo. Sampdoria grabbed a lifeline when late substitute Patrik Schick hit a last-gasp rocket, but Lazio held on for a ninth win that moved them up to fifth, level with Napoli and eight points behind leaders Juventus.

FRANCE

BENJAMIN MOUKANDJO (Lorient)

The 28-year-old Cameroon striker hit his seventh Ligue 1 goal of the season but was unable to prevent a 3-2 defeat to Toulouse for whom Swedish international Ola Toivonen scored a hat-trick. Moukandjo, who has 36 caps, has scored more than a third of his team's 18 league goals but Lorient are still at the foot of the table. — AFP



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Bournemouth v Leicester 22:45
beIN SPORTS 3 HD

Everton v Arsenal 22:45
beIN SPORTS 2 HD

SOCCER TABLE

English Premier League table ahead of midweek matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Chelsea	15	12	1	2	33	11	37
Arsenal	15	10	4	1	36	15	34
Liverpool	15	9	4	2	37	20	31
Man City	15	9	3	3	32	19	30
Tottenham	15	7	6	2	24	11	27
Man Utd	15	6	6	3	20	16	24
Watford	15	6	3	6	21	26	21
West Brom	15	5	5	5	20	18	20
Everton	15	5	5	5	19	19	20
Southampton	15	5	5	5	14	15	20
Stoke	15	5	4	6	17	22	19
Bournemouth	15	5	3	7	21	25	18
Burnley	15	5	2	8	15	25	17
Leicester	15	4	4	7	21	26	16
Crystal Palace	15	4	3	8	27	29	15
Middlesbrough	15	3	6	13	16	15	15
West Ham	15	3	4	8	17	31	13
Swansea	15	3	3	9	19	31	12
Hull	15	3	3	9	14	32	12
Sunderland	15	3	2	10	14	27	11

SPANISH LA LIGA TABLE

Real Madrid	15	11	4	0	40	14	37
Barcelona	15	9	4	2	37	15	31
Sevilla	15	9	3	3	28	20	30
Real Sociedad	15	8	2	5	26	21	26
Atletico Madrid	14	7	4	3	28	11	25
Villarreal	14	6	5	3	19	10	23
Athletic Bilbao	15	7	2	6	20	18	23
Eibar	15	6	4	5	21	19	22
Espanyol	15	5	7	3	19	18	22
Las Palmas	15	5	6	4	26	23	21

Malaga	15	5	6	4	24	22	21
Celta Vigo	15	6	3	6	24	29	21
Alaves	15	4	6	5	15	18	18
Real Betis	15	5	3	7	18	28	18
Leganés	15	4	3	8	12	26	15
Deportivo	15	3	4	8	20	27	13
Valencia	15	3	3	9	21	29	12
Sporting Gijon	15	3	3	9	16	30	12
Granada	15	1	6	8	14	31	9
Osasuna	15	1	4	10	13	32	7

ITALIAN SERIE A TABLE

Juventus	16	13	0	3	35	14	39
Roma	15	10	2	3	35	16	32
AC Milan	15	10	2	3	27	19	32
Napoli	16	9	4	3	32	15	31
Lazio	16	9	4	3	29	17	31
Atalanta	16	9	1	6	25	20	28
Torino	16	7	4	5	32	22	25
Inter Milan	16	7	3	6	24	21	24
Fiorentina	14	6	5	3	22	16	23
Chievo	16	6	4	6	16	16	22
Sampdoria	16	6	4	6	20	22	22
Udinese	16	6	3	7	22	24	21
Genoa	15	5	5	5	17	17	20
Cagliari	16	6	2	8	23	37	20
Sassuolo	15	5	2	8	20	26	17
Bologna	16	4	5	7	14	22	17
Empoli	16	2	5	9	7	24	11
Crotone	16	2	3	11	14	30	9
Pescara	16	1	5	10	13	29	8
Palermo	16	1	3	12	11	31	6



PARIS: PSG goalkeeper Alphonse Areola, right, jumps to stop a goal during a League One soccer match against Nice, at the Parc des Princes stadium, in Paris, France, Sunday.— AP

WENGER LOOKS TO GUNNERS TO KEEP PRESSURE ON CHELSEA

LONDON: Arsene Wenger believes Arsenal are in the 'fight' for their first Premier League title since 2004 and insists the Gunners will maintain the pressure on leaders Chelsea in today's trip to out of sorts Everton.

Arsenal have not lost in the Premier League since the opening day of the season, and had a short stay at the top at the weekend before Chelsea eked out a 1-0 win over West Brom to maintain their three point lead.

With a visit to bottom side Sunderland tomorrow they should retain top spot ahead of next weekend's games.

Wenger, though, is pleased with the way his side have progressed from last season when they finished a distant second to Leicester having never posed a significant challenge. "At the minute there is no difference anyway with the other teams," said Wenger.

"But we are in there. So that's good-we are in the fight. "We were not too bad last year but I believe we have improved. I believe that we have created confidence."

Wenger will be without the impressive German international Skohdran Mustafi, who went off in the 3-1 win over Stoke with a hamstring injury, which will be music to the ears of Belgian international Romelu Lukaku.

He returned to form with a brace in the 3-2 defeat to Watford but Ronald Koeman's honeymoon with the Everton fans is well and truly over after a run of just one win in 10 games.

Chelsea's trip to Sunderland shouldn't pose too many problems-even with rumours swirling they may be punished with a points deduction over the players role in the angry climax to the Manchester City match earlier this month-despite the Black Cats having won three of their previous five matches. Chelsea manager Antonio Conte has proved the doubters wrong in sending out a far more fluent and happier side than the one that led to Jose Mourinho being sacked last season. Diego Costa, who scored his 12th goal of the season on Sunday, is one of those who have been transformed and Conte is expecting the 28-year-old to get even better. "I'm happy for him because he is showing great passion. In every game he is showing great commitment and work rate to help the team," said Conte.

The two London clubs gained some breathing space at the weekend as the chasing pack all dropped points-Manchester City and Spurs both losing and Liverpool held 2-2 at home by struggling West Ham. Spurs-who host struggling Hull on Wednesday-could at least point to a narrow 1-0 defeat by Manchester United whereas Pep Guardiola's problems appear to be mounting with City's 4-2 humbling by Leicester.

Guardiola, whose side have won just four times in 15 matches, didn't offer much in the way of a solution to his players inability to tackle.

They failed to win one in the opening 35 minutes against Leicester something which the Watford forwards will be licking their lips at ahead of tomorrow's clash.

"I am not a coach for the tackles. I don't train for tackles. What I want is to try to play well and score goals. What are tackles?," said Guardiola.

"I have to improve, but I want to play the football I feel because of course it is simple to say 'concede fewer goals and score more'."

Jose Mourinho will be hoping United's win over Spurs will spark a sequence of wins especially as three of their next four are against teams in trouble starting away at Crystal Palace tomorrow.

As ever, though the 'Special One' preferred to look at a half empty glass. "We can (win them all), but to play at Palace, it is not an easy match," said Mourinho. "To play at West Brom is not an easy match and to play at home against two teams that will fight desperately for a point, Middlesbrough and Sunderland, teams that want to avoid relegation, will be difficult too. "So four winnable matches, yes, but also matches where we can lose points." —AFP

CAVANI SCORES TWO TO RESCUE PSG IN DRAW WITH LEADER NICE

PARIS: Edinson Cavani's goals at one end are carrying a Paris Saint-Germain side that is conceding them with alarming regularity at the other. Cavani scored twice in the second half as the defending champion rallied from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 at home to league leader Nice on Sunday. PSG has lost three times already in the league this season and narrowly avoided a fourth defeat - having lost only twice all last season. After 17 games, PSG sits in third place, three points behind Monaco and four behind Nice. The situation would be a lot worse without Cavani's league-leading 16 goals - especially if he had given in to the critics who wanted him gone this summer.

The sometimes clumsy Uruguay forward was often criticized by his own fans when playing a supporting role to Zlatan Ibrahimovic over the previous three campaigns. But he has stepped firmly out of Ibrahimovic's imposing shadow since the Swede joined Manchester United.

Altogether, Cavani has 22 goals in 21 games this season and 103 in his PSG career, making him the club's third all-time leading scorer. He is closing on former Portugal forward Pauleta (109) but remains some distance behind Ibrahimovic (156). Although defensive blunders hit PSG for the third straight game, it was an awful mistake from Nice goalkeeper Yoan Cardinale that gifted Cavani the equalizer. After volleying in right back Serge Aurier's cross one minute after the restart, Cavani then got the easiest of tap-ins on the hour mark.

Cardinale flapped weakly at left back Layvin Kurzawa's cross, patting the ball onto the back of Dante. It fell to Cavani, one meter out. "What I regret is the two goals we conceded, they were too easy," Nice coach Lucien Favre said on Canal Plus television. "That joke goal was not possible."

In a measure of how well Nice is playing, its players were bitterly disappointed not to win. "We should have played much better in the second half," Nice's Brazilian defender Dante said. "We should have been cleverer."

Midfielder Wylan Cyprien's brilliant curling

free kick from 25 meters put Nice ahead in the 32nd, totally against the run of play after PSG had missed several chances.

Then, following a mix-up between Brazilian defenders Thiago Silva and Marquinhos on a cross from the left, striker Alassane Plea moved in between them to make it 2-0 in first-half injury time with his 10th league goal of the season. Marquinhos made careless mistakes in a 3-0 defeat away to Montpellier last weekend and was at fault for Ludogorets' second goal in a 2-2 home draw in the Champions League today.

Given such vulnerable defending, Nice had cause for regret. "We wasted our lead," Cyprien said. "But let's not be too dramatic. It's still a good point that will serve us well."

LYON 1, RENNES 0

Mathieu Valbuena is finally finding his best form for Lyon as the winger's well-taken goal sealed a 1-0 home win. Midfielder Rachid Ghezzal did well down the right and picked out Valbuena as he advanced from the left into the penalty area. Valbuena drilled a low shot past goalkeeper Benoit Costil in the 28th minute to score for the third league game in a row. Lyon's win moved it above Rennes into fourth place. Valbuena only managed one goal in 26 games last season, when he had trouble settling in following a move from Dinamo Moscow.

Rennes defender Ramy Bensebaini was sent off in the 74th minute for pulling back striker Alexandre Lacazette as he was through on goal.

SAINT-ETIENNE 1, GUINGAMP 0

Although winger Romain Hamouma scored the winner for Saint-Etienne, the best performance came from its goalkeeper, Stephane Ruffier.

Hamouma finished neatly midway through the first half following some fine work from right back Kevin Malcuit. Ruffier, who has played more than 200 league games for Les Verts, then made excellent saves.

Saint-Etienne's win moved it up to eighth place, just behind sixth-placed Guingamp. — AP



MILAN: Genoa's Giovanni Simeone and Inter Milan's Jeison Murillo, left, vie for the ball during a Serie A soccer match between Inter Milan and Genoa, at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy, Sunday.— AP

Sports

Giants snap Cowboys' 11-game winning streak



Ashwin leads India to series win over England



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QATAR SAYS ADIOS TO BARCELONA

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RESULTS OF THE DRAW	
MANCHESTER CITY FC (ENG)	VS AS MONACO FC (FRA)
REAL MADRID CF (ESP)	VS SSC NAPOLI (ITA)
SL BENFICA (POR)	VS BORUSSIA DORTMUND (GER)
FC BAYERN MÜNCHEN (GER)	VS ARSENAL FC (ENG)
FC PORTO (POR)	VS JUVENTUS FOOTBALL CLUB (ITA)
BAYER 04 LEVERKUSEN (GER)	VS CLUB ATLÉTICO DE MADRID (ESP)
PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN (FRA)	VS FC BARCELONA (ESP)
SEVILLA FC (ESP)	VS LEICESTER CITY FC (ENG)

RESULT OF THE DRAW	
ATHLETIC CLUB (ESP)	VS APOEL FC (CYP)
LEGIA WARSZAWA (POL)	VS AFC AJAX (NED)
RSC ANDERLECHT (BEL)	VS FOOTBALL CLUB ZENIT (RUS)
FC ASTRA GIURGIU (ROU)	VS KRC GENK (BEL)
MANCHESTER UNITED FC (ENG)	VS AS SAINT-ÉTIENNE (FRA)
VILLARREAL CF (ESP)	VS AS ROMA (ITA)
PFC LUDOGORETS RAZGRAD (BUL)	VS FC KØBENHAVN (DEN)
RC CELTA DE VIGO (ESP)	VS FC SHAKHTAR DONETSK (UKR)
OLYMPIACOS FC (GRE)	VS OSMANLISPOR FK (TUR)
KAA GENT (BEL)	VS TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR FC (ENG)
FC ROSTOV (RUS)	VS AC SPARTA PRAHA (CZE)
FC KRASNODAR (RUS)	VS FENERBAHÇE SK (TUR)
B. MÖNCHENGLADBACH (GER)	VS ACF FIORENTINA (ITA)
AZ ALKMAAR (NED)	VS OLYMPIQUE LYONNAIS (FRA)
HAPOEL BEER-SHEVA FC (ISR)	VS BESIKTAS JK (TUR)
PAOK FC (GRE)	VS FC SCHALKE 04 (GER)

NYON, Switzerland: The match fixtures are shown on an electronic panel after the draw of the Round of 16 of the Champions League 2016/17 (left) and the draw of the Round of 32 of the Europa League 2016/17 (right) at the UEFA Headquarters yesterday. — AP

ARSENAL GET BAYERN AGAIN, BARCA MEET PSG

POGBAS TO CLASH AS MAN UTD DRAW SAINT-ÉTIENNE

NYON: Arsenal were once again drawn against Bayern Munich in the last 16 of the UEFA Champions League yesterday, while Barcelona will also come up against familiar foes in the shape of Paris Saint-Germain. Arsene Wenger's side had hoped winning their group for the first time in five years would spare them a tie against one of the continent's giants in the first knockout round, but instead they must face Carlo Ancelotti's German champions, who came second in their section, with the first leg in Bavaria.

Bayern eliminated Arsenal en route to winning the trophy in 2012/13 and repeated the feat a year later, while the teams also met in the group stage last season—the Gunners won 2-0 in London but then lost 5-1 at the Allianz Arena. PSG came second to Arsenal in Group A, leaving them more vulnerable to a tough draw and five-time winners Barcelona have eliminated the French club in the quarter-finals in two of the past four seasons, while the teams also met in the group stage in 2014/15. Recent history favors the Catalans, and so does current form, with Unai Emery's side having squandered the chance to top their group by drawing at home to Ludogorets of Bulgaria last week.

CITY GIVEN MONACO TEST

Reigning European champions Real Madrid will face Napoli as they look to win the trophy for a record 12th time, while Pep Guardiola's Manchester City face a testing two-legged encounter against Monaco. City, currently struggling for form, cannot afford to take the principality side lightly—they are the most prolific side in Europe's leading leagues this season and have beaten Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur in the Champions League in the past two years.

Premier League champions Leicester City will take on last season's Europa League winners Sevilla as a reward for topping their group in their debut appearance in the competition, with a visit to the Sanchez Pizjuan in the first leg. Atletico Madrid, runners up to city rivals Real in two of the last three seasons, were drawn against Bayer Leverkusen in a repeat of their clash at the same stage in 2014/15. On that occasion, Atletico emerged victorious after a tense penalty shootout.

Two-time winners Juventus were drawn against FC Porto, while Borussia Dortmund also face Portuguese opposition in the shape of Benfica. The first legs will be played on Feb 14, 15, 21 and 22 with the second legs on March 7, 8, 14 and 15.

BROTHERS TO MEET

Separately, Manchester United will take on Saint-Etienne in the last 32 of the Europa League pitting world-record signing Paul Pogba against his elder brother Florentin for the first time. Jose Mourinho's side will host the French club in the first leg on Feb 16 at Old Trafford, with the return the following week. United midfielder Paul represents France but Florentin, a defender, plays for Guinea and the brothers have never faced each other in a competitive game. At age 26, Florentin Pogba is three years older than his more famous sibling, who cost United £89 million (\$109 million) from Juventus in the summer.

The other Premier League representative, Tottenham Hotspur, will face Gent of Belgium after being eliminated from the Champions League at the group stage. Villarreal of Spain will face Italian giants Roma in one of the standout ties, while Bundesliga club Borussia Moenchengladbach were drawn against Fiorentina of Italy. United and Saint-Etienne met in the now-defunct Cup Winners' Cup first round in 1977, with United winning 3-1 on aggregate. On that occasion United were forced to host the second leg in the southern English city of Plymouth, 450 km away from Old Trafford, following crowd trouble in the first leg in France.

Mourinho's men finished second in Group A behind Fenerbahce of Turkey while Saint-Etienne topped Group C. After also having to go to Ukraine to face Zorya Luhansk in the group stage, United's Portuguese manager is pleased that there will be no long away trip this time. Saint-Etienne, 10-time French champions and European Cup runners-up in 1976, are eighth in Ligue 1. Saint-Etienne will host United in the second leg at the Stade Geoffroy-Guichard on Feb 22, with that game brought forward a day to avoid a clash with Lyon, who play AZ Alkmaar of the Netherlands nearby the following day. — Agencies

RONALDO CAPS DREAM YEAR WITH FOURTH BALLON D'OR

PARIS: Cristiano Ronaldo won his fourth Ballon d'Or yesterday to get one over his nemesis Lionel Messi in their long-running duel for the title of best footballer on the planet. It was the perfect ending to another fantastic year for the Real Madrid star, who won the Champions League for the second time in three seasons and then led Portugal to their first major title at Euro 2016 - albeit he went off early injured and in tears in the surprise win over France.



Cristiano Ronaldo

As has been the case for almost a decade now, the 31-year-old's main rival was Messi - but the Barcelona and Argentine maestro had to relinquish the crown after a less-than-stellar year for club and country by his lofty standards. Never one to play down his achievements, Ronaldo was spotted midweek in training having dyed his hair gold in anticipation and several media outlets published a photo earlier yesterday appearing to confirm he was the winner, before France Football made the official announcement.

Ronaldo is now one Ballon d'Or behind last year's winner Messi. "For me there is no debate. The Ballon will be for

him," Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said after his talisman's hat-trick saw off Atletico Madrid last month to underpin Real's domination in La Liga. "He showed it last season and he shows it again and again. We expect a lot of him but he stands above everyone."

Despite such effusive praise Ronaldo, rested at the weekend ahead of the Club World Cup in Japan, has had some negative headlines in the

past week - not least pertaining to accusations of tax evasion. Denying any wrongdoing, he responded by publishing his financial records on Thursday, showing last year he earned a bumper €227 million (\$240 million). "You believe I am worried? He who owes nothing, fears nothing," Ronaldo told broadcaster RTP.

Ronaldo first won the Ballon d'Or in 2008 after Premier League and Champions League triumphs with Manchester United. But it was only in 2013 that he added his second - Messi had hogged it before then - and Ronaldo made it a hat-trick the following year. The first Ballon d'Or was won by Stanley Matthews, at the time with Blackpool, who beat Alfredo Di Stefano for the inaugural title in 1956. This year marks the end of six years of joint awards by founders France Football and FIFA, which will revert to bestowing a "Best" accolade of its own on Jan 9 to both male and female players. The Ballon d'Or will henceforth be decided by a vote of 173 journalists while national team captains and managers will no longer have a say. — AFP

REAL HOT SHOTS READY FOR JAPAN TEST, SAYS ZIDANE

YOKOHAMA: Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane looked frazzled after arriving in Japan yesterday but he has promised his side will be ready for the Club World Cup.

The European champions, chasing a second world title in three years, worked out the kinks as night fell, talisman Cristiano Ronaldo leading the players in a gentle jog around a pitch in chilly Yokohama.

"We're very tired from the long flight of course," a bleary-eyed Zidane told AFP. "But that's normal. We will untangle ourselves a bit and feel better after a good night's sleep."

"The serious work starts tomorrow," added the Frenchman, whose side take on Mexico's Club America on Thursday for a place in the final. "We are here to win the



YOKOHAMA: Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (L) and his teammates run during a training session at Mitsuzawa stadium in Yokohama yesterday. —AFP

Club World Cup. It's an extremely important target for Real Madrid."

Zidane's Spanish table-toppers, who have strung together a club record 35-game unbeaten run, swept into Tokyo before sunrise on Monday and were greeted at the airport by around 300 fans.

"Personally, I'm knackered," said a smiling Zidane, who hoisted the Club World Cup's fore-runner, the Intercontinental Cup, with Real in 2002 and Juventus in 1996.

"But the players will be ready. We're on a fantastic run and that's because we have a great bunch of players-quality players, intelligent players-who work their socks off every day in training to be as good as they are. "We have played nine matches in three weeks but we want to keep this run going," added the former World Cup winner.

Real will be without Gareth Bale as they look to be crowned the world's best team for a fifth time. The Welshman is recovering from ankle surgery, but the Spanish giants have been boosted by the return of German Toni Kroos after a metatarsal fracture.

Ronaldo is expected to take centre stage as he waits to hear if he has won his third Ballon d'Or, set to be announced later yesterday-early Tuesday morning Tokyo time.

"We will stay up tonight to see if he's won," said Brazilian defender Marcelo. "We're all nervous to see if Cristiano wins. He's a great player and he deserves to win. I have so much respect for him."

Real president Florentino Perez has demanded the team complete a Champions League, UEFA Super Cup and Club World Cup treble.

But Marcelo shrugged: "This is Real Madrid-we're obliged to win. We haven't had much time to sleep and it's a crazy schedule but it would be a dream for the players to win this title." —AFP



BUENOS AIRES: Boca Juniors' goalkeeper Axel Werner (L) fails to stop River Plate's forward Lucas Alario's (not in frame) ball during their Argentina First Division football match at El Monumental stadium, in Buenos Aires, on Sunday. —AFP

TEVEZ DOUBLE LEADS BOCA TO DERBY WIN OVER RIVER PLATE

BUENOS AIRES: Carlos Tevez scored twice as Boca Juniors defeated bitter rivals River Plate 4-2 to win the Clasico of Argentine football on Sunday in a tense encounter at the Estadio Monumental.

Boca took the lead after 13 minutes through striker Walter Bou from a fine pass by Tevez. But 20 minutes later, River Plate were level thanks to a goal from Sebastian Driuzzi. Lucas Alario gave River the

lead just before the break while Tevez brought Boca level at 2-2 on the hour mark. Tevez hit his team's third after 81 minutes with Ricardo Centurion slotting in the fourth in injury time. —AFP



Alghanim Auto opens 2016-17 season

CITY GROUP INVESTS KD 2.5M TO RENEW FLEET WITH MODERN BUSES



NEW YORK: An electronic screen shows the Nasdaq Composite at the Nasdaq MarketSite yesterday in New York. — AP

DOW, S&P HIT RECORD HIGHS; OIL PRICES SURGE

INVESTORS TO KEEP CLOSE WATCH ON FED MEETING

NEW YORK: The S&P 500 and the Dow hit fresh record highs yesterday, fueled by energy shares, while the Nasdaq was lower, a day ahead of the US Fed's two-day meeting.

Oil prices rose as much as 6.5 percent to an 18-month high after OPEC and some of its rivals reached their first deal since 2001 to jointly reduce output to try to tackle global oversupply and boost prices. The S&P energy index was the top gainer with a 2.4 percent rise. Oil majors Exxon and Chevron were up about 2.3 percent and provided the biggest boost to the Dow.

President-elect Donald Trump's expected agenda of economic stimulus and reduced taxes and regulations has fueled a market rally, with the benchmark S&P 500 rising 5.6 percent since Nov 8 to Friday's close. The Dow has closed at record highs 14 times since the election. "This market has gone up without taking a breather and will enter a cautious trading day as it awaits the Fed," said Peter Cardillo, chief market economist at First Standard Financial in New York.

Investors are keeping a close watch on the

US Federal Reserve's last meeting for the year, beginning today, with a statement from Fed Chair Janet Yellen on Wednesday. The central bank is widely expected to raise benchmark interest rates, with market participants looking for clues about the pace of future hikes.

At 9:41 a.m. ET (1441 GMT) the Dow Jones industrial average was up 29.82 points, or 0.15 percent, at 19,786.67, the S&P 500 was down 0.68 points, or 0.030095 percent, at 2,258.85 and the Nasdaq Composite was down 23.66 points, or 0.43 percent, at 5,420.84.

Seven of the 11 major S&P sectors were lower, with the industrials index's 0.64 percent fall leading the decliners. Viacom fell 6.4 percent to \$36.14 after Sumner Redstone's privately held National Amusements withdrew its merger proposal for CBS and Viacom, according to a source familiar with the situation. CBS was down 3.5 percent.

Lockheed Martin was down 4.2 percent at \$248.75 after Donald Trump tweeted that the company's F-35 program and costs were "out of control". Other defense stocks, such as General Dynamics, Raytheon, and Northrop

Grumman, were down between 3.4-6.1 percent. Ophthotech slumped 84.3 percent to \$6.06 after Novartis said a combination of its eye drug along with the company's did not produce better outcomes.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers on the NYSE by 1,550 to 1,133. On the Nasdaq, 1,495 issues fell and 916 advanced. The S&P 500 index showed 46 new 52-week highs and no new lows, while the Nasdaq recorded 87 new highs and seven new lows.

Output deal

World oil prices surged yesterday after non-OPEC producers struck a deal to cut output, while Europe's main stock markets were subdued before a key Fed meeting due this week. Indices in London, Frankfurt and Paris pulled back after soaring last week when the European Central Bank decided to extend its massive quantitative easing (QE) stimulus to December 2017.

At the same time, markets are on tenterhooks before a widely-expected interest rate hike from the US Federal Reserve tomorrow.

"Markets are taking a breather after a strong run... and Fed risk this week," City Index research director Kathleen Brooks told AFP. "Oil is in focus, so too is central bank risk, but overall we think it is low (trading) volumes as markets wait for the Federal Reserve before piling back in-or not, depending on the outcome."

Oil prices surged over two dollars per barrel after 11 non-OPEC countries agreed to huge cuts in crude production, while OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia also signalled a bigger reduction in output than previously agreed. The non-OPEC oil producing nations, led by Russia, said they would pump more than half a million fewer barrels a day from next month in an effort to address a supply glut that has scythed prices over the past two years.

That gave a shot in the arm to the energy sector because rising oil prices translate into higher revenues and profits. "It is a little surprising that investor sentiment is not more upbeat... given the latest leg higher in the oil price," noted XTB analyst David Cheetham. "The main scheduled event that will be driving markets this week is the Fed meeting." There seems little room for

doubt that the US central bank will raise the benchmark interest rate in the coming week for only the second time in a decade.

Italy lift

Elsewhere, there is lingering uncertainty over the future of Italy's troubled Monte dei Paschi di Siena (BMPs) bank. "Equities (generally) have made a poor start to the week despite a non-OPEC oil production cut pledge that bolsters OPEC's own key promise, designed to maintain an oil price recovery," said Mike van Dulken, head of research at trading firm Accendo Markets. "A lack of Monte dei Paschi rescue over the weekend has dampened sentiment somewhat, leaving the bank and troubled peers as an outstanding risk issue." Rome's main stocks index however pushed higher after Paolo Gentiloni was Sunday named Italy's new prime minister following Matteo Renzi's recent resignation. BMPs meanwhile said it would seek a private sector-led rescue, as it attempts to avoid the need for a government bailout. The plight of the world's oldest bank has raised broader concerns over the eurozone's third-largest economy. — Agencies

CHINA LAUNCHES FRESH WTO COMPLAINT AGAINST US, EU

BEIJING: China said yesterday it had launched a complaint at the World Trade Organization over the approach used by the United States and European Union to calculate anti-dumping measures against Chinese exports. When China joined the WTO in 2001, its accession terms allowed other WTO members to treat it as a non-market economy when assessing dumping duties for 15 years.

That gave trade partners the advantage of using a third country's prices to gauge whether China was selling its goods below market value. But part of that clause expired on Dec 11, which China says means trading partners must drop their use of such surrogate pricing. US Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker said in November the time was "not ripe" for the United States to change the way it evaluates whether China has achieved market economy status, and there was no international trade rules requiring changes in the way US anti-dumping duties are calculated. China's Commerce Ministry said in a statement on its website that 15 years on, all WTO members had an obligation to stop using the surrogate country approach.

"Regretfully, the United States and European Union have yet to fulfill this obligation," the ministry said.

The European Commission said it had received the request for consultations, the first step in a WTO dispute. "We regret that

China is launching this dispute now despite the fact that the Commission has already made a proposal to amend the legislation in question," a Commission spokesman said.

The Commission proposed last month a new way of treating China, but its plans await approval from the EU's 28 members and the European Parliament. Last week it angered Beijing by launching an anti-dumping case under the old system - using the prices of a third country - just days before the Dec. 11 deadline.

Separately, a Chinese ministry official said in another statement a US investigation into what it regards as Chinese dumping of plywood products launched last week amounted to abuse of emergency trade relief measures. The United States and European Union are some of the biggest levellers of anti-dumping measures under this process against China. The measures have seriously affected exports and employment for Chinese firms, the ministry added.

"China reserves the right under WTO rules to resolutely defend its legal rights," it added, without elaborating.

The United States has repeatedly argued that China's market reforms have fallen short of expectations, especially in aluminium and steel, where state intervention has led to overcapacity, threatening industries around the world. — Reuters

IMF CHIEF LAGARDE ON TRIAL IN FRANCE OVER TYCOON CASE

PARIS: IMF chief Christine Lagarde went on trial in France yesterday over a massive state payout to a flamboyant tycoon when she was finance minister, in a case that risks tarnishing her stellar career. Lagarde denies the charges of negligence, arguing she was acting "in the state's interest" in approving the payment to Bernard Tapie, the former owner of sportswear giant Adidas.

If found guilty, the 60-year-old could receive a maximum one-year prison sentence and a 15,000 euro (\$15,900) fine. She arrived at the Court of Justice of the Republic, a tribunal that hears cases against ministers, wearing a dark suit and a patterned scarf. Her defense team is expected to push for an adjournment.

"I don't plan to keep quiet," Lagarde told the presiding judge, when advised of her right to remain silent. In a documentary aired on French television on Sunday, Lagarde said she was "confident and determined." "I tried to do my work the best I could within the limits of what I knew," she told France 2. "Negligence is an unintentional offence. I think all of us have been a little bit negligent at some stage of our lives," she added.

Whatever the outcome, the case risks damaging the image of the former corporate lawyer who progressed through the finance ministry to become one of the world's most powerful women. It also threatens the credibility of the International Monetary Fund, as Lagarde is the third IMF chief to face trial. The IMF has given its



PARIS: International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde confers with her lawyers, Patrick Maisonneuve (left) and Bernard Grelon (2nd left) prior to her trial at the special Paris court, France yesterday. — AP

full backing to its managing director, who began her second term in the post in July.

Lagarde's lawyer Patrick Maisonneuve yesterday dismissed speculation about what the IMF would do if she lost the case. "She will be cleared so the question hasn't even arisen," he told Europe 1 radio.

Tapie's deals

The accusations stem from Lagarde's handling of a dispute with Tapie, a former government minister who claimed a state bank had defrauded him in its sale of Adidas. Tapie, now 73, owned the firm between 1990 and 1993 but lost control of it when he went bankrupt.

He sold it to state-owned bank Credit Lyonnais for 315.5 million euros in February 1993. The bank sold it again the year after at 701 million euros, leading Tapie to claim he had been cheated. Lagarde, upon becoming finance minister in 2007 under then president Nicolas Sarkozy, ordered that Tapie's long-running battle with the state be resolved by arbitration. The decision was hugely costly, with Tapie initially walking away with a staggering 404 million euros in compensation in 2008. After a lengthy court battle, he was ordered to repay the money.

Investigators suspect the arbitration process was rigged in favour of Tapie, who had supported Sarkozy in his 2007 election campaign. One of the arbitrators also had links to the businessman. Lagarde, who served as finance minister until 2011, has always insisted she acted in France's best interest. Although she is not accused of personally profiting from the payment, she has been criticised for failing to challenge the award.

The prosecution says that through her actions, Lagarde "deprived the state of a chance to avoid this money being misused". — AFP

ABU DHABI SIGNS DEAL ON FUTURISTIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM

DUBAI: Abu Dhabi has signed the United Arab Emirates' second hyperloop feasibility study to build a futuristic high-speed transport system connecting the cities of Abu Dhabi and Al-Ain.

Abu Dhabi's Department of Municipal Affairs and Transport (DMAT) and US-based Hyperloop Transportation Technologies (HyperloopTT) announced the agreement, which follows a similar study signed in Dubai last month. Dubai's Road & Transport Authority (RTA) and US-based Hyperloop One, a rival to HyperloopTT, agreed on Nov 8 to explore routes between Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

A hyperloop uses magnets to levitate pods inside an airless tube, creating conditions in which the pods can shuttle people and freight at speeds of up to 750 miles (1,200 kms) per hour.

The unproven technology is proposed as a replacement to existing rail

infrastructure. The UAE has put on hold plans to build its own national rail network after neighboring Gulf countries fell behind on their rail projects that were supposed to link the six states from Kuwait to Oman.

A hyperloop route could connect Abu Dhabi and Al-Ain in eight to 12 minutes, according to a joint DMAT and HyperloopTT statement. This compares to the two hours it takes by car today.

The statement said it was "the only initiative of its kind that has the support of the government of Abu Dhabi." Hyperloop One is also exploring a route in Dubai connecting the emirate's Expo site for when it hosts the world's fair in 2020. Creative Director Colin Rhys was quoted as saying by local newspaper Gulf News yesterday. However, Rhys later told Reuters he was quoted out of context and that Hyperloop One was not considering an Expo route. —Reuters



DUBAI: Dubai is set to be home to the world's first Hyperloop One transport link, which is expected to begin operations for passengers in 2020. — Hyperloop One.



COLOMBIA: A woman shows wads of 100-bolivar-bills to change in La Parada, municipality of Villa del Rosario, Norte de Santander department, Colombia, in the border with Venezuela yesterday. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Sunday signed an emergency decree ordering the country's largest banknote, the 100 bolivar bill, taken out of circulation to thwart "mafias" he accused of hoarding cash in Colombia. —AFP

TURKEY REJIGS GDP ESTIMATES AS OUTPUT FALLS 1.8% IN 2016

CHANGE UNLIKELY TO STEM FRUSTRATION ABOUT ECONOMY

ISTANBUL/ANKARA: On paper at least, 79 million Turks got a near 20 percent boost to their average standard of living yesterday when the government rejigged GDP calculations, a change unlikely to stem frustration about an economy now in contraction.

Turkey, which restated its gross domestic product (GDP) data to meet the standards of the European Union it aims to join, also said third quarter output fell a bigger-than-expected 1.8 percent year-on-year, the first decline in seven years. Once one of the world's most promising emerging markets, Turkey has been hit by security fears after a series of bombings, the most recent on Saturday, and a failed coup in July. Authorities have since detained, jailed or dismissed more than 100,000 people in a crackdown that has worried investors and sent the lira currency to a record low.

"These revisions make some of Turkey's macroeconomic variables look healthier," William Jackson of Capital Economics in London said in e-mailed comments. "But these don't change anything on the ground: The lira has been one of

the most vulnerable (emerging market) currencies to shocks and the economy still has a productivity problem."

The Turkish Statistical Institute said that 2015 GDP stood at \$861 billion, from \$720 billion before the revision - adding \$141 billion to the size of the economy virtually overnight. Per capita income, often used as a proxy for standard of living, was estimated at \$11,014 from \$9,257 previously.

That boost in paper wealth may mean little to Turks who have seen their buying power eroded by the lira's double-digit decline this year. However, it may come in handy for President Tayyip Erdogan as he campaigns for an executive presidential system, which is expected to go to a referendum by May.

Economic credentials

Erdogan and the AK Party he founded have long relied on their successful stewardship of the economy - including years of rapid growth, new jobs and vast spending on airports, hospitals and housing - to win voter loyalty. While that

reputation could be threatened by recent economic weakness, the rejigged GDP numbers are undeniably positive for the AK Party. Analysts at BBVA noting that growth over the previous 17 years now averages 5.1 percent, rather than 3.9 percent.

The 1.8 percent decline in third-quarter GDP far outstripped the 0.5 percent drop forecast in a Reuters poll, which did not take into account the revisions. The economy weakened as a double-digit jump in public consumption failed to offset a decline in private domestic demand, the data showed.

Still, analysts remain worried about the weakness in the lira, as Erdogan's drive for lower borrowing costs gives the central bank little room to hike. "The lira has been in freefall since the end of September, the central bank's rate hikes have proved woefully ineffective and, perhaps most worryingly, the economy is now contracting sharply, fuelling populist and nationalist sentiment and making it very difficult for the central bank to raise rates," said Nicholas Spiro, of Laussa Advisory in London. —Reuters

ENI TO SELL 30% STAKE IN EGYPTIAN FIELD TO ROSNEFT

MILAN: Italian energy company Eni has agreed to sell a 30 percent stake in a giant Egyptian offshore gas field to Russia's Rosneft for \$1.575 billion, pressing ahead with asset sales to fund investment amid weak oil prices. Eni, which currently owns 90 percent of the Shorouk concession containing the giant Zohr gas field, said Rosneft would pay \$1.125 billion cash for the stake and would reimburse investments already carried out by Eni for around \$450 million.

Rosneft also has an option to buy a further 5 percent stake. Selling down stakes in oil and gas fields it operates is part of Eni's so-called "dual exploration" strategy to raise cash to fund future development and support dividends. In the last four years, Eni has raised about \$6.3 billion in this way.

Eni, whose cash flow fell 19 percent in the third quarter due to low oil prices, has pledged to sell 5 billion euros of assets in the next two years. Zohr, discovered by Eni in 2015, is the biggest gas field ever found in the Mediterranean with an estimated 850 billion cubic metres of gas in place.

The approval process for development of the field was completed in February and first gas is expected by the end of 2017. In November, Eni Chief Executive Claudio Descalzi said he wanted to cut the firm's stake in Zohr to 50 percent. Back then the state-controlled major sold a 10 percent stake in Zohr to BP for a total of \$525 million, granting BP an option to buy another 5 percent before the end of the year. BP holds 19.75 percent of Rosneft and the two companies have traditionally had close relations.

Eni, which has partnerships with BP in Egypt, signed a joint venture agreement with Rosneft back in 2012 to develop offshore projects in Russia in areas like the Barents and Black Seas. The Russian energy conglomerate, led by Igor Sechin, said earlier this month its board planned to discuss buying a stake of up to 35 percent in Shorouk.

The deal marks another step in Rosneft's global expansion drive after it bought into India's Essar Group in October. —Reuters

AIRBUS TEAM IN IRAN TO FINALIZE PLANE DEAL

TEHRAN: Airbus delegates have arrived in Tehran for talks aimed at finalising a deal to sell around 100 planes, an Iranian official said Monday.

The representatives of the European aerospace giant arrived on Sunday just hours after national carrier Iran Air concluded a \$16.6 billion deal with US firm Boeing to buy 80 planes.

"An Airbus delegation has arrived in Tehran," said Asghar Fakhrieh Kashan, deputy minister for transport.

"We have started negotiations and if there are no problems, we will sign the agreement within a week for the purchase of around 100 planes," he said. Meanwhile, some conservatives in Iran reacted angrily to news of the deal with Boeing, which comes at a time when law-

makers in Washington have recently voted for renewed sanctions on the country.

Iran says the renewal of sanctions, which President Barack Obama is expected to approve in the coming days, is a breach of the nuclear deal it signed with world powers last year. "60 trillion tomans: Iran's gift to the US for violating the JCPOA (nuclear deal)", read yesterday's headline on the headline Javan newspaper. But Iran has been desperate to access new planes and parts after decades of economic isolation has left it with one of the world's worst aviation safety records.

Both Boeing and Airbus, which manufactures some of its parts in the United States, were granted special permission from the US Treasury in September to go ahead with deals in Iran. —AFP

BAHRAIN LNG COMPLETES \$741M SYNDICATED LOAN

DUBAI: Bahrain LNG, the developer of the Gulf state's receiving and regasification terminal for liquefied natural gas (LNG), has closed a \$741 million syndicated loan for the platform's construction, according to a company statement yesterday.

"The project is being developed to supplement local gas production in Bahrain and ensure capacity to meet peak seasonal gas demand and industrial growth," the statement said.

While the Gulf region is known for its large oil reserves, countries including Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have struggled to keep up with demand for gas and have been searching for a way to address the issue, which has crimped economic development. Standard Chartered, Arab Petroleum Investments Corp (APICORP), and Korea Development Bank were the institutions leading the limited recourse project financing, which was provided by nine international and regional lenders. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.697
Indian Rupees	4.497
Pakistani Rupees	2.919
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.065
Nepali Rupees	2.812
Singapore Dollar	216.870
Hongkong Dollar	39.459
Bangladesh Taka	3.846
Philippine Peso	6.169
Thai Baht	8.626

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.654
Qatari Riyal	84.101
Qatari Riyal	795.218
Bahraini Dinar	813.070
UAE Dirham	83.356

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	23.900
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.399
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.229
Tunisian Dinar	133.920
Jordanian Dinar	431.200
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.040
Syrian Lira	2.182
Morocco Dirham	30.909

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	306.000
Euro	324.670

Sterling Pound	390.150
Canadian dollar	230.510
Turkish lira	88.230
Swiss Franc	302.970
Australian Dollar	229.350
US Dollar Buying	304.800

GOLD

20 Gram	241.07
10 Gram	123.46
5 Gram	62.57

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	305.900
Canadian Dolla	232.870
Sterling Pound	386.170
Euro	324.785
Swiss Frank	302.350
Bahrain Dinar	810.915
UAE Dirhams	83.680
Qatari Riyals	84.900
Saudi Riyals	82.500
Jordanian Dinar	432.620
Egyptian Pound	17.072
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.062
Indian Rupees	4.539
Pakistani Rupees	2.918
Bangladesh Taka	3.879
Philippines Pessso	6.145
Cyprus pound	167.990
Japanese Yen	3.650
Syrian Pound	2.435

Nepalese Rupees	3.825
Malaysian Ringgit	70.120
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.775
Thai Bhat	9.580
Turkish Lira	89.310

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.381639	0.391639
Czech Korune	0.003927	0.015927
Danish Krone	0.039332	0.044332
Euro	0.317427	0.326427
Norwegian Krone	0.032031	0.037231
Romanian Leu	0.072173	0.072173
Slovakia	0.009174	0.019174
Swedish Krona	0.028990	0.033990
Swiss Franc	0.294522	0.305522
Turkish Lira	0.083994	0.094294
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.219571	0.231571
New Zealand Dollar	0.211038	0.220538
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.224135	0.233135
Georgina Lari	0.138207	0.138207
US Dollars	0.301900	0.306600
US Dollars Mint	0.302400	0.306600
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003377	0.003961
Chinese Yuan	0.042940	0.046440

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037368	0.040118
Indian Rupee	0.000096	0.004607
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002608	0.002788
Kenyan Shilling	0.002996	0.002996
Korean Won	0.000250	0.000265
Malaysian Ringgit	0.064916	0.070916
Nepalese Rupee	0.002840	0.003010
Pakistan Rupee	0.002670	0.002960
Philippine Peso	0.006074	0.006374
Sierra Leone	0.000052	0.000058
Singapore Dollar	0.209050	0.219050
South African Rand	0.015998	0.024498
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001642	0.002222
Taiwan	0.009428	0.009608
Thai Baht	0.008255	0.008805

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.805100	0.813600
Egyptian Pound	0.015640	0.024893
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000181	0.000241
Jordanian Dinar	0.426542	0.435542
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020137	0.044137
Nigerian Naira	0.000369	0.001004
Omani Riyal	0.788384	0.794064
Qatar Riyal	0.083239	0.084689
Saudi Riyal	0.080513	0.081813
Syrian Pound	0.001298	0.001518
Tunisian Dinar	0.129939	0.137939
Turkish Lira	0.083994	0.094294
UAE Dirhams	0.081888	0.083588
Yemeni Riyal	0.001013	0.001093

KFH LAUNCHES 2FA CAMPAIGN FOR E-PAYMENT SERVICE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched an awareness campaign for clients in order to educate them on the Two Factor Authentication 2FA service for electronic payment. 2FA is an extra layer of security by having the card owner receive a dynamic One Time Password (OTP) on their registered mobile number as an additional check when processing an online payment transaction through the payment gateway Kpay.

The service has been launched and approved by K-Net to ensure further security on all ATM/Knet transactions. The 2FA campaign includes messages and illustration visuals on KFH channels on social media for KFH customers. 2FA process is effective January 1st where customers are requested to enter a passcode of 6 digits. The passcode will be sent upon conducting any no more than KD 25 purchasing transaction on the internet to customers' phone numbers that is approved by KFH. The campaign targets shying away customers from any rejection or delay for

their transactions when shopping online ahead of implementing this service at the beginning of next year.

KFH urges customers to periodically update their data and information, mainly the mobile phone number for the sake of avoiding any disruptions or obstacles of the electronic payments. It is worth noting that only one phone number is approved to receive the passcode in a period of 4 minutes.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 446 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan, and Dubai.



AUB NAMED 'BANK OF THE YEAR MIDDLE EAST 2016' BY BANKER

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) has been recognized as "Bank of The Year - Middle East 2016" by The Banker, the world's longest running international banking magazine and member of the Financial Times Group. This represents the second time that AUB has received this prestigious award.

The announcement was made at the official 'Bank of The Year Awards 2016' gala event, held recently in London and attended by senior bankers from around the world. Aimed at rewarding and promoting industry wide excellence in the global banking community, the award's judging panel noted that AUB has "made the most progress over the past 12 months; not only in terms of the bank's strong financials, but also in the wide range of initiatives which the bank undertook during this period".



The Banker listed the launch of a new wholly owned AUB subsidiary bank in Dubai International Financial Centre, increasing ownership of its insurance joint venture to 100 percent, increasing the paid-up capital in AUB's Egyptian subsidiary and the full conversion of its Libyan affiliate to a Sharia-compliant bank despite a very challenging and operating environment as the key factors in winning the regional award. The Banker went on to say that this regional title "is testament to the strong management, sound business model

and strategy of AUB". Accepting the award on behalf of AUB, Group CEO & Managing Director Adel El-Labban said: "We are honored to receive this prestigious award from a leading authority such as The Banker for the second time. This repeat award is a fitting tribute to the continued loyalty and support of our shareholders and customers, to the dedication and professionalism of our team across the AUB Group and to our commitment to excellence in all our efforts to achieve our well defined business strategy and vision."

El-Labban added: "AUB is very proud to be selected by the industry as a leader in regionalization initiatives and for the recognition given to its various ongoing organic and inorganic business development initiatives across its home markets in the GCC and MENA countries."



FM: GREECE SEEKS 'HONEST COMPROMISE' IN STANDOFF

ATHENS: Greece wants to end a standoff with its lenders through 'honest compromise', its finance minister said, indicating a willingness to give ground on reform, but he warned that inflexibility on their part could inflame anti-establishment sentiment in Europe.

Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos said he anticipated a deal could allow the country's inclusion in an asset-buying program of the ECB by the spring of 2017, allowing Greece to then test markets with a debt issue later in the year. Greece, which is on its third international bailout since crisis first hit the indebted nation in 2010, is again at odds with lenders on fiscal targets and the scope of reforms required to conclude its latest review on bailout progress.

European Union and International Monetary Fund mission chiefs left Athens last month without a deal on key bailout review issues - including labour and energy reforms. Talks are being held over teleconferences until there is enough progress for direct talks to resume, probably this week.

"The Greek expression is 'put water into wine'. It's not an expression I like, because I wouldn't like my wine watered down, but you know what I mean, to reach an honest compromise," Tsakalotos said in an interview. Delays in signing off on the bailout review, he argued, could temper economic recovery, an early return to markets, and further deepen a view - already entrenched with the result of referendums in Britain and Italy - that Europe was out of sync with its citizens and was not solving problems.

"I can't see the logic of returning to uncertainty and delay," he said adding Greece was meeting its bailout commitments and was 'constructively engaging' with creditors. "We don't go to the institutions with 'this is our stance, take it or leave it' we try to respond to their criticisms, when they have objections to the nature of our structural measures, and we are willing to discuss all those issues in good faith."

FISCAL WRANGLE

Eurozone ministers want Greece to maintain a primary fiscal surplus of 3.5 percent beyond 2018, but have yet to specify how long it should keep this up and have also left open the question of longer-term debt relief. Last week, they offered relief on short-term debt, which will eventually top about 21 points off the country's massive debt mountain now standing at just under 180 percent of GDP, but did not outline any medium- or long-term debt relief measures.

Both are important factors for the IMF in weighing up whether it will join the present bailout program worth up to 86 billion euros. Germany, Europe's paymas-

ter, wants the IMF on board to add credibility to the program. A 3.5 percent surplus retained post-2018, when the bailout program ends, implies a heavier tax burden and more pension cuts for Greeks, who have been squeezed due to a deep recession.

It's an option ruled out by Greece's leftist-led government which argues the austerity burden is already crippling for a nation where one in four are unemployed, and many households rely solely on elderly relatives' pensions to make ends meet. "No government would be able to legislate more measures to be implemented in 2019 and further. There is no economic sense in that and there is no political possibility of them being carried out," Tsakalotos said. The IMF has said that with the current set of reforms agreed with Athens, Greece will only reach a primary surplus of 1.5 percent of GDP in 2018 and therefore the euro zone should grant it more relief or Athens should implement deeper cost-cutting.

With Greece's euro zone partners insisting on a 3.5 percent surplus after 2018, Athens has offered a half-way compromise of attaining a 2.5 percent surplus. Tsakalotos said his proposal remained on the table, though he said there had been no in-depth discussion of it at the Eurogroup meeting.

"The IMF - I'm very disappointed with it - the IMF has said on countless occasions that it thinks that in the post-program period we should not have very high surpluses, that Greece cannot have more austerity. "But in all honesty, I didn't see them giving any fight with the Europeans on reducing the fiscal surplus," Tsakalotos said.

The pressure, he said, seemed to be applied only on Greece, and not those who were stalling on a better deal on debt, an indirect reference to Germany's reticence. "What we want is an IMF that fights on two fronts," he said. "Moving from 3.5 percent to 2.5 percent had 'hardly any cost to the man outside Lidl in Hamburg,'" Tsakalotos said, referring to the German discount store chain. It would, however, impact sentiment, he said. "Because it will be a more sustainable program, people will believe that there is light at the end of the tunnel and I think that's very important for both Germany and Greece."

DAMPENING SENTIMENT

Tsakalotos said he anticipated the present review could be wrapped up by January, adding the ECB may need further clarity on how Greece's debt would be handled for the longer term in weighing up its inclusion in the asset-buying QE program. The ECB has extended the program until the end of 2017. —Reuters

ZAIN PARTICIPATES IN PR AND MARKETING DISCUSSION PANEL

SHEIKH SALMAN PATRONIZES ADVERTISING CREATIVITY AWARD 2016 EVENT

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, participated in a public relations and marketing discussion panel as part of the Advertising Creativity Award 2016 organized by the Arab Media Forum. The event came under the patronage of Sheikh Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs.

Najla Al-Eisa, Zain Kuwait's Marketing Communications Department Manager, represented Zain during the event that was held in Al Raya ballroom, alongside a number of prominent experts, academics, and specialists in the fields of public relations, marketing, and adver-

tising. During her participation in the discussion panel, Al-Eisa shared Zain's leading experience in public relations, marketing communications, advertising, and branding.

Al-Eisa also discussed Zain's strategies and techniques in communicating with the public via digital marketing channels, as well as provide a thorough explanation of the essentials of commercial advertising and branding identity.

Zain's participation came as part of its distinguished advertising and media involvement, and it further showcases the company's role as a leading private sector company launching several advertising and marketing campaigns all year

round. Zain will continue supporting this very important field which carries significant and informative messaging to the public at large and the communications world as a whole, whether through traditional or modern media tools.

The Advertising Creativity Award 2016 is organized for the fourth year by the Arab Media Forum, which has proven itself to be one of the region's most prominent events that attend to Arab Media. The event brings together many ministers, media executives, journalists, academics, authors, actors, businessmen, and social figures from all around the Arab world.



ENERGY: OPEC RESETS THE BAR

BOFA MERRILL LYNCH GLOBAL RESEARCH

The big news is that, for the first time in eight years, OPEC agreed on November 30 to cut its production. Key non-OPEC nations (led by top-producer Russia) are also parties to the agreement, a first since 1998. OPEC member nations will curb their output by 1.2 million barrels per day, others by 600,000 barrels per day. Country allocations and an independent production monitoring committee are also part of the deal, so we expect firmer compliance than for prior agreements.

Holding firm

Based on the OPEC announcement, the global oil market should enter into a deficit as soon as Q1 2017. As such, we are keeping our 2017 forecasts for Brent and WTI

crude oil unchanged at \$61 and \$59 per barrel, respectively.

Potential downsides

While we expect annual global oil demand to grow (by an average of 1.2 million barrels a day), we still see downside risks to our forecast. Demand could decline if US interest rates move higher and if the Chinese yuan depreciates in a disorderly fashion. Also, some OPEC nations or Russia could break free of the agreement, or production could rise faster than expected in nations outside of this unlikely alliance.

Rising US output

Our price expectation embeds a sequential 500,000 barrels per day increase in US crude production, raising output to 9.2 million barrels

a day by the end of 2017.

Natural gas forecast

We see US natural gas balances tightening between now and mid-2018 on falling production and strong structural demand growth. Our 2017 price forecast is \$3.50 per million British Thermal Units (BTUs), about 15 cents above the current forward curve. In the longer term, the Trump presidency presents some downside risks prices as it could speed up pipeline infrastructure, allowing for a faster supply expansion.

LNG outlook

Spot LNG prices have decoupled from Brent and may push lower even if oil prices continue to recover, as a wave of supply from US and Australia is underway. Asian buyers

have bought too much LNG on long-term contracts and will be selling in the face of this largest supply wave ever. EU and Asian spot LNG prices may eventually find support on coal-to-gas switching levels.

Coal bear

Coal has been one of the best performing commodities in 2016 as China coal production has fallen steeply on mandated reduction in mining days from the government. The thermal coal price rally was exacerbated by a number of other factors, including tightness in the met coal market. Producers are now restarting production in response to prices, setting the stage for another leg down in prices next year.

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QATAR'S AL-FAISAL HOLDING LOOKS AT LOAN OPTIONS

DUBAI: Al-Faisal Holding, a Qatari conglomerate, is considering alternative debt funding options after the idea of a US dollar sukuk issue received a lukewarm response from the market, sources familiar with the situation said.

The conglomerate had approached banks earlier this year to discuss arranging a potential sukuk issue of around \$200 million. The issue, which would have been the company's first international debt raising exercise, may now be replaced by a syndicated loan, the sources said.

A spokesman for the company said in an emailed response to Reuters that Al Faisal does not have any short-term plans to issue sukuk. Al-Faisal is always open to discussions about how best to fund its operations, the spokesman said. —Reuters

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GLOBAL STOCKS SLIDE AHEAD OF FED DECISION

BEIJING: Global stocks fell yesterday ahead of a Federal Reserve meeting that is expected to raise US interest rates, while oil prices jumped after several non-OPEC countries agreed to join the cartel in cutting output.

KEEPING SCORE: Britain's FTSE 100 was down 0.3 percent to 6,933 and Germany's DAX shed 0.2 percent to 11,186. France's CAC 40 was flat at 4,763. On Wall Street, the future for the Dow Jones industrial average was up 0.1 percent and that for the Standard & Poor's index was unchanged.

FED WATCH: Investors expect Fed governors, meeting Thursday, to raise rates for only the second time in a decade. The Fed has kept rates

close to zero since the 2008 global crisis but its leaders have indicated the US economy has strengthened enough to start gradually returning to normal policy. The election of Donald Trump, who has promised tax cuts and higher spending, has raised questions about whether the Fed will delay future moves to see how that plays out. Investors are expected to look at Fed comments on the economic outlook for clues to its next move on rates.

"A quarter-point rate hike looks almost certain," Jim O'Sullivan of High Frequency Economics said in a report. "The tone of the statement will probably be a more upbeat than last time, but we don't expect projections to

change significantly." China stocks suffered their biggest drop since June to hit a one-month low yesterday, as fresh regulatory curbs were put on trading by insurance companies and worries about incoming US president Donald Trump's China policy rattled investors. The downbeat mood spread to Hong Kong, where investors were already cautious ahead of a likely US interest rate increase this week.

In mainland markets, analysts said investors were spooked by an announcement by the country's insurance regulator late on Friday that it had suspended Evergrande Life, the insurance arm of China Evergrande Group, from conducting stock market investments due to its specula-

tive, frequent, high-volume trading.

The Shanghai Composite Index tumbled 2.5 percent to 3,152.97 points and Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.5 percent to 22,410.10. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 shed 0.9 percent to 19,155.03 and India's Sensex lost 0.5 percent to 26,606.01. Seoul's Kospi gained 0.1 percent to 2,027.24 while Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 was unchanged.

The opposition-controlled legislature passed an impeachment motion Friday against President Park Geun-hye following accusations by prosecutors that she colluded with a longtime friend to extort money and favors from South Korea's biggest companies and gave that confidante influence over government decisions. Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn is to lead a caretaker government while a court weighs Park's fate. Park has apologized for putting trust in her friend, Choi Soon-sil, but has denied any legal wrongdoing. The dollar rose to 115.77 yen from Friday's 115.29 yen. The euro also gained, to \$1.0600 from \$1.0562.

The blue-chip CSI300 index fell 2.4 percent to 3,408.58 points, and the Shanghai Composite Index lost 2.5 percent to 3,152.47 points. "The market dropped because several insurers are not allowed to buy stocks. This has changed investors' expectations," said David Dai, Shanghai-based investor director at Nanhai Fund Management Co.

Also late on Friday, Foresea Life Insurance, a unit of Baoneng, said that it would not further boost its stake in Gree Electric Appliances Inc of Zhuhai. Gree

shares, which had surged by Forsea Life's aggressive stake-building, plummeted more than 6 percent yesterday. Other companies favoured by insurers, including China Vanke Co Ltd, China State Construction Engineering Corp Ltd and Poly Real Estate Group Co Ltd, also saw their shares tumble.

One-China policy

US President-elect Donald Trump's rhetoric calling into question the United States' long-standing position that Taiwan is part of "one China" and broader questions about his protectionist agenda were seen by some analysts as dragging down shares in Hong Kong. The benchmark Hang Seng index dropped 1.4 percent, to 22,433.02 points, while the Hong Kong China Enterprises Index lost 1.7 percent, to 9,699.31 points. "You can sense the nervousness...the big caps got hit quite early today, and I think it's related to Donald Trump," said Alex Wong, Hong Kong-based director at Ample Finance Group. Wong added that there was concern about retaliatory action from China, a major holder of US government debt.

"The market is awaiting new policies from Trump after he takes office, which makes investors more cautious. It's not easy to measure the influence now. I think the main reason for today was the slump in mainland peers," he said. Nearly all sectors lost ground in both China and Hong Kong. Zhang Qi, analyst at Haitong Securities in Shanghai, said year-end profit-taking was also a factor in the mainland markets. —Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Monday 12 December 2016

Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low
Price Index	▲ 25.21	5,636.99	5,611.78	5,644.85	5,611.18
Weighted Index	▲ 1.73	378.46	376.73	380.43	376.72
KSX 15	▲ 6.49	891.06	884.59	896.63	883.91

Volume	247,695,169
Value (KWD)	25,743,016
Number of Trades	4,569

Trades

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	75	70	18061	1,265	4	70	▼ -5.0
IKARUS	38.5	37.5	181,250	6,878	11	38.5	▲ 1.5
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	— 0.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	810	— 0.0
ENERGYH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	42.5	— 0.0
GPI	40.0	39.5	7,340,110	291,791	113	40.0	▲ 0.5
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	— 0.0
Oil & Gas			7,539,421	299,934	128	777.49	▼ -2.42
KFOUC	180	176	50,673	8,940	6	176	▼ -2.0
BPCC	480	475	218,505	104,712	9	480	— 0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	640	— 0.0
ALQURAIN	228	228	29,078	6,630	6	228	— 0.0
Basic Materials			298,256	120,282	21	980.66	▼ -1.75

Trades

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	35.0	34.0	335,1975	115,620	79	34.5	▼ -1.0
KRE	65	61	2,682,592	169,862	62	61	▼ -2.0
URC	99	97	189,287	18,532	11	98	▲ 2.0
NRE	106	102	3,409,280	352,937	73	104	▲ 2.0
SRE	365	365	100,000	36,500	2	365	▲ 5.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	470	— 0.0
AREEC	200	198	455,500	91,069	16	200	▲ 2.0
MASSALEH	39.5	39.5	2,500	99	1	39.5	— 0.0
ARABREC	29.0	28.5	1,249,130	35,602	21	29.0	— 0.0
ERESCO	40.5	39.5	2,527,882	101,113	66	40.5	— 0.0
MABANEE	840	820	500,127	415,105	27	830	— 0.0
INJAZZAT	74	73	77,000	5,656	7	73	▼ -1.0
INVESTORS	25.5	24.0	29,808,531	737,511	254	25.0	▲ 1.0
IRC	28.0	27.5	922,000	25,746	27	28.0	— 0.0
ALTJARIA	81	81	72,000	5,832	3	81	▲ 1.0
SANAM	31.5	30.5	12,550	387	4	31.5	▲ 1.0
AAYANRE	66	65	200,500	13,173	8	65	▼ -2.0
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	69	— 0.0
ALAQARIA	25.5	25.0	410,200	10,340	8	25.0	▲ 0.5
MAZAYA	114	112	237,500	26,605	17	112	— 0.0
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0	— 0.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	89	— 0.0
TLUARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	42.0	— 0.0
TAAMEER	22.5	20.5	945,101	20,629	28	21.0	▲ 1.0
ARKAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	— 0.0
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	162	— 0.0
ABYAAR	22.5	22.0	16,787,554	375,963	92	22.5	▲ 0.5
MUNSHAAT	49.5	48.5	133,915	6,500	11	48.5	▼ -0.5
FIRSTDUBAI	57	56	1,622,324	91,823	54	57	▲ 2.0
KBT	42.5	41.5	3,811,252	159,233	98	42.0	▲ 0.5
REAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	— 0.0
MENA	21.0	19.5	2,372,279	47,955	31	21.0	▲ 2.0
ALMUDON	36.0	35.5	1,896,178	67,955	43	36.0	▲ 1.0
MARAKEZ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	36.0	— 0.0
REMAL	51	48.5	1,024,475	51,444	42	49.5	— 0.0
AWJ	66	65	252,397	16,416	12	66	— 0.0
Real Estate			75,053,829	2,999,607	1,097	863.01	▲ 5.28

Trades

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	420	— 0.0
REFRI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	325	— 0.0
CABLE	385	380	970,073	369,551	36	385	▲ 5.0
SHIP	170	168	111,347	18,799	11	170	▲ 2.0
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290	— 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	63	— 0.0
ACICO	270	270	71,809	19,388	4	270	— 0.0
GGMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	315	— 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	118	— 0.0
KBMMK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190	— 0.0
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	206	— 0.0
EQUIPMENT	43.0	42.5	576,405	24,702	20	42.5	▼ -0.5
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	— 0.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0
SALBOOKH	58	55	132,480	7,453	7	58	▲ 4.0
AGLTY	650	610	3,099,947	1,954,252	101	640	▲ 20.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	202	— 0.0
CLEANING	43.5	41.5	446,154	19,022	14	43.5	▲ 1.5
KGL	54	52	86,300	4,554	10	54	▲ 2.0
KPCP	172	170	21,125	3,604	3	172	▲ 2.0
HUMANSOFT	2,160	2,100	28,053	60,576	19	2,160	▲ 100.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	212	— 0.0
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0
GFC	30.5	28.5	20,500	585	2	30.5	— 0.0
MAYADEEN	29.5	28.5	10,522,121	304,947	103	29.0	— 0.0
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	620	— 0.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0
UPAC	660	660	237	156	1	660	▼ -20.0
ALAFCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	222	— 0.0
MUBARRAD	59	57	869,290	50,305	21	57	▼ -1.0
LOGISTICS	70	68	677,100	46,709	24	70	▲ 2.0
SCEM	80	80	500	40	1	80	▲ 3.0
GCEM	75	73	40,400	2,989	4	75	▲ 1.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	— 0.0
FCEM	80	80	306,000	24,480	5	80	— 0.0
RKWC	89	89	1,500	134	1	89	▲ 2.0
SPEC	81	81	500	41	1	81	— 0.0
Industrials			17,981,841	2,912,286	388	1288.37	▲ 16.01

KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	— 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64	— 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0
CATTL	236	236	100	24	1	236	▲ 8.0
DANAH	90	90	43,210	3,889	2	90	▼ -1.0
POULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	— 0.0
FOOD	2,620	2,600	19,700	51,414	5	2,620	▲ 3.0
Consumer Goods			63,010	55,327	8	1146.36	▲ 3.10

MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	230	— 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0.0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	435	— 0.0
Health Care			0	0	0	1287.54	— 0.00

KCIN	970	960	2,108	2,029	4	970	▲ 10
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	265	— 0.0
SULTAN	62	58	732,598	43,889	28	60	▼ -1
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	61	— 0.0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0
IFAHR	152	152	100	15	1	152	▼ -2
OUJAFUEL	116	114	144,439	16,721	10	116	▲ 2
MUNTAZAHAT	76	76	91,000	6,916	2	76	— 0.0
JAZEERA	790	760	157,940	121,549	13	780	▲ 10
SOOR	114	114	18,933	2,158	5	114	— 0.0
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	— 0.0
ALRAI	152	148	48,000	7,178	10	150	▲ 2



ALGHANIM AUTO OPENS 2016-17 SEASON WITH FORD MUSTANG OWNERS AND ENTHUSIASTS

AMAZING TURNOUT AT ALGHANIM AUTO SERVICE CENTER



KUWAIT: In another move that underscores the commitment the Alghanim Auto has toward loyal Ford customers, the company recently organized a special gathering dedicated to Mustang owners and fans in cooperation with the local enthusiast groups, FordRacingQ8 and 5.0Q8, who represent hundreds of Mustang owners in Kuwait. The gathering featured a variety of Mustang vehicles of different models and colors at the Alghanim Auto Service Center on the evening of Friday December 9th, 2016.

The celebration of this special gathering, which Alghanim Auto saw as a great opportunity to further connect with its customers, featured DJ music and a food station catering for the guests along with an eye-catching display of Ford Mustang models, including the new 2017 Shelby GT350, Mustang GT Convertible, and a highly customized GT model enhanced with unique accessories. And to add more thrill and fun to this auspicious gathering, Alghanim Auto hosted a trivia contest for which participants received valuable prizes, and all Mustang owners went home with branded gifts in appreciation of their attendance, as well as vouchers for a free oil and filter change. Before the event came to a close, Alghanim Auto organized a special photo shoot to commemorate the groups' attendance and continuous loyalty for their beloved automotive brand.

Alghanim Auto ultimately concluded the event by reinstating the importance of supporting passionate fans and the youth, and working closely with the group members to keep them abreast of the latest products, offers, and amazing services. The gathering, after all, represents Alghanim Auto's dedication to build a successful relationship with all Ford customers, especially the youth, who have always aspired to own the legendary Ford Mustang and for what it represents in terms of American muscle, craftsmanship, and power.

The Mustang's impact goes well beyond the 9 million-plus cars sold in its 50 years of continuous production. It has made thousands of appearances in film, television, music and video games. The new design of the Mustang reflects a contemporary interpretation of its legendary heritage, as an automotive icon that symbolizes power and freedom for millions of people around the world, beginning from the sound of its engine. In its current generation, the Mustang is offered at Alghanim Auto in both fastback and

convertible models. As far as performance goes, the available engine lineup boasts 300HP and 280 lb.-ft. of torque on tap from the standard 3.7-liter V6 engine.

Meanwhile, fans of big displacement can enjoy the thrill delivered by the throaty 5.0-liter V8 that yields 435HP and 400 lb.-ft. of torque. In addition, the all-new 2.3-liter EcoBoost engine with output of 310HP uses direct injection, variable cam timing and turbocharging to deliver plenty of usable performance and projected segment-leading fuel efficiency. Mustang fans in Kuwait will now appreciate the availability of the six-speed manual transmission, or opt for the automatic and still enjoy an enormous amount of performance and flexibility. For performance purists, Alghanim Auto is also exclusively offering the new 2017 Shelby GT350 Mustang in three new colors: Grabber Blue, Lightning Blue and Ruby Red.

The new Shelby GT350 is a world-class performance vehicle, designed to tackle the planet's most challenging roads. The new GT350 takes advantage of a dramatically improved sixth-generation Mustang to create a truly special driving experience. Driving enthusiasts behind the

wheel of a Shelby GT350 can expect to be treated to the most balanced, nimble and exhilarating production Mustang yet.



Ford engineers took an innovative approach with GT350; rather than develop individual systems to perform well independently, every com-

ponent and shape is optimized to work in concert; balance is the key. While paying rigorous attention to detail, the team pushed the envelope with cutting-edge materials and technologies. The Shelby GT350's new 5.2-liter V8 engine is considered the most powerful, naturally aspirated production Ford engine ever, at 526 horsepower and the highest-revving V8 in Ford history - with a redline of 8,250 rpm.ft. It is also the most efficient in terms of specific output.

Without turbocharging or supercharging, the flat-plane crankshaft V8 produces 102 horsepower per liter of displacement. Ultra-quick responsiveness to changing conditions is provided by the first-ever Ford application of continuously controlled MagneRide dampers. The new Shelby GT350 also features Brembo brakes, the most track-credible brake system ever offered on a Ford vehicle in terms of absolute stopping power, fade resistance and brake pedal feel. GT350 makes use of extra-stiff 19-inch aluminum alloy wheels - 10.5 inches wide in front, 11.0 inches in the rear - clad in state-of-the-art Michelin Pilot Super Sport tires with GT350-specific sidewall construction, tread face and compound. The custom tires are designed to deliver maximum grip on the road or during weekend track days.

Shelby GT350 has been weight-optimized to balance capability with on-track durability. Lightweight components are engineered to offset added extreme-performance hardware, and, as a result, the standard GT350 tips the scales at 1,705kg only. Only Alghanim Auto has been contractually authorized by Ford to sell new Ford vehicles and provide aftersales support and genuine Ford and Motorcraft spare parts for Ford customers in Kuwait. The Alghanim Auto service center provides the highest levels of service by a team of Ford-trained and qualified technicians who use genuine Ford and Motorcraft spare parts to ensure the best operation of vehicles.

All current Ford owners can visit the service center from Saturday till Thursday between 7AM - 7PM. For added convenience, the Express Service is open from 7AM - 10PM from Saturday - Thursday, and 2PM - 7PM on Fridays. To learn more about the Ford Mustang and the latest offers from Alghanim Auto, customers can visit the showroom; open Saturday - Thursday from 9AM - 10PM. The New Vehicle Showroom, Service and Spare Parts Center is located in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, opposite from the Classical Car Museum and Sirrb Circuit.



ADEEB AHAMED HONORED WITH GLOBAL BUSINESS LEADER AWARD

KUWAIT: The inaugural Gulf Indian Excellence Awards were held at the Hyatt Regency Dubai Creek Heights on Sunday. The gala event recognized leading successful Indian Business Leaders in the region who have made a mark in their sectors and have shown exceptional ability in their areas of excellence.

In recognition of his successful growth as a business leader across various sectors around the region, Adeb Ahamed, Director, Lulu Exchange and MD, Twenty14 Holdings, a hospitality investment firm which owns prestigious properties around the world including the Great Scotland Yard in London, Steigenberger Hotel Business Bay in Dubai and the Sheraton Oman Hotel in Muscat, among others.

Other winners in this category includes M A Yusuf Ali, MD, Lulu Group International, B R Shetty, Chairman, NMC Healthcare, Thumbay Moideen, President,

Thumbay Group, Mickey Jagtiani, Chairman, Landmark Group and Joy Alukkas, Chairman, Joy Alukkas, among others.

Adeb Ahamed is a multifaceted professional who began his journey in the region with the setting up of Lulu Exchange, a reputed financial services company. After successfully establishing Lulu Exchange with more than 130 branches across the globe within seven years, Adeb went on to setup Twenty14 Holdings, a hospitality investment firm which owns prestigious properties around the world including the Great Scotland Yard in London, Steigenberger Hotel Business Bay in Dubai and the Sheraton Oman Hotel in Muscat, among others.



"I am absolutely delighted and deeply honoured to be acknowledged with this award. This recognition will allow me to further strengthen our commitment towards setting up new benchmarks in the sectors we are involved in.

This award also encourages me to further inspire those around me and make a lasting, positive impact on their lives and community," said Adeb Ahamed. Other awards including Transformational Biz Leader, Strategic Innovators of the Year, Creative Entrepreneurs of the Year and Business Innovators were also given away during the event. The event also featured panel discussions, conversations with the award winners and active participation of the audience.



AL-MAZAYA SIGNS OMR 5.7M CONTRACT FOR MAZAYA RESIDENCE IN OMAN

MUSCAT: Al-Mazaya Real Estate Company - Oman, a subsidiary of Al-Mazaya Holding Company, has awarded an OMR 5,691,000 contract to Al-Hajiry Trading LLC for the construction, execution, delivery and maintenance of its Mazaya Residence, a residential and commercial development, strategically located in Al-Seeb Province, in the heart of Muscat.

Spanning over a 6,614 squaremeters in area, the project has been awarded to the Omani company following a call for the best of the qualified bidders who can serve the company's interests in terms of quality and completion deadlines.

Al-Hajiry Trading is a pioneering, dynamic business with 2500-strong work force, boasting more than 21 years of professional experience through 19 platforms of building and construction in the Omani market.

The 22-month contract was signed by Ibrahim Al-Soqabi, Group CEO Al-Mazaya Holding and Jason Sam Varghese, Executive Director of Al-Hajiry Trading Projects Division. The signing ceremony was attended by Rashid Yaqoub Al-Nafisi, Al-Mazaya Board Chairman; Nasser Khamis Al-Hashar, Board Chairman of Al-Hajiry Trading; Eng. Salwa Malhas, Chief Business Development, Marketing & Sales Officer; Dr Abdulaziz Jarkas, Chief Projects Development Officer and Sam Varghese the Managing Director of Al-Hajiry Trading.

Commenting on the development, Al-Soqabi said, "Al-Mazaya Residences is the company's second investment in Oman. It is a well-integrated and distinguished residential oasis, providing apartments in modern, unique designs. We take care of the most delicate details, allowing its residents to enjoy a luxurious living environment, full of comfort and convenience."

The project boasts 120 residential units, including one-bedroom, two-bedroom and

three-bedroom flats and 28 shops of various sizes with high-end amenities, landscaped areas and nature. The amenities include swimming pools, health clubs and tennis playgrounds along with a spacious underground car park sprawling beneath the entire space of the residential building. The project stands out as an attractive opportunity for residents looking for investment or housing.

Al-Soqabi added, "Mazaya Residence apartments adhere to the highest design standards that include the best use of space, satisfying all modern life requirements. The residence offers a variety of designs with its 68 by 74 meter one-bedroom, 99 by 110 meter two-bedroom and 142 by 154meter three-bedroom apartments. The project is protected 24/7 by a sophisticated surveillance system to suit the specific security needs of the residents. In addition, they are provided with best satellite and internet services in the area."

Al-Mazaya Holding is now developing a massive publicity campaign for launching the project in Oman first, which will be followed by another campaign to promote the project in other Gulf markets by early next year.

According to Al-Soqabi, the promotion campaign will be officially launched via print and social media in the presence of Omani dignitaries, company senior management, and media representatives. He noted that the project's residential units and shops will be offered at competitive prices and can be purchased through easy installments in order to draw the largest possible numbers of clients.

Al-Soqabi concluded that Al-Mazaya Holding adopts a forward-thinking vision for the Omani market, expressing hope that upon the completion of the project, the company will continue its presence in the Omani market.

CITY GROUP INVESTS KD 2.5M TO RENEW FLEET WITH MODERN BUSES

56 NEW BUSES WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH EURO III ENGINES

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: City Group Company yesterday held an exclusive celebration to announce the renewal of Citybus fleet with buses equipped with Euro III engines.

Nabil Al-Jeraisy, Vice Chairman and CEO, confirmed in his address during the celebration, on the company's commitment of implementing its strategy aiming at developing the services presented to clients in Kuwait.

Therefore, a decision of renewing 56 buses equipped with Euro III engines was taken with a cost amounting KD2.5million. These buses were put on trial during the last two years on Citybus's route networks where positive results, including the noticeable reduction of the carbon emissions, were obtained. This step represents just the first phase of the future program of Citybus's entire fleet development.

Al-Jeraisy added that these buses are modernized and eco-friendly as they help reduce the pollution. Also, they are equipped with the most advanced technological means in addition to the GPS devices providing accurate information to the control room, and this enhances the quality level of the services provided to the clients.

In addition, he indicated the company is committed to devote its efforts to provide high-level quality of services in an endeavor to push more road users to use the public transport means as this will lead to alleviate the traffic congestion and intensity on roads, and this means lower numbers of accidents and saving souls. We, in Citybus, are proud to achieve more than 60 million passenger journeys in this year on the board



of our fleet buses. Al-Jeraisy directed his thanks to the Traffic General Department for their efforts to facilitate Citybus's operations, and he highly appreciated the awareness contributions provided to Citybus drivers during the awareness sessions run by representatives of the Public Relations Department in the Traffic General Department.

The event was attended by Colonel Abdullah Ghazi Al-Mutairi, Director of Coordination and

Follow-up Department (Acting Major General Fahd Salem Al-Shwea and Undersecretary Assistant for Traffic Affairs), Lt Col Khalid Abdullah Al-Adwani, Chairman of the Technical Office in the Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Office, First lieutenant Abdulla Al-Salman Bu-Hassan, and Corporal Hamad Badr Edan from the public relations and traffic awareness department. At the end, Al-Jeraisy invited the audience to a tour to view the new buses.

ACCELERATE YOUR BUSINESS TO SUCCESS WITH CHEVROLET ALGHANIM'S FLEET SOLUTIONS

KUWAIT: Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons Automotive, the exclusive distributor of Chevrolet vehicles in Kuwait, is looking forward to service all business owners with its comprehensive Fleet Solutions, effectively offering them the opportunity to start the New Year right. Designed to answer the customers' various transportation needs and wants, Chevrolet Alghanim's Fleet Solutions offers a wide-ranging support structure and extensive product range in both passenger and light commercial vehicles, paired with a unique fleet package that business customers won't find anywhere else.

In addition to offering the widest variety of solutions, Chevrolet Alghanim's Fleet Solutions will also help business owners stay informed and up-to-date with the latest market developments, all while enjoying a number of competitive advantages, such as reaping the benefits of the brand's outstanding equity and reputation, experiencing a quality of service and assurance across the board benefiting from a flexible SME program and a comprehensive aftersales facility, which is famously regarded as one of the biggest and most professional service centers in the Middle East.

Upon signing up, the sales professionals at Chevrolet Alghanim's Fleet Solutions will assist customers to make the right choice by presenting them an appropriate lineup of vehicles that is guaranteed to meet their everyday need. Customers can choose from the crossover range, such as the Traverse and Captiva, and the SUV range, which includes the Trailblazer and Tahoe, in addition to the following sedan cars: the Aveo, Sonic, Cruze, Malibu and Impala. The lineup also includes trucks, like the Silverado, and vans, like the Express, which is suited for passenger transportation and cargo shipment.

To accelerate the customers' business to success, Chevrolet Alghanim will also avail them a trio of fleet solutions designed to maximize the return of their fleet investment. These solutions include Chevrolet Business Choice and Government Fleet Solutions.

With Chevrolet Business Choice, customers will receive a range of services aimed to keep their businesses running smoothly, such as offering a dedicated dealer, personalized help to get the exact vehicle they need for the job, extended warranty for extra peace of mind, regional roadside assistance coverage with 24/7 availability and competitive and transparent cost of maintenance (Chevrolet Complete Care).

However, if the client is representing a government entity, they can put their confidence in Chevrolet Government Fleet Solutions. Thanks to the company's longstanding experience, government customers will benefit from the expertise of a dedicated fleet team, whom not only will they provide assistance during the vehicle purchase process but also regularly work with them for training and support. Chevrolet Alghanim's Fleet Solutions welcomes its business customers in its new location at the ground floor of Chevrolet Alghanim Showroom and Service Center in Shuwaikh. The Fleet Solution department will be open all week long excluding Fridays and Saturdays, 8 am till 5 pm.



AL-TIJARI CREDIT AND PREPAID MASTERCARD HOLDERS RECEIVE 40% DISCOUNT FROM QATAR AIRWAYS



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait is making air travel more affordable for credit cardholders to create a memorable experience, the bank has announced in partnership with MasterCard and Qatar Airways for a special discount of 40 percent to all credit and prepaid card holders on all Qatar Airways destinations. The offer's booking period is from December 7th to December 21st 2016, and the travelling

period is from December 8th 2016 to November 30th 2017. For more details and coupon code customers are requested to visit the promotion page on the bank website www.cbk.com

The Commercial Bank of Kuwait is always keen on giving the best offers to its customers and chooses the finest partners to partner with in offering good deals that are beneficial and matches the client's demands and needs.

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Pay your bills and win cash prizes every KD 1 gives you a chance to win

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VIVA ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 'MORE' PRIZES CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced 7th week draw's winners of KD 100, of "more" prizes campaign for postpaid customers.

The names of daily prize winners, KD 100, from 1 December until 10 December, were as follows: Mohammed Amin Mohammed, Fahad Nadhem Thamer Alhunaidi, Saadawi Saeed Samah Abdulhaleem, Mohammad B H Alqattan, Mohammad Bjad Hadi Alotaibi, Abdullah Mohammad Sagheer Alenezi, Ghannam T GH Almutairi, Khaled Mohammad Ibrahim Alsayed, Joyeh Lian Eden Gornaz, Anwar Taraheeb Fayeh Almutairi.

VIVA gives the customers a wonderful opportunity to win amazing cash prizes, KD 100 daily and KD 1000 at the end of each month, once they pay their VIVA bills through Direct Debit, VIVA website, VIVA's Kiosks, VIVA App or by calling 102. Customers earn one chance for each KD 1.

VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things possible for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established an unrivalled position in the market through its customer-centric approach. VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions; a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service. VIVA offers internet speeds of more than 100 Mbps, due to the implementation of the most advanced fourth generation (4G LTE) network in Kuwait resulting in superior coverage, performance and reliability.

FUTURE COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY BECOMES MICROSOFT CLOUD SOLUTION PROVIDER

URGES ORGANIZATIONS TO EMBRACE CLOUD TECHNOLOGY

KUWAIT: Microsoft today praised small businesses across Kuwait on their adoption of cloud services to further the nation's ongoing digital transformation. The company leveraged the admirable progress made nationwide in the adoption of global best practices, with solutions providers such as Future Communications Company having received certified recognition by Microsoft for their ongoing efforts as Cloud Solution Provider and Gold Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) partner.

"Thriving SME sectors across the GCC have played major roles in growing non-oil GDPs and are making impressive inroads in supporting knowledge-based economies," said Charles Nahas, General Manager, Microsoft Kuwait. "As Kuwait's SME are acquiring the muscle to be com-

petitive, Cloud services are the perfect way for them to cast off the shackles of scale and operate like global players.

Nahas spoke of the "maturity and readiness" of the Kuwaiti cloud services market, as national providers adopt international best-practice standards. Earlier this year, Microsoft certified Kuwait-based Future Communications Company (FCC) as Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider and Gold ERP Partner. FCC can now offer end-to-end cloud solutions to manage business processes in public, private and hybrid clouds, or on premises.

"FCC takes this Microsoft certification as validation of the skill and commitment of our people when serving customers across Kuwait," said Salah Al Awady, founder and CEO, FCC. "Small businesses in particular have so much to

gain from migrating their digital infrastructure to the cloud. Business efficiency and competitive advantage invariably follow such transformations and we look forward, in our role as Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider and Gold Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Partner, to continue to tell that story to customers. Our competency certification has resulted from our approach to cloud solutions - to make growth easy; to make it flexible; and to make it cost effective, for all our customers."

"For organizations throughout the region, cloud is becoming a formidable tool allowing companies to focus on their core business while increasing resource optimization and speed to market" Nahas added. "Microsoft has invested heavily in the infrastructure and talent needed to support our customer

Digital Transformation journey. We are delighted to move forward with leading partners like FCC, and offer SMEs across Kuwait the best in cloud solutions, to make their businesses the very best they can be. We are excited about our future relationship with FCC and the prospect of joining forces to help individuals and organizations across the nation achieve more and ease the transition to New IT for all Kuwaiti companies. As users embrace the benefits cloud can bring, Microsoft and our solutions partners are ready to offer those services and add more value to our customers' businesses. This is the time of cloud."

FCC's specialists in managed cloud hosting talk customers through the adoption, deployment and optimization of the latest technologies. Driven by the business goals of the customer and in

close consultation with all stakeholders at each stage of a project, FCC implements international best-practice standards to reduce project risk and achieve a quicker return-on-investment.

Microsoft's Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions competency recognizes partners that offer Microsoft Office 365 cloud and hybrid solutions to SME customers.

KuwaitKuwait, according to BMI research, is set for a compound annual growth (CAGR) of 1.4% to reach a national IT spend of US\$ 1.11 billion by 2020, with US\$ 407 million going to the service segment. Growth in the country's software and services sales suggests a mass move to cloud. Furthermore, total IT spending in Kuwait forecasted to increase by 2.5 % to KWD3.59 million over the period 2016 to 2020.

ISRAEL'S FIRST F-35 STEALTH FIGHTERS SET FOR LANDING

NEVATIM AIR BASE, Israel: With Israel's first F-35 stealth fighters set to arrive in the country yesterday, officials are touting them as ultra-high-tech planes that will allow it to maintain military dominance in the Middle East.

The first two of 50 F-35s to be purchased by Israel from US aerospace giant Lockheed Martin were due to arrive at Nevatim air base in the country's south.

In a sign of the importance being placed on the event, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter is to attend the arrival, expected around 2:00 pm (1200 GMT), along with his Israeli counterpart Avigdor Lieberman and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. While other countries have ordered the planes, Israel-which receives more than \$3 billion a year in US defense aid-says it will be the first with an operational F-35 squadron outside the United States.

It is the most expensive plane in history, and while the technology can seem dazzling, it has been criticized for cost overruns and earlier flaws. Israel however says it will be key to its military's future. "The F-35 constitutes another element allowing us to maintain our aerial superiority in the region," Lieberman said in a statement. "A powerful air force signals a powerful Israeli military, and a powerful Israeli military signals a strong Israel."

Israel has given its F-35s the name "Adir"-which means "mighty" in Hebrew. Its first planes are expected to be operational within a year after delivery. It will be receiving the F-35A model for standard takeoff and landings. The B and C models are for short takeoffs and aircraft carriers.

Israeli components will be integrated in the plane, which will be known as the F-35I.

Supersonic stealth

Among the aircraft's main features are advanced stealth capabilities to help pilots evade sophisticated missile systems. The single-pilot jets can carry an array of

weapons and travel at a supersonic speed of Mach 1.6, or around 1,200 miles per hour (1,900 kilometers per hour).

The ultra-high-tech helmets, at a cost of some \$400,000 each, sound like something out of a science fiction film. The helmet includes its own operating system, with data that appears on the visor and is also shared elsewhere. Thermal and night vision as well as 360-degree views are possible with cameras mounted on the plane.

In Israel, the planes, designed for multiple combat situations, will initially replace a group of ageing F-16s. They are seen as helping the country maintain its edge in the Middle East, particularly as its main enemy Iran seeks further influence in the region. Israel is especially concerned over whether Iran will seek to develop nuclear weapons by violating the international accord it has signed with world powers.

Netanyahu strongly opposed the Iran nuclear deal, and said in an interview broadcast Sunday that he wants to discuss ways of abandoning it with US President-elect Donald Trump.

"I think what options we have are much more than you think. Many more," Netanyahu said in the interview with CBS's "60 minutes" in the United States. Netanyahu gave no details on what he will be proposing when he meets with Trump, but minimized the downside of Washington backing out of an accord that includes other world powers, including its European allies. "There are ways, various ways of undoing it," he said. "I have about five things in my mind."

Israel is buying its first 33 F-35s at an average price of about \$110 million (103.5 million Euros) each. Among the earlier flaws uncovered was one where pilots who weighed less than 136 pounds (62 kilos) risked being killed by its ejection system. There have also been software bugs and technical glitches, though Lockheed Martin says such issues have been overcome.—AFP



FARNBOROUGH, HAMPSHIRE, United Kingdom: This file photo taken on July 12, 2016 shows the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II taking part in a flying display at the Farnborough Airshow, south west of London.—AFP

OFFICIAL: FBI TOLD ILLINOIS GOP OF POSSIBLE EMAIL HACKING

CHICAGO: The FBI told the Illinois Republican Party months before the presidential election that its email accounts may have been hacked, and party officials later found some of its emails on a website reportedly tied to Russia's military intelligence agency, the state GOP's executive director said Sunday.

Nick Klitzing told the Chicago Tribune the FBI raised questions with the state party in June about four inactive or rarely used accounts that may have been compromised dating back to 2015.

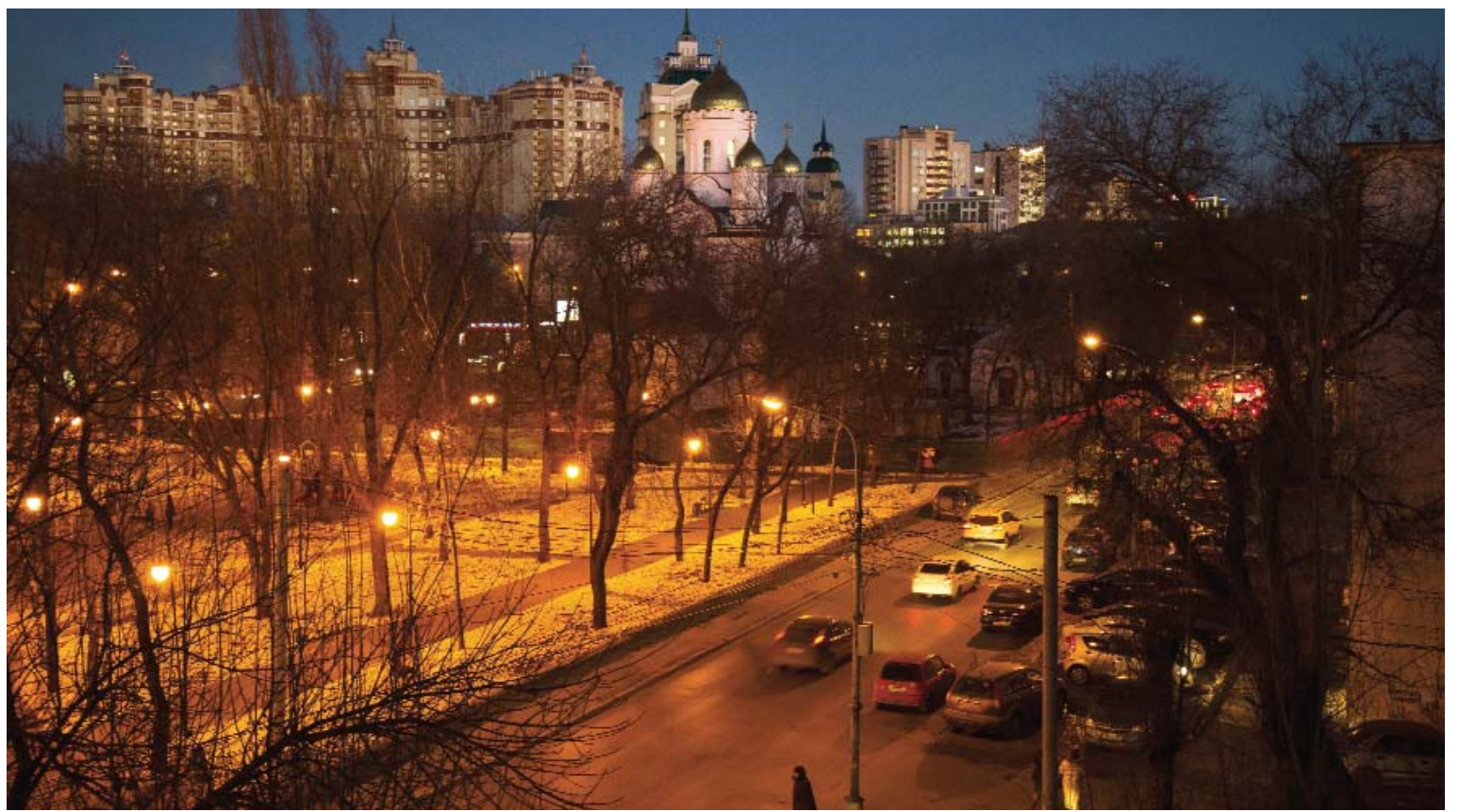
The FBI didn't tell the state party that the possible hacking was part of a larger federal investigation into alleged Russian activity in the US political system but urged officials to change passwords and take other steps to secure the email accounts. "We thought it was weird that the FBI was giving IT advice," Klitzing said. Klitzing said the Illinois GOP on its own found 18 of its emails on the website DCLeaks.com, which has posted more than 200 emails involving Republican activists and state parties. According to a New York Times report, US intelligence officials and private cybersecurity companies believe the site was created by a unit controlled by the GRU, Russia's military intelligence agency.

The Chicago Tribune reviewed the emails provided by the state GOP and reported they dealt with such things as training requests, invitations to party events and a discussion about whether Republican US Rep. Peter Roskam of Illinois should run for speaker of the House. The FBI didn't respond to a phone message Sunday night from The Associated Press.

Questions about Russian involvement in the US political system resurfaced Friday with a Washington Post report that the CIA had concluded with "high confidence" that Russia sought to influence the US election on behalf of Republican Donald Trump.

Trump called the CIA's assessment "ridiculous," and his incoming chief of staff Reince Priebus, chairman of the Republican National Committee, insisted on NBC's "Meet the Press" Sunday that the RNC was not hacked.

In June, a cyberattack of the Illinois State Board of Elections involved as many as 90,000 voters, though board officials said no voting files were erased or modified. Still, after that cyberattack and another attempt in Arizona, the FBI issue a "flash alert" to states about alleged attempts to obtain voter registration information.—AP



VORONEZH, Russia: In this photo taken Wednesday, Nov 23, 2016, cars go through a street.—AP

FOR TECH HUB IN RUSSIA, RECESSION'S A GODSEND

EARNING POWER ALLOWS THEM TO AIM HIGHER

VORONEZH, Russia: Russia's economy is in a quagmire thanks to sanctions and low oil prices, but it's a boom time for Mikhail Khorpyakov. The 32-year-old, who develops software for Russian and foreign clients, has seen his earnings rise over the last two years even as the country fell into recession and the national currency lost half its value. At the airy, well-lit office he shares with friends in a newly built block in the thriving provincial tech hub of Voronezh, Khorpyakov recalls his last workspace was "in a basement, with noisy sewer pipes all around," before their earning power allowed them to aim higher.

Khorpyakov and his friends are part of an unlikely tech revolution in Voronezh, a former Soviet industrial town where startups and online contract work are proving the only source of good jobs and escape from economic decline.

Biggest fortune

In fact, the crisis has turned out to be the tech sector's biggest fortune. As Russia fell into recession, the ruble's nosedive to record lows made tech workers here much cheaper for foreign companies to hire or buy from - letting them compete with traditional tech offshoring hubs like India and China.

Even as officials in the United States and Europe warn about the threat posed by government-backed Russian hackers, tech workers in Voronezh say security concerns don't affect their international business relationships.

Ivan Grishaev, a 30-year-old software engineer, moved to Voronezh with his wife and son from Chita, a remote city in Eastern Siberia, in 2013. He chose Voronezh because it offered better career options, lower rent and warmer weather than traditional magnets for migrants such as Moscow or St. Petersburg.

First he worked for DataArt, a Russian software company with more than 800 employees in Voronezh. But when the ruble's value plunged, Grishaev struck out on his own, working directly for foreign clients. As well as financial benefits, the change also brought a more flexible work schedule, meaning he can collect his son from school. Now a self-employed IT specialist developing websites for a Swiss firm, Grishaev makes nearly twice as much as he used to thanks to the difference in local and European salaries, and in currency-exchange rates. A qualified remote IT services provider working for a Western firm can

make \$2,000-\$3,000 per month. That is up to eight times the average salary for the local region, and double what IT specialists can earn working for Russian companies in Voronezh.

"We've become less constrained financially, could afford to have a second child, and now go on vacations abroad," says Grishaev.

"We produce games for the Russian-speaking CIS (former Soviet) countries, and make versions for Europe and the US, which bring us revenue in foreign currency. Thanks to the exchange rate, this revenue is even bigger in rubles," says Sergey Khatenkov, head of the Voronezh office of Mail.Ru Group, one of Russia's largest internet companies.



VORONEZH, Russia: In this photo taken on Thursday, Nov 24, 2016, software developer Ivan Grishaev and other programmers from Deep Refactoring work at their office.—AP

Boasting several Soviet-era technology-focused universities, Voronezh serves as an outsourcing hub for many Russian and foreign companies. Reachable in six hours by car from Moscow - comparatively close by the standards of the world's largest country - office rent and salaries here are significantly lower than in the capital.

Other rust-belt towns around the world, such as Pittsburgh in the US, have seen their local economies helped by a rise in tech companies taking advantage of cheap rents and educated workforces. But Voronezh stands out as an extreme example due to the enormous gains that the ruble's drop gives tech workers compared with the rest of the local economy.

Mail.Ru's history

In 2006, Mail.Ru opened its Voronezh office with five employees. Now it employs 200 people and almost entirely focuses on developing multiplayer online games. Some of the games developed by Mail.Ru in Voronezh, such as Allods Online, count tens of thousands of daily players globally and are one of the company's main sources of income. "Thanks to the (cheap currency) we've significantly increased benefits for our employees," says Andrey Shinkarenko, head of the Voronezh office of Murano Software, a US-Russian company whose business is entirely based on outsourcing. "We've expanded their medical insurance to the fullest, organized meals in the office, that kind of thing."—AP

ABU DHABI SIGNS AGREEMENT ON FUTURISTIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM

DUBAI: Abu Dhabi has signed the United Arab Emirates' second hyperloop feasibility study to build a futuristic high-speed transport system connecting the cities of Abu Dhabi and Al Ain.

Abu Dhabi's Department of Municipal Affairs and Transport (DMAT) and US-based Hyperloop Transportation Technologies (HyperloopTT) announced the agreement, which follows a similar study signed in Dubai last month.

Dubai's Road & Transport Authority (RTA) and US-based Hyperloop One, a rival to HyperloopTT,

agreed on Nov 8 to explore routes between Dubai and Abu Dhabi. A hyperloop uses magnets to levitate pods inside an airless tube, creating conditions in which the pods can shuttle people and cargo at speeds of up to 750 miles (1,200 kms) per hour.

The unproven technology is proposed as a replacement to existing rail infrastructure.

The UAE has put on hold plans to build its own national rail network after neighboring Gulf countries fell behind on their rail projects that were supposed to link the six states from Kuwait to Oman.

A hyperloop route could connect Abu Dhabi and Al Ain in eight to 12 minutes, according to a joint DMAT and HyperloopTT statement. This compares to the two hours it takes by car today.

The statement said it was "the only initiative of its kind that has the support of the government of Abu Dhabi." Hyperloop One is also exploring a route in Dubai connecting the emirate's Expo site for when it hosts the world's fair in 2020, according to a report in local newspaper Gulf News yesterday.—Reuters

MASSAGE GIVES INFANTS BREATH OF LIFE IN IVORY COAST

ABIDJAN: A mother from a working-class district of Abidjan watches fearfully while the physiotherapist presses down on the thorax and abdomen of her crying, struggling baby to help him breathe. Under the health worker's expert hands, the infant gradually expels the

secretions clogging up his lungs through his nose and mouth. His mother looks astonished and the therapist keeps working until her child's airways are completely clear.

Respiratory physiotherapy is critically needed in Ivory Coast where pneumonia

is second only to malaria as a killer of babies and toddlers.

The charity Agis (Association Graine d'Ivoire et Sante), founded in 2010 by Aboubakar Sylla, a physiotherapist himself, trains volunteer staff in the massage techniques to serve the poorer neighborhoods of the commercial capital and towns in the interior of the west African country.

Their work is linked in with medical consultations and "schools for mothers", where women are taught how to help keep their little ones safe from infection and to treat them if they fall sick.

Affects children under five

The World Health Organization reports that respiratory infections in 2015 claimed the lives of more than 900,000 children under the age of five around the globe. In Ivory Coast, such infections are estimated to have killed more than 11,000 youngsters in 2012, according to the latest available count.

The Annual Report on the Health Situation (RASS) for 2014 and 2015 meanwhile showed that the number of acute respiratory infections rose to more than 202 cases per 1,000 children in 2015 from 165 per 1,000 in 2014.

Respiratory infections are "the second cause of hospitalization in pediatric services. After malaria, it's the second cause of mortality" among Ivorian children under

five, says Max Valere Itchi, a doctor at CHU of Cocody, one of the main hospitals in Abidjan.

In the countryside the death toll has worsened due to a lack of funds and equipment. Children are usually taken to hospital only when their case is very serious and more difficult to cure, doctors say. "This is particularly regrettable since many cases could have been avoided with a little prevention," says Sylla, taking part in his Agis association's campaign in the poor Koumassi district of Abidjan.

Don't sweep with baby on back

In the courtyard of the city's general hospital, several dozen mothers show up early one morning to wait under tents put up to provide shelter from the rain. Some are carrying their babies on their backs.

Esthetician Monique Zabia has brought two children with her. "Every day they have colds and they have runny noses," says Zabia, who is discovering the methods of the physiotherapists for the first time. "She has a cold all the time and she coughs in spite medication," says another mother, Linda Akele, who brought her three-year-old daughter "to experiment" with the massage techniques.

Three days later, a similar scene takes place in Attecoube, another low-income neighborhood in Abidjan, where health staff give advice to women as well as

treatments to the kids.

Young mother Saly listened attentively to a volunteer nurse while her 14-month-old baby sat calmly at her feet. "Don't carry the child on your back to sweep the house or to light the fire. Otherwise the dust and the smoke are still going to give him colds," the nurse patiently tells the women.

Sylla, who deploys one or more practicing doctors to take part in each Agis operation, explains that the volunteers "also teach the women how to give the massages themselves."

He stresses however that physiotherapy is not the primary treatment. "People need to see their doctor. Medication is the primary means of treatment. Physiotherapy is complementary to that. Studies have shown that when physiotherapy is added to treatment with drugs, it speeds up recovery and brings respiratory comfort to the child," he says.

The charity's head is keen to see a full-fledged government policy to help the children in distress. "There is not enough money devoted to the battle against pneumonia." His Agis association is entirely dependent on volunteer medical staff, whose numbers vary according to the workload and location. The charity is funded by private donations and patrons such as a company which may step forward to finance operations in a specific district. —AFP



ABIDJAN: Medical staff treat a child for breathing problems using physical therapy on March 17, 2016 during tests to diagnose pneumonia for children until age five in a health centre in the Attecoube neighborhood. —AFP

'OBAMACARE' REPEAL PATH WORRIES HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY

STAND-ALONE REPEAL WOULD COST BILLIONS

WASHINGTON: One by one, key health care industry groups are telling the incoming Republican administration and Congress that it's not a good idea to repeal the 2010 health care law without clear plans to address the consequences.

Hospitals, insurers and actuaries - bean-counters who make long-range economic estimates - have weighed in, and more interest groups are expected to make their views known soon. Representing patients, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

sustain the individual health insurance market.

And the anti-cancer network is concerned that protection for people with pre-existing health conditions might be undermined or lost. Before the Affordable Care Act, it was common for insurers to deny coverage to people with a cancer diagnosis, even if successfully treated, or to charge them more. Also, uninsured people with cancer are more likely to be diagnosed late, when there's less chance of a cure.

"Replacement health care legis-

tion and without the unpopular "individual mandate" that forces most Americans to have coverage or risk fines. However, replacement legislation that covers a comparable number of people would still require billions in government financing and extensive regulations, a stumbling block for the most conservative Republicans.

The path forward is complicated by the dynamics of the 2016 political campaign, which centered on personalities rather than policy. President-elect Donald Trump

His coalition has written Congress to express its concerns. Industry groups are giving lawmakers plenty to consider: The two main hospital lobbies - the American Hospital Association and the Federation of American Hospitals - released studies indicating more than \$200 billion in potential losses for their members if the health law is repealed without restoring the funding cuts that were used to finance coverage expansion. "Losses of this magnitude cannot be sustained and will ... decimate hospitals' and health systems' ability to provide services, weaken local economies ... and result in massive job losses," the groups said in a letter to Trump.

America's Health Insurance Plans, the biggest insurer lobby, said its members need time, as well as an assurance that federal dollars will continue to flow, in order to successfully transition to a new system under different rules. It took the better part of three years once Obama's health law was passed to launch its major coverage expansion, and that was anything but smooth. Insurers said the new administration and Congress need to "send strong signals" that they're willing to maintain the current market through at least Jan. 1, 2019.

Perhaps the most sobering assessment comes from a little-known group, the American Academy of Actuaries, representing professionals who assess the financial stability of pension and health insurance programs. Unlike hospitals and insurers, actuaries don't have a direct financial stake in the future of the health law. The group said delaying the effective date of a repeal while a replacement is worked out could create such uncertainty that it triggers a crisis for the individual health insurance market.

That's where people who don't have job-based coverage can buy policies, including more than 10 million in HealthCare.gov and other government markets, and 9 million who purchase their plans independently. "Significant market disruption could result, leading to millions of Americans losing their health insurance," the actuaries' group wrote Congress. —AP



WASHINGTON: In this March 23, 2010 file photo, President Barack Obama signs the health care bill in the East Room of the White House. —AP

reminded lawmakers that lives are at stake.

The concerns go beyond the obvious potential hardship for the 20 million people covered by subsidized private insurance and expanded Medicaid under President Barack Obama's signature law.

Billions in costs

Hospitals say a stand-alone repeal would cost them billions, compromising their ability to serve local communities. Insurers say Congress must be careful not to create even more uncertainty and instability. Actuaries worry the mere promise of an eventual replacement won't be enough to

lition that accompanies repeal needs to provide recognized patient protections that currently exist," Chris Hansen, the group's president, said in a statement.

Republicans say they remain resolute in their determination to repeal "Obamacare," but some also seem mindful of the potential political risks.

The basic plan under GOP consideration involves repealing the health law next year, but delaying the effective date to allow Congress time to pass a replacement. That replacement presumably would do many of the things the Affordable Care Act does, such as subsidize coverage and protect people in poor health, but with less regula-

promised to repeal "Obamacare," but his ideas for a replacement plan were more talking points than an actual plan.

"Public opinion seems to be shifting," said John Rother, president of the National Coalition on Health Care, an umbrella organization that includes doctors, businesses, unions, and religious groups. "It's not clear when people say they want to 'repeal,' what they mean by that. It may mean they just want to get rid of the individual mandate." Rother believes the outcome ultimately hinges on a handful of GOP senators.

"Moderate Republicans are worried about the consequences," he said.

NOVARTIS EYE DRUG FRANCHISE HIT BY FAILED FOVISTA STUDIES

BASEL, Switzerland: Novartis's bid to bolster its eye drug portfolio suffered a setback yesterday when it announced combining Lucentis with Fovista in patients with neovascular age-related macular degeneration (nAMD) did not produce better outcomes than treatment with Lucentis alone.

Two phase III studies that combined Ophthotech's Fovista with Lucentis "did not meet the primary endpoint of superiority," Novartis said in a statement.

Two years ago, the Swiss drugmaker signed a potential \$1 billion licensing deal with Ophthotech to market Fovista outside the United States.

It had hoped a successful combination with Lucentis could help it counter waning sales of Lucentis, which has been hurt by competition from other drugs. With the trials' failure, however, Novartis said it still hoped analysis of underlying data would provide further understanding and guidance on helping nAMD

patients. "The proven efficacy of Lucentis monotherapy was not improved by the addition of" Fovista, said Vasant Narasimhan, Novartis's chief drug development officer. "Together with Ophthotech we con-

tinue to analyze the data."

Novartis shares slipped 0.3 percent in early trading.

Age-related macular degeneration affects up to 25 million people worldwide and is the leading cause

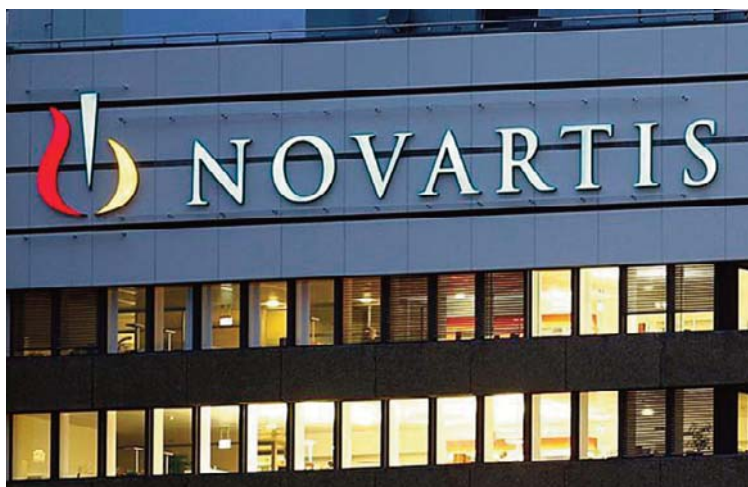
of early blindness in the industrial world.

In the first nine months of 2016, Lucentis's sales for Novartis outside the United States fell 11 percent, on top of a previous decline in 2015, due to competition from drugs including Regeneron's Eylea.

"A positive result of the study would have been welcome to add a little pep to waning Lucentis sales," wrote Michael Nawrath, a Zuercher Kantonal Bank analyst, in a note. "For the small company Ophthotech this will be much worse than for Novartis, but it's still a negative result."

The failure leaves Novartis hoping for more-favorable results from a separate phase III trial of its investigational medication RTH258 against nAMD, due to be published early next year.

The failure also impacts Roche, which has marketing rights for Lucentis in the United States and had a deal with Novartis for a share of revenue from Fovista outside the United States. —Reuters



BASEL, Switzerland: The logo of Swiss drugmaker Novartis is seen at its headquarters on October 22, 2013. —AFP



CONCARNEAU, France: This file photo taken on October 21, 2016 shows (From L) Production supervisor of Makurazaki France, a Japanese firm producing katsubushi for the European market, Japan's Yutaro Higashi, General Manager of Makurazaki France, Gwenael Perhirin and Production supervisor of Makurazaki France, Japan's Atsushi Kawazoe posing by the Makurazaki France katsubushi firm. —AFP

FLAKING FAD? JAPAN OPENS BONITO PLANT IN FRANCE

CONCARNEAU, France: They came all the way from Japan to France with a crazy idea: Establishing a factory for authentic dried bonito flakes, a key ingredient in Japanese cuisine that is very rare in Europe.

Dried bonito fish, also known as katsubushi, has a distinct umami flavour and is the main ingredient in dashi, a traditional stock which forms the basis of much of Japanese cuisine. Considered essential for Japanese cooking, European chefs have been largely unable to find authentic bonito as it cannot be exported from Japan to Europe.

But now all that is set to change with Japanese cooperative Makurazaki opening its own production facility in Brittany, northwestern France, from which it hopes to supply connoisseurs across the continent. "It was crucial to be passionate about this product and the aim of this project for it to see the light of day," said Gwenael Perhirin, director of Makurazaki France.

Makurazaki, which takes its name from a city in southern Japan that is famous for its katsubushi industry, represents eight manufacturers of bonito flakes and other products derived from fish of the tuna family, a packaging company and a fishing cooperative.

Although bonito flakes can be found in specialized shops across the European Union, mostly coming from China, Korea or Vietnam, they can cost up to 130 Euros (\$140) per kilogram. "It is not at all the same product (as the Japanese original) in terms of taste and smell," says Perhirin, sitting in the factory's rest area, slippers on his feet as Japanese tradition dictates.

With the United Nations' cultural body

UNESCO recognizing Japanese cuisine as part of the country's intangible cultural heritage, Makurazaki is hoping to make good on the growing wave of interest in Japan's culinary know-how.

Very strict regulations

Located in the seaside town of Concarneau, at the northern end of France's Atlantic coast, the factory, which covers an area of 800 square meters (8,600 square feet), was opened in early September. Despite the fanfare, it is not the first katsubushi production facility in Europe-another factory was set up last year in Vigo, a city on Spain's northwestern Atlantic coast.

Makurazaki has ploughed two million euros into the Concarneau plant after signing a deal with French tuna firm CFTO (Compagnie Francaise du Thon Oceanique) which is also based in Brittany. Under the deal, CFTO will supply Makurazaki France with between three and six tons of bonito, also known as skipjack tuna, per week.

For now, the plant can turn a ton of fish into 200 kilograms of katsubushi, but the management is hoping to see volumes increase in the coming years. CFTO, which is also based in Concarneau, runs a fleet of 14 vessels in the Atlantic and Indian oceans, where it catches the fish according to very strict regulations. "We worked very hard to get this specification because we have to be very careful about its fat content," says Perhirin.

Fat content depends on both the available food and the temperature of the water, with those swimming at a greater depth having a higher proportion of fat as insulation from the cold. —AFP



CONCARNEAU, France: This file photo taken on October 21, 2016 shows Dried bonito flakes pictured at the Makurazaki France katsubushi firm. —AFP



PORTLAND: Atlantic halibut steaks are displayed for sale at a seafood market, Friday, Dec 9, 2016. —AP

OVER FISHED HALIBUT UNDER SCRUTINY

BRUNSWICK, Maine: Federal fishing regulators say they are looking to change the way they manage Atlantic halibut in the wake of a surge in catch of the fish.

The government lists Atlantic halibut as "overfished" and conservationists want to protect it. But many fishermen say the catch is up because the stock has been rebuilt over recent years.

East Coast fishermen caught more than 215,000 pounds of Atlantic halibut in 2015 in the most productive year of fishing for the flatfish since 1972. Catch of the fish in near shore Maine waters is helping drive the increase, regulators say.

The regulatory New England Fishery Management Council decided last month to review management of halibut, which is popular with diners and chefs for its thick, meaty steaks. Exactly what form regulation changes could take isn't yet known. "We've identified that this is an issue, and this will be a priority for 2017," Janice Plante, a spokeswoman for the council, said.

The council has also asked that Maine's state fishing managers adjust the way they oversee halibut. Part of the issue is that if fishermen exceed their quota for the fish, it can trigger restrictions on fishing that impact fishermen who operate in federal waters. About 40 percent of the halibut catch for the 2015 fishing year was taken in state waters, mostly in Maine.

Limiting the amount of fishing

Ben Martens, executive director of the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, said

Maine should consider limiting the amount of halibut fishing in state waters. Otherwise, federal fishermen will be negatively affected by the surge in state catch, he said.

Martens also said better data also is needed because many fishermen believe the stock has rebuilt significantly in recent years, and that's why catch is up. "The story is that this is a rebuilding success," he said. "In New England, we don't know what to do with successes."

A spokesman for the Maine Department of Marine Resources declined to comment beyond acknowledging that the agency is reviewing the council's request, and taking it seriously. Some conservationist groups have tried to dissuade consumers from buying Atlantic halibut.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration lists it as a "species of concern," meaning there are "concerns regarding status and threats," but also insufficient information about whether a listing under the federal Endangered Species Act is warranted.

Atlantic halibut is fished commercially off New England, with the majority of the catch coming ashore in Maine and Massachusetts. The fish is of high economic value, frequently serving as an entree item in the \$30 range, and its price per pound at the dock has doubled for fishermen in the last ten years.

The much larger Pacific halibut fishery, which is based around Alaska, generates more than 20 million pounds of fish per year. —AP

AFTER HEALTH-CARE REPEAL VOTE, SOME IN GOP FEAR A CLIFF 'WOULDN'T TAKE EFFECT FOR PERHAPS THREE YEARS'

WASHINGTON: Republicans are eagerly planning initial votes next month on dismantling President Barack Obama's health care law, a cherished GOP goal. But many worry that while Congress tries to replace it, the party will face ever-angrier voters, spooked health insurers and the possibility of tumbling off a political cliff.

Republicans have said they first want to vote to unwind as much of the health care law as they can, though it wouldn't take effect for perhaps three years. That's to give them and new President Donald Trump time to write legislation constructing a new health care system - a technically and politically daunting task that has frustrated GOP attempts for unity for years.

Many congressional Republicans worry they'd be vulnerable during the transition period between a repeal vote and actually replacing Obama's law with a new system. Twenty million people now covered would face uncertainty about their future benefits, while unsettled health insurers might quickly start boosting premiums or stop selling policies in some areas to protect themselves.

In both cases, public wrath could be aimed at the party controlling the White House and Capitol - the GOP. "It's going to be a difficult challenge to pass a replacement" for Obama's law and make sure some people don't lose coverage, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said. Health insurers will need time to adjust to a new system and if Congress waits until the last minute to enact a new law, "It's not going to work," she said.

Another fear

A related fear: Congress and Trump enact legislation dismantling Obama's law but as the clock ticks down to its expiration, the GOP remains divided over replacing it. The political imperative for Republicans to pass something would be overwhelming but with Congress being Congress, there are no guarantees. "When you set up a cliff, you can go over it," Rep. Charlie Dent, R-Pa., said. Many Republicans insist that won't happen. They view setting an end date on Obama's law as a way to force congressional action on replacing it without hurting consumers. "There needs to be a reasonable transition period so people don't have the rug pulled out from under them," House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., told reporters last week.

But in one of many questions dividing Republicans, they differ over what a reasonable transition period means. No. 2 Senate Republican, John Cornyn of Texas, said there will likely be a three-year gap between Congress' votes to repeal Obama's law and when that would actually kick in. "We're not going to let

anybody fall through the cracks," Cornyn said.

Other Republicans, particularly in the House, worry that three years is too long to leave voters, insurers and health care providers in suspense. Eager to prevent a drawn-out effort to pass new health care legislation from spinning into a damaging issue for the 2018 campaigns, many want the process to take a year or less. "I hope it's not years with no replacement," said Rep. Steve Stivers, R Ohio, who next year will head the National Republican Congressional Committee,

to help people pay insurance premiums. Both want to eliminate Obama's mandate that most individuals get coverage and most employers cover workers, but that could be replaced with a requirement that people maintain "continuous" coverage or face higher premiums.

Democrats, who enacted Obama's law in 2010 over solid GOP opposition, have signaled they won't help Republicans demolish it. "Bring it on," Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., next year's minority leader, said of GOP repeal efforts. "They



WASHINGTON: In this Dec 1, 2016, file photo, House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wis., speaks during a news conference on Capitol Hill. —AP

the House GOP's political organization. "Quality matters more than speed, but speed can't be ignored. You don't want the American people to feel too uncomfortable for too long."

Bring it on

Rep. Jeff Denham, R-Calif., re-elected narrowly last month, said he wants Republicans to "provide certainty" within a year. He said that means showing in January "not only what our vision is, but putting it in print, start passing it through committees and get some consensus with the Senate. But it is something that we need to resolve within the year."

Republicans have yet to decide what their replacement will look like. Though details are scant, Trump and Ryan have proposed tax breaks

having nothing to put in its place."

Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said last week that the GOP-controlled Congress plans to pass a procedural measure in January that will let Republicans push repeal legislation through the Senate later with just a simple majority. That's important because with the Senate GOP holding a 52-48 majority next year, Democrats would otherwise be able to block a repeal bill unless it gets 60 votes.

The early procedural vote could also signal that the GOP is intent on repealing Obama's law, while saving the more difficult details for later. They are still deciding what that part of the process will look like - and what their replacement will be. —AP

TREEHOUSE FOODS RECALLS SOME PRODUCTS CITING SALMONELLA RISK

NEW YORK: Packaged foods maker TreeHouse Foods Inc on Sunday recalled certain macaroni and cheese cup products containing cheddar cheese seasoning, saying they may be contaminated with salmonella. The company said no illnesses had been reported and that the products had been distributed nationwide through retail stores.

Products being recalled are Big Win Original Macaroni & Cheese Dinner, Cheese Club Express Mac Macaroni & Cheese Dinner and Great Value Macaroni & Cheese Original Cups, the company said.

TreeHouse said the recall was issued because of a notification from its supplier that the milk powder used in the seasoning of the products had the potential for salmonella contamination. Salmonella is a bacteria that typically infects the intestinal tract and can cause diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about 1.2 million illnesses and about 450 deaths occur because of non-typhoidal salmonella annually in the United States.

SOUTH KOREA TEMPORARILY BANS TRANSPORT OF POULTRY TO FIGHT BIRD FLU

SEOUL: South Korea's agriculture ministry said yesterday that it will issue a temporary nationwide ban on the transportation of poultry to contain the spread of bird flu, with 43 outbreaks recorded in Asia's fourth-largest economy.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs said in a statement that the movement control order will be effective for 48 hours, from 1500 GMT on Monday or midnight in Seoul. Since the first outbreak of a severe strain of bird flu known as H5N6 was reported on Nov 18., South Korea has ramped up quarantine measures to stop a wider spread of the virus, includ-

ing issuing a 48-hour nationwide standstill order three weeks ago.

A total of 43 bird flu outbreaks had been confirmed as of Dec 11, with another nine possible cases being tested, according to the ministry statement. To prevent the spread of bird flu, the ministry said at least 8.8 million farm birds were culled and plans to slaughter 1.5 million more. That would be over 10 percent of the country's poultry population of nearly 85 million.

Although cases of human infections from the H5N6 virus have previously been reported elsewhere including China, no cases of human infection have been found in South Korea. —Reuters

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VALLEROIS-LE-BOIS, France: This file photo taken on August 03, 2016 shows cows in their pen feeding at a farm. — AFP

COWS AND RICE PADDIES BOOST METHANE EMISSIONS: STUDY

PARIS: Global methane emissions from agriculture and other sources have surged in recent years, threatening efforts to slow climate change, an international study has found. Researchers led by French Laboratoire des Sciences du Climat et de l'Environnement (LSCE) reported that methane concentrations in the air began to surge around 2007 and grew precipitously in 2014 and 2015.

In that two-year period methane concentrations shot up by 10 or more parts per billion (ppb) annually, compared with an average annual increase of only 0.5 ppb during the early 2000s, according to the study released by the Global Carbon Project, which groups climate researchers.

Marielle Saunois, lead author of the study and assistant professor at Université de Versailles Saint Quentin, said that the increase in methane emissions could threaten efforts to limit global warming. "We should do more about methane emissions. If we want to stay below a 2 degrees (Celsius) temperature increase, we should not follow this track and need to make a rapid turnaround," she said in a statement.

Less prevalent

Methane is much less prevalent in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide (CO2) -- the main man-made greenhouse gas-but is more potent because it traps 28 times more heat. The report did not say to what extent methane contributes to global warming. CO2 emissions are expected to remain flat for the third year in a row in 2016, thanks to falls in China, the Global Carbon Project said last month. Saunois said that while the reasons behind the methane surge are not well understood, the most likely sources are cattle ranching and rice farming. Cows expel large quantities of methane and the flooded soils of rice paddies are homes for microbes that produce the gas. She cited data from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization indicating that livestock operations worldwide expanded from producing 1.3 billion head of cattle in 1994 to nearly 1.5 billion in 2014, with a similar increase in rice cultivation in many Asian countries.

Robert Jackson, a co-author of the paper and Professor in Earth System Science at Stanford University, said that methane can come from many different sources, including natural sources such as marshes and other wetlands, but about 60 percent comes from human activities, notably agriculture. A smaller portion of the human contribution, about a third, comes from fossil fuel exploration, where methane can leak from oil and gas wells during drilling. "When it comes to methane, there has been a lot of focus on the fossil fuel industry, but we need to look just as hard, if not harder, at agriculture," Jackson said. — Reuters

CHINA OPENS INVESTIGATION INTO SLAUGHTER OF RARE SEA TURTLE

BEIJING: Authorities in southern China have opened an investigation into the slaughter and sale of a protected leatherback sea turtle by local fishermen, media reported Saturday. The case grew to national prominence after cell phone video circulated showing the 200-kilogram (440-pound) turtle being sliced into pieces and sold to eager villagers in a fishing village in the southern province of Guangdong. The meat sold for about 70 Yuan (\$10) per kilogram, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Xinhua that six villagers have been referred to investigators. It said area residents were told by fishermen that the turtle was dead at the time it was caught.

Liang Daichong, a local fisheries policeman quoted by Xinhua, said the incident was the result of "bad eating habits" and simple ignorance of regulations. China's growing animal rights movement has sought to raise awareness of abuses ranging from the slaughter of canines for an annual dog meat festival in a southern city to the farming of bears milked for their bile to be used in traditional Chinese medicine.

Social media has played a major role in mobilizing such sentiments, although a push to enact animal protection legislation has made little progress through the national legislature. — AP

GENERIC COPY OF ROCHE FLU PILL TAMIFLU HITS US MARKET

The first generic copy of Roche's top-selling flu pill Tamiflu hit the US market yesterday, marking a further step in the Swiss drugmaker's enforced evolution to reliance on a new wave of blockbuster medicines.

Unlisted generic drugmaker Alvogen, which developed the cut-price version with India's Natco Pharma, said it expected the cheaper product to save the US healthcare system up to \$500 million in the upcoming flu season.

Over the years, Tamiflu has provided Roche with occasional windfall profits as flu epidemics have led to spikes in demand, most notably during global H1N1 swine flu outbreak in 2009 when revenue from the drug hit almost \$3 billion.

Since then sales have fallen back and Tamiflu is currently a relatively small component of Roche's overall revenue, which reached \$37 billion in the first nine months of 2016. Roche faces bigger generic challenges starting next year, when the

first so-called biosimilar versions of its injectable biotech cancer drugs are expected to reach the market in Europe.

Its three established cancer blockbusters Rituxan, Herceptin and Avastin, which account for annual sales of around \$20 billion, all face biosimilar competition by the end of the decade in major markets. Roche is banking on success with a new batch of biotech drugs for cancer and other serious diseases to help fill the gap. — Reuters

BREXIT UNCERTAINTIES THREATEN BRAIN DRAIN FOR UK SCIENCE

JOB SECURITY AND RESEARCH PROSPECTS UP IN THE AIR

LONDON: Like many foreign scientists in Britain, Joanna Bagniewska was devastated when Britons voted to leave the European Union. The biology lecturer, a Polish migrant who found Britain a welcoming place to build her academic career over a decade, is suddenly seeing her job security and research prospects up in the air.

"I'm worried that after my current contract finishes, one of the prerequisites could be a permanent residence card," she said. "I'd like to apply for EU grant money, but how much longer will it be available for?"

Britain's top universities have long been among the world's most sought-after destinations for study and research, drawing the brightest minds from all corners of the globe. But since Britons voted in June to leave the 28-nation EU, many in the science community say the UK risks losing the money, the international influence - and crucially, the talent - to sustain that enviable position.

More than one-tenth of research funding at British universities has come from the EU in recent years. Some fields - such as nanotechnology and cancer research - are more dependent on EU funding than others, according to a report by technology firm Digital Science. From 2007 to 2013, Britain received 8.8 billion Euros (\$9.4 billion) in direct EU investment in research.

Upset for the future

Bagniewska is not just anxious about herself - she's upset for her students' future too, for the opportunities that both Britons and foreigners will likely miss out on when unfettered mobility between Britain and Europe can no longer be taken for granted. "They were just getting excited about doing their masters and PhDs in other countries. And then Brexit happened and they just got trampled," she said.

Scientists and researchers argue that being part of the EU has given British science a huge boost because it allows Britain to recruit the best talent across Europe and take part in important research collaborations and student exchanges without being constrained by national boundaries. The bloc's freedom of movement means its 500 million people can live and work visa-free in any member state. No one knows yet what form Britain's exit from the EU - commonly known as Brexit - is going to take, but immigration was a key issue for "Leave" voters. Many believe some limit should be put on the number of EU citizens moving to Britain.

Prime Minister Theresa May has vowed to reassert control over British borders. She has offered no firm guarantees for the rights of Europeans already living in Britain, an uncertainty that weighs heavily over the 32,000 Europeans who make up 16 percent of the academic workforce in British universities. Many universities say the rhetoric over immigration control is also jeopardizing recruitment of researchers and students from further afield.

Scientists for EU, an advocacy group, says it has received over 400 letters from researchers describing how Brexit has already impacted their life and work. Some are losing doctoral students who pulled out of studentships and job offers. Academics are putting plans to relocate to Britain on hold. One said their employer, a London university, immediately imposed a temporary hiring freeze, citing uncertainties about student recruitment and research income.



ENGLAND: In this photo taken on Friday, Dec 2, 2016, university lecturer Joanna Bagniewska looks at a tiger skull at the Zoology department of the University of Reading. — AP

Moving for the EU

Adam Durrant, a British entrepreneur who founded an aerospace startup supplying climate data to airlines and aircraft manufacturers, says he's now considering moving some of his business to a EU country outside of Britain. Part of the reason, he says, is that Brexit will likely make hiring the right people much harder than before.

"In the future, it probably means that people would be less interested to come to the UK to work," said Durrant. "There's a huge question mark over my company and my own personal future. I will certainly retain a UK presence, but my company's focus of gravity may shift elsewhere."

Scientists say some UK-based researchers are already being excluded from joint bids for EU funding to minimize the risks for their colleagues.

Paul Crowther, head of physics and astronomy at the University of Sheffield, said a researcher from his department was dropped from an EU grant proposal as a precaution following the Brexit referendum. The vote "put the UK-based researchers in a very awkward position" and their participation in EU-funded programs could "compromise the project," he was told. "The erosion of UK involvement in EU networks has already begun, with both the UK and EU science worse off," Crowther said.

Apart from a loss of grant money, Brexit will likely cause British scientists and research centers to miss out on shared databases and infrastructure. "Large-scale efforts like studies of rare genetic diseases, the building of large facilities, are areas that multinational collaborations do much better," said Venki Ramakrishnan, a Nobel Prize-winning biologist and president of Britain's prestigious Royal Society.

The EU is an important source of research funding for Britain, which lags behind many developed countries in state investment in science. In 2014, Britain's government spent under 0.5 percent of its GDP on research - below the European average, and half that of South Korea.

May's government is clearly aware of the jitters. She has promised to increase annual investment in research by 2 billion pounds (\$2.4 billion) by 2020, in hopes her country can remain a world leader in science and innovation.

Durrant is doubtful that's enough to make a big difference. "Two billion a year spread across everything isn't going to go very far," he said. Similar anxieties are being felt at the undergraduate level. The 125,000 European students studying at British universities now pay the same fees as locals and have access to the same government loans. Officials have promised this will not change for those applying next year - but no one knows what will happen after that.

Fewer European students appeared to be applying for some of Britain's most competitive university courses, including medicine and places at Oxford and Cambridge. In September, the admission service UCAS reported a 9 percent drop in EU applications for British undergraduate courses starting in 2017.

Some argue that Britain could become like Switzerland, an "associate" EU state that is opting out of free movement of people while still taking part in limited European science projects.

"It's not all doom and gloom - but it will be harder," Ramakrishnan said. "We could make a go of it outside the EU. But for that to happen, we have to attract talent and fund science. And those two things are critical." — AP



TRINGGADING, ACEH PROVINCE, Indonesia: Survivors perform Friday prayer at a Jami Quba mosque which was severely damaged during Wednesday's earthquake on Friday, Dec 9, 2016. — AP

AT LEAST 45,000 HOMELESS AFTER ACEH QUAKE IN INDONESIA

JAKARTA: At least 45,000 people have been displaced by the powerful earthquake that hit Indonesia's Aceh province, authorities said Saturday, as the government and aid agencies pooled efforts to meet the basic survival needs of shaken communities.

The estimate of the number of homeless people continues to grow while relief efforts fan out across the three districts near the epicenter of Wednesday's magnitude 6.5 quake, National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told a press conference. "The basic needs of refugees must be met during the evacuation," the agency said in statement.

Humanitarian groups are now coordinating their efforts from a main command post in the worst affected district Pidie Jaya, the agency said. At least 100 people were killed and hundreds injured in the quake, which also destroyed or damaged more than

11,000 buildings, mostly homes but also several hundred mosques and schools. The displaced are staying in temporary shelters and mosques or with relatives.

On Saturday, sniffer dogs were again used in the search for bodies and possible survivors in the devastated town of Meureudu, where a market filled with shop houses was largely flattened. Four other locations in Pidie Jaya are also the focus of search efforts. President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo traveled Friday to worst-hit areas of the province and promised to rebuild communities.

Australia's government said on Saturday it will provide 1 million Australian dollars (\$750,000) of humanitarian aid through the Indonesian Red Cross. Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said Australia is ready to respond to additional requests for assistance from the Indonesian government. — AP

REINDEER ARE SHRINKING: WARMING THREATENS XMAS ICON

PARIS: If Santa is recruiting helpers to haul Christmas presents around the world this year he had better take a few extra, said researchers Monday who warned that reindeer are shrinking.

Over the past 16 years, the weight of adult reindeer in Svalbard in the Norwegian Arctic has dropped by 12 percent, likely due to global warming, said study findings presented to a meeting at the British Ecological Society (BES) in Liverpool. By the time they reached adulthood, reindeer born in 2010 weighed just over 48 kilograms (106 pounds), compared to 55 kg for those born in 1994.

"Twelve percent may not sound very much, but given how important body weight is to reproduction and survival, it's potentially huge," study leader Steve Albon of the James Hutton Institute in Scotland, told AFP.

Previous research had shown that when the average adult weight in April is less than 50kg, the population as a whole declines, he added. Albon and his fellow researchers blame climate change for the shrinking reindeer. Scientists say land surface temperatures in the Arctic were about 2.8 degrees Celsius (five degrees Fahrenheit) higher last year than when records began a century earlier.

Warmer winters mean more rain, which

falls on snow and freezes, the BES explained in a statement.

'Catastrophic die-offs'

The ice prevents reindeer from getting to the lichen which comprises the bulk of their winter diet and for which they usually forage in the snow. Lichen are complex organisms comprised of a fungus living in symbiosis with an alga or bacterium. "The reindeer starve, aborting their calves or giving birth to much lighter young," said the BES. Reindeer numbers have increased over the past two decades, said the research team, so greater competition for food likely also contributed to their smaller size.

This meant there could be more, but smaller reindeer in the Arctic in the decades to come, "possibly at risk of catastrophic die-offs because of increased ice on the ground." The team has tracked Arctic reindeer since 1994, catching, marking and measuring 10-month-old calves every winter and returning the following year to recapture and note the animals' size and weight. A study earlier this year pointed to 61,000 reindeer starving to death on the Yamal Peninsula in Siberia in the winter of 2013-2014 due to a "rain-on-snow" event as described in the new research. — AFP



DIKAN, Sweden: A Sami man from the Vilhelmina Norra Sameby, catches a reindeer during a gathering of his reindeers herd for selection and calf labeling on October 27, 2016. — AFP



BOULEVARD ORGANIZED ITS FIRST JOGGING/RUNNING MARATHON

On Saturday 10th of December 2016, Boulevard organized its first jogging / running Marathon "Run for Change". A total of 250 participants enjoyed the fresh air, spacious greenery and amazing view in Boulevard in an exciting competitive environment.

This Marathon was sponsored by Peak, Rauch, Biryntand Al Seef Hospital. It was aimed to increase health awareness and maintain a healthy life style by exercising. Joggers and runners went in a 6KM mini Marathon around Boulevard project and winners enjoyed valuable prizes and gifts.

Rawan Adnan - Marketing & Leasing Manager stated that Boulevard management is planning to organize such Marathons quarterly as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility to support sport activities and encourage society members to follow a healthy life style. In addition,

Boulevard has created special routes for joggers and runners as part of its dedication to create a healthier atmosphere for athletes and sport lovers.

Rawan Adnan also added that "Boulevard" project provides commercial, entertainment and sports services to represent the perfect place for family and youth to spend their time and enjoy such unique events. The project facilitates a huge commercial mall that consist of 2 floors with famous international and local brands, coffee shops and restaurants in addition to a huge green area that occupies 90% of the project area. It provides a perfect environment for joggers to enjoy beautiful views of trees. In addition to the above, the project also contains 2 lakes, a river and sports fields for football, tennis, basketball and cricket.

GARSHOM AWARD FOR INDIAN EXPAT

By Sajeev K Peter

Indian expatriate and well-known social activist in Kuwait Manoj Mavelikkara is one of the recipients of this year's Garshom International Awards. Dr Fancis Cletus (Abu Dhabi), Mani Menon (Malaysia), Dr Rajeshkumar (USA) and Shijo Francis (Bangalore) are the other recipients of Garshom International Awards for the year 2016.

An expatriate, who arrived in Kuwait 24 years ago, Mavelikkara is well-known in the Indian community for his selfless and voluntary humanitarian service in helping repatriate bodies of people who pass away in Kuwait especially those who are financially weak. He has helped repatriate nearly 1,000 corpses mostly to India over the last 20 years. He has also helped dispatch dead bodies to countries such as the Philippines, Egypt, Sri Lanka and Korea.

The 11th Garshom Awards will be presented in Pangung Seri,

Taman Budaya, Malacca on December 17, 2016 at 5.30 pm. The word 'garshom' means 'pravasi', one who is away from his motherland. Garshom, a media company for non-resident Keralites (NRKs), recognizes the contribution of the global community of non-resident Keralites to the society they are currently part of, the nation they had the privilege to be born to, and to Kerala, their motherland in particular. Till now ten Garshom Award presentation ceremonies have been held.



SABAH AL-AHMAD CENTER FOR TALENT AND CREATIVITY HONORS ARBITRATORS SECOND LIFE MATH CONTEST

Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for talent and Creativity honored the arbitrators who supervised and staged mathematics life and schools set up mathematics club within the competition, as the Commission introduced electronic platforms in the Ministry of Education and the organizing committees in similarly National Robot third.

First Officer of Strategy and Planning Manager - Riad Sharaf in Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for talent and Creativity for the important role it like cooperation of the Ministry of Education with the center through the participation of all schools in the competitions center that is working to spread interest in scientific articles mathematics and computer Kuwait has sons who are the future of the nation .

I commend the honor during a ceremony honoring the jury in the second national math contest at the state level under the slogan (Mathematics life) and to honor the constellation of Almalen, teachers and mentors in the national robot contest third yesterday in Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity on the efforts carried out

by the teacher in educating young people and encourage them to engage in scientific fields of mathematics and computer

For his part, the math club adviser in Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity Ahmed Anzi announced its first "best way instruction" to teachers and teachers of mathematics and teachers of Kuwaitis and expatriates on 6 November for a month for all the Kuwait government and private schools, and there is the value of financial awards competition of its kind to be held in Kuwait are the first centers in recognition of their efforts to simplify and facilitate the math for students.

He pointed out that it was the creation of mathematics clubs in schools in Kuwait elementary middle and high pointing out that the aim of these centers to encourage students to love mathematics, as well as convert them to my side along with my work.

And it announced the start of the third life math competition at the level of Kuwait is notified of all schools in Kuwait to begin registration in the competition and continue to receive requests

to the beginning of March and subsequent announcement of the winners in the contest honored in the award, which is held in the month of April of each year ceremony.

He pointed out that the student out of the primary and middle achievers in mathematics helps him in his scientific career in the future, as well as making it puts the solutions to the problems that are in life correctly because mental abilities are able to be creative in developing solutions for the corresponding problems.

He pointed out that the number of schools that participated in the previous contest surpassed 250 schools each school has established its own project under the slogan (Mathematics life) the role of mathematics in the public life of the man won 60 projects, half of the primary and the other half stage of the middle stage shows, pointing out that mathematics is a science account numbers and study the relations between the various figures out equations known mathematical equations, a mathematical formulas that adjust adequately by other sciences.



KOZHIKODE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION MAHILAVEDI HOLDS FREE MEDICAL CAMP

Kozhikode District Association Mahilavedi conducted Free Medical Camp on 2nd December 2016 at Pakistan English School and College, Abbasiya for the benefit of public and the members in association with the Indian Doctors Forum, Kuwait. The camp was also supported by Kuwait Heart Foundation and Indian Dentists Alliance in Kuwait. The camp was inaugurated by Dr. Rajendra Mishra, the Joint General Secretary, IDF and the function was presided over by Mahilavedi President Vanisree Santhosh.

Dr. Sayed Rehman-IDF Community Secretary, Dr Subu Thomas-IDAK, Navaf- Warba Medical Supplies Company, Kozhikode District Association President, E. Rajagopalan, General Secretary, Ramakrishnan M, Association Patron Santhakumar. and Mahilavedi Secretary Reeya Santhosh addressed the gathering. Association Treasurer Haneef. C, Patron Aboobacker, Vice-Presidents Sidharthan K M and Shyji K, Mahilavedi Treasurer Neena Rajagopal and Medical Camp General Convener Biji Ramakrishnan also

graced the occasion. Organizations and individuals that offered great support for the camp were honoured by presenting mementos.

Large number of people got benefited from this noble service organized by Mahilavedi. Doctors from various departments such as General Medicine, Pediatrics, Cardiology, Ophthalmology, ENT, Orthopedics, Gynecology, Oncology, Dermatology, Dental, Physiotherapy etc. offered their free service from 8 am to 1 pm. Around fifteen paramedical staff also rendered their service for the smooth functioning of the camp. Cholesterol check-Up by Kuwait Heart Foundation, Blood Sugar Test by Warba Medical Supplies Company, Vision Test, and ECG facility were other attractions of the Medical Camp.

Welcome speech was delivered by the Medical Camp General Convener Mrs. Biji Ramakrishnan and vote of thanks was proposed by Mahilavedi Treasurer Mrs Neena Rajagopal.



OSN MOVIES
ACTION

- 00:00 Combustion
- 02:00 Jersey Shore Shark Attack
- 04:00 Close Range
- 06:00 The Mark: Redemption
- 08:00 Nick Of Time
- 10:00 Jesse Stone: Lost In Paradise
- 12:00 Last Knights
- 14:00 Survivor
- 16:00 Nick Of Time
- 18:00 Automata
- 20:00 Taken 3
- 22:00 Constantine

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 01:45 Bondi Vet
- 02:40 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Borneo's Pygmy Elephants
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 06:49 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 07:36 Swamp Brothers
- 08:00 Swamp Brothers
- 08:25 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 09:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 10:10 Mutant Planet
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 Mutant Planet
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Borneo's Pygmy Elephants
- 18:25 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 19:20 Wildest Europe
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Search For The Knysna Elephants
- 22:05 Mutant Planet
- 23:00 Wildest Europe
- 23:55 Gator Boys

BBC FIRST

- 00:10 Eastenders
- 00:45 The Durrells
- 01:35 The Paradise
- 02:30 Orphan Black
- 03:15 Silent Witness
- 04:10 Doctors
- 04:40 Eastenders
- 05:10 Doctor Who

- 07:15 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 08:05 Impractical Jokers
- 08:30 Ridiculousness
- 08:55 Tosh.0
- 09:20 Key And Peele
- 09:45 Workaholics
- 10:10 The It Crowd
- 10:35 Ridiculousness
- 11:00 Lip Sync Battle
- 11:25 Lip Sync Battle
- 11:50 I Live With Models
- 12:15 Workaholics
- 12:40 The It Crowd
- 13:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 13:55 Ridiculousness
- 14:20 Lip Sync Battle
- 14:45 Lip Sync Battle
- 15:10 I Live With Models
- 15:35 Ridiculousness
- 16:00 Impractical Jokers
- 16:30 Workaholics
- 16:55 Tosh.0
- 17:25 Workaholics
- 17:50 Urban Tarzan
- 18:15 Urban Tarzan
- 18:39 The It Crowd
- 19:03 Lip Sync Battle
- 19:27 Lip Sync Battle
- 19:50 I Live With Models
- 20:13 Impractical Jokers
- 20:37 Ridiculousness
- 21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 21:30 South Park
- 21:54 Ugly Americans
- 22:18 The Roast Of James Franco
- 23:28 The Roast Of Donald Trump

Discovery Family

- 00:30 Prototype This
- 01:20 Buggin' With Ruud
- 02:10 The Lion Queen
- 03:00 Untamed & Uncut
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 04:40 How It's Made
- 05:05 How It's Made
- 05:30 Dirty Jobs
- 06:20 Mythbusters
- 07:00 Kenny The Shark
- 07:25 Awesome Adventures
- 07:50 Bad Dog
- 08:40 How It's Made
- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 Prototype This
- 10:20 Mythbusters
- 11:10 Dirty Jobs
- 12:00 Bad Dog
- 12:50 Ultimate Survival
- 13:40 How It's Made
- 14:05 How It's Made
- 14:30 Dirty Jobs
- 15:20 Mythbusters

- 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 08:45 Star Darlings
- 08:50 Liv And Maddie
- 09:15 Jessie
- 09:40 Jessie
- 10:05 Jessie
- 10:30 The Incredibles
- 12:35 Austin & Ally
- 13:00 Liv And Maddie
- 13:25 Liv And Maddie
- 13:50 Shake It Up
- 14:15 Shake It Up
- 14:40 Dog With A Blog
- 15:05 Dog With A Blog
- 15:30 Good Luck Charlie
- 15:55 Good Luck Charlie
- 16:20 Girl Meets World
- 16:45 Girl Meets World
- 17:10 Elena Of Avalor
- 17:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 18:25 Descendants Wicked World
- 18:30 Liv And Maddie
- 18:55 Star Darlings
- 19:00 Liv And Maddie
- 19:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:30 Austin & Ally
- 19:55 Descendants Wicked World
- 20:00 Backstage
- 20:25 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 20:30 Elena Of Avalor
- 20:55 Best Friends Whenever
- 21:20 Jessie
- 21:45 Jessie
- 22:10 Jessie
- 22:35 H2O: Just Add Water
- 23:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Doc McStuffins
- 00:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 00:35 Zou
- 00:50 Loopedidoo
- 01:05 Art Attack
- 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:45 Calimero
- 02:00 Zou
- 02:15 Loopedidoo
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 03:00 Calimero
- 03:15 Zou
- 03:30 Loopedidoo
- 03:45 Art Attack
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:25 Calimero
- 04:45 Loopedidoo
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:35 Calimero

- 20:10 Storage Hunters UK
- 20:35 The Liquidator
- 21:00 Salvage Hunters
- 21:50 Marooned With Ed Stafford
- 22:40 Sharks Among Us
- 23:30 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder

Disney XD

- 06:00 Supa Strikas
- 06:25 Supa Strikas
- 06:50 Counterfeit Cat
- 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 07:15 K.C. Undercover
- 07:40 Atomic Puppet
- 08:10 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 08:35 Danger Mouse
- 09:00 Finding Nemo
- 10:45 Gravity Falls
- 11:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 11:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 12:00 Counterfeit Cat
- 12:30 K.C. Undercover
- 12:55 K.C. Undercover
- 13:20 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
- 13:45 Lab Rats
- 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:15 Lab Rats
- 14:40 Counterfeit Cat
- 14:50 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 15:05 K.C. Undercover
- 15:30 Atomic Puppet
- 15:55 Lab Rats
- 16:25 Danger Mouse
- 16:50 Future-Worm!
- 17:15 Lab Rats: Crush, Chop & Burn
- 18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 18:10 Supa Strikas
- 18:35 Supa Strikas
- 19:00 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
- 19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 19:55 K.C. Undercover
- 20:30 Counterfeit Cat
- 20:45 Mighty Med
- 21:10 Pickle And Peanut
- 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 21:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
- 22:35 Boyster
- 23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

food network

- 00:00 Chopped South Africa
- 01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:00 Man Fire Food
- 02:30 Man Fire Food
- 03:00 Chopped
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 05:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 06:00 Chopped
- 07:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 07:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 08:00 The Kitchen
- 09:00 Cooking For Real
- 09:30 Cooking For Real
- 10:00 Chopped
- 11:00 Guy's Big Bite
- 11:30 Guy's Big Bite
- 12:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 12:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 13:00 Man Fire Food
- 13:30 Man Fire Food
- 14:00 Chopped
- 15:00 The Kitchen
- 16:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 16:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 17:00 Chopped
- 18:00 Iron Chef America
- 19:00 Siba's Table
- 19:30 Siba's Table
- 20:00 Private Chef
- 20:30 Private Chef
- 21:00 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera
- 21:30 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera
- 22:00 Iron Chef America
- 23:00 Siba's Table
- 23:30 Siba's Table

H2 HD

- 00:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 01:00 Ancient Aliens
- 02:00 Missing In Alaska
- 03:00 Ancient Impossible
- 03:30 Patton 360
- 04:40 Last Days Of The Nazis
- 05:30 America's Book Of Secrets
- 06:20 America's Book Of Secrets
- 07:10 The Universe
- 08:00 Ancient Aliens
- 09:00 Missing In Alaska
- 10:00 Ancient Impossible
- 11:00 Patton 360
- 12:00 Heroes Of War
- 13:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 14:00 Ancient Aliens
- 15:00 Missing In Alaska
- 16:00 Ancient Impossible
- 17:00 Patton 360
- 18:00 Heroes Of War
- 19:00 Ancient Aliens
- 20:00 Missing In Alaska
- 21:00 Ancient Impossible
- 22:00 Patton 360

- 23:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain

HISTORY

- 00:20 Fifth Gear
- 01:10 American Pickers
- 02:00 Storage Wars
- 02:25 Storage Wars
- 02:50 Fifth Gear
- 03:40 Fifth Gear
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Time Team
- 06:00 Shipping Wars
- 06:25 Shipping Wars
- 06:50 American Pickers
- 07:40 Pawn Stars
- 08:05 Pawn Stars
- 08:30 Storage Wars Texas
- 08:55 Banger Boys
- 09:45 Banger Boys
- 10:35 Shipping Wars
- 11:00 Shipping Wars
- 11:25 Time Team
- 12:15 Shark Wranglers
- 13:05 Ice Road Truckers
- 13:55 Counting Cars
- 14:20 Counting Cars
- 14:45 Fifth Gear
- 15:35 Pawn Stars
- 16:00 American Pickers
- 16:50 Storage Wars
- 17:15 Storage Wars
- 17:40 Swamp People
- 18:30 Time Team
- 19:20 American Pickers
- 20:10 Pawn Stars
- 20:35 Pawn Stars
- 21:00 Forged In Fire
- 21:50 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 22:40 Time Team
- 23:30 Forged In Fire

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
- 00:35 My Dubai
- 01:00 Cool Spaces
- 01:50 The Best Job In The World
- 02:15 Food School
- 02:40 Mega Food
- 03:30 Wineroads
- 03:55 Places We Go
- 04:20 Places We Go
- 04:45 Croatia's Finest
- 05:10 Croatia's Finest
- 05:35 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 06:00 Around The World In 80 Dishes
- 06:50 Cool Spaces
- 07:40 The Best Job In The World
- 08:05 Food School
- 08:30 Mega Food
- 09:20 Wineroads
- 09:45 Places We Go
- 10:10 Places We Go
- 10:35 Croatia's Finest
- 11:00 Croatia's Finest
- 11:25 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 11:50 Around The World In 80 Dishes
- 12:40 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 13:05 A Is For Apple
- 13:35 The Best Job In The World
- 14:00 Food School
- 14:30 Mega Food
- 15:25 Wineroads
- 15:50 Places We Go
- 16:20 Lucky Chow
- 16:45 Croatia's Finest
- 17:15 Croatia's Finest
- 17:40 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 18:10 Around The World In 80 Dishes
- 19:05 A Is For Apple
- 19:30 Wineroads
- 20:00 Places We Go
- 20:25 Lucky Chow
- 20:50 Croatia's Finest
- 21:15 Croatia's Finest
- 21:40 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 22:05 Around The World In 80 Dishes
- 22:55 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 23:20 A Is For Apple
- 23:45 The Best Job In The World

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

- 00:10 Science Of Stupid Sports
- 00:35 Science Of Stupid Sports
- 01:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
- 02:00 Mars
- 02:55 Startalk
- 03:50 Science Of Stupid Sports
- 04:15 Science Of Stupid Sports
- 04:45 Chasing UFOs
- 05:40 Strippers: Cars For Cash
- 06:35 Brain Games S3 Compilations
- 07:30 Megastuctures
- 08:25 Mega Factories
- 09:20 Chasing UFOs
- 10:15 Explorer
- 11:10 Classified: Secret Service Files
- 12:05 Locked Up Abroad
- 13:00 Mega Factories
- 14:00 The Raising Of The Costa Concordia
- 15:00 Brain Games Compilation
- 16:00 Fidel Castro: The Lost Tapes
- 17:00 Classified: Secret Service Files
- 18:00 Locked Up Abroad - Short
- 18:30 Locked Up Abroad - Short
- 19:00 Taboo



STORM RIDER ON OSN MOVIES FAMILY HD

- 20:00 Explorer
- 20:50 Classified: Secret Service Files
- 21:40 Locked Up Abroad - Short
- 22:05 Locked Up Abroad - Short
- 22:30 Taboo
- 23:20 Strippers: Cars For Cash

NAT GEO WILD HD

- 00:20 Dark Side Of Crocs
- 01:10 Animals Gone Wild
- 02:00 Sumatra's Last Tiger
- 02:50 Bear Nomad
- 03:45 The Invaders
- 04:40 Make You Laugh Out Loud
- 05:35 Sumatra's Last Tiger
- 06:30 Bear Nomad
- 07:25 The Invaders
- 08:20 Make You Laugh Out Loud
- 09:15 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 10:10 Extreme Animal Babies
- 11:05 World's Weirdest
- 12:00 Manta Mystery
- 12:55 Mother Croc
- 13:50 Hollywood Bear Tragedy
- 14:45 The Invaders
- 15:40 Make You Laugh Out Loud
- 16:35 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 17:30 Extreme Animal Babies
- 18:25 Madagascar's Fantastic Creatures
- 19:20 The Invaders
- 20:10 Make You Laugh Out Loud
- 21:00 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 21:50 Extreme Animal Babies
- 22:40 Madagascar's Fantastic Creatures
- 23:30 Manta Mystery

OSN MOVIES DRAMA

- 01:30 Boychoir
- 03:30 The Patrol
- 05:00 Every Thing Will Be Fine
- 07:00 Stolen From Suburbia
- 09:00 Abandoned
- 11:00 Boychoir
- 13:00 Invasion Day
- 15:00 Love Under The Stars
- 17:00 Abandoned
- 19:00 Landmine Goes Click
- 21:00 Touched With Fire
- 23:00 Addicted

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

- 00:30 Cougar Town
- 01:00 Cougar Town
- 01:30 Family Guy
- 02:00 Family Guy
- 02:30 Insecure
- 03:00 Last Man Standing
- 03:30 The Simpsons
- 04:00 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 George Lopez
- 06:00 The Grinder
- 06:30 Men At Work
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
- 08:30 George Lopez
- 09:00 Last Man Standing
- 09:30 Angie Tribeca
- 10:00 Young & Hungry
- 10:30 Men At Work
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 The Grinder
- 12:30 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
- 13:00 George Lopez
- 13:30 Men At Work
- 14:00 The Simpsons
- 14:30 Angie Tribeca
- 15:00 Young & Hungry
- 15:30 Cougar Town
- 16:00 Cougar Town
- 16:30 The Grinder
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 Last Man Standing
- 18:30 The Last Man On Earth
- 19:00 The Last Man On Earth
- 19:30 Young & Hungry
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Cougar Town
- 21:30 Cougar Town
- 22:00 Family Guy
- 22:30 Family Guy
- 23:00 Insecure
- 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

OSN MOVIES KIDS

- 04:30 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure
- 06:00 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
- 07:45 Ghatothkach - Master Of Magic
- 09:30 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
- 11:00 Gladiators Of Rome
- 12:45 Blue Elephant 2
- 14:30 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 16:00 Alpha Dogz: Pups United
- 18:00 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
- 20:00 Minuscule: Valley Of The Lost Ants
- 22:00 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 23:30 Alpha Dogz: Pups United
- 00:00 Exeter

OSN MOVIES PREMIERE

- 02:00 The Mark
- 04:00 Girl Missing
- 06:00 Murder, She Baked: A Chocolate Chip Cookie Mystery
- 08:00 Date Night
- 10:00 Two Wrongs
- 12:00 The Proposal
- 14:00 The Dorm
- 16:00 Date Night
- 18:00 The Visit
- 20:00 The Forger
- 22:00 Son Of A Gun



THE BEST OF ME ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 06:00 Doctors
- 06:30 Doctors
- 07:00 Eastenders
- 07:30 Holly City
- 08:30 Father Brown
- 09:15 Call The Midwife
- 10:10 Doctor Who
- 11:00 Doctors
- 11:30 Eastenders
- 12:00 Father Brown
- 12:45 Call The Midwife
- 13:40 Doctor Who
- 14:30 Doctors
- 15:00 Eastenders
- 15:30 Father Brown
- 16:15 Call The Midwife
- 17:10 Doctor Who
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Father Brown
- 20:00 Holly City
- 21:00 Mr Slink
- 21:55 Moone Boy
- 22:15 Moone Boy
- 22:40 Benidorm
- 23:30 The Detectivists

- 16:10 Kenny The Shark
- 16:35 Awesome Adventures
- 17:00 Secret Space Escapes
- 17:50 How The Universe Works
- 18:40 Prototype This
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 19:55 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 Secret Space Escapes
- 22:00 How The Universe Works
- 22:50 Untamed & Uncut
- 23:40 Ultimate Survival

ID

- 00:40 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen
- 01:30 Deadly Women
- 02:20 Suspicion
- 03:10 Murder Among Friends
- 04:00 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen
- 04:48 I Almost Got Away With It
- 05:36 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 06:24 Love The Way You Lie
- 07:12 Blood Relatives
- 08:00 Id Kill For You
- 08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 09:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 10:30 Love The Way You Lie
- 11:20 Blood Relatives
- 12:10 Disappeared
- 13:00 Id Kill For You
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 15:30 Love The Way You Lie
- 16:20 Blood Relatives
- 17:10 A Crime To Remember
- 18:00 Id Kill For You
- 18:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 19:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 20:30 Love The Way You Lie
- 21:20 Blood Relatives
- 22:10 I Am Homicide
- 23:00 Six Degrees Of Murder
- 23:50 Nowhere To Hide

Disney Channel HD

- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:00 Violetta
- 01:45 The Hive
- 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:40 Hank Zipzer
- 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:30 Violetta
- 04:15 The Hive
- 04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 04:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:10 Hank Zipzer
- 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:00 Violetta
- 06:45 The Hive
- 06:50 Mouk
- 07:00 Dog With A Blog
- 07:25 Dog With A Blog
- 07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 07:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir

- 05:50 Zou
- 06:00 Loopedidoo
- 06:15 Art Attack
- 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:50 Calimero
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:20 Loopedidoo
- 07:35 Art Attack
- 08:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 08:30 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 09:00 Goldie & Bear
- 09:30 Doc McStuffins
- 10:00 Doc McStuffins
- 10:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 The Lion Guard
- 12:00 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
- 12:30 Little Mermaid
- 13:00 Sofia The First
- 13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 14:30 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
- 15:00 The Lion Guard
- 15:30 Sofia The First
- 16:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 16:30 Doc McStuffins
- 17:00 The Lion Guard
- 17:30 PJ Masks
- 18:00 The Adventures Of The Disney Fairies
- 18:30 Goldie & Bear
- 19:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 19:30 Little Mermaid
- 20:00 PJ Masks
- 20:30 Sofia The First
- 21:00 The Lion Guard: Return Of The Roar
- 22:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 22:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 23:00 The Adventures Of The Disney Fairies
- 23:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

Discovery Channel HD

- 00:20 Wheeler Dealers
- 01:10 Blue Collar Backers
- 02:00 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
- 02:50 World's Top 5
- 03:40 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
- 04:30 The Liquidator
- 05:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 05:30 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 Deadliest Catch
- 06:50 Wheeler Dealers
- 07:40 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
- 08:30 Gold Divers
- 09:20 The Liquidator
- 09:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 10:10 How Do They Do It?
- 10:35 Blue Collar Backers
- 11:25 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
- 12:15 World's Top 5
- 13:05 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 13:30 Storage Hunters UK
- 13:55 The Liquidator
- 14:20 Edge Of Alaska
- 15:10 Gold Divers
- 16:00 Deadliest Catch
- 16:50 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
- 17:40 Wheeler Dealers
- 18:30 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 18:55 How Do They Do It?

CLASSIFIEDS

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

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

REQUIRED

A waiter for a famous restaurant in Kuwait city

- at least 3 year's experience
- good appearance
- salary from 200 K.D to 250 K.D

Please send your C.V at
 (halahummuskw@gmail.com)
 Contact NO. 97640383

ACCOMMODATION

For Filipino Bachelor ONLY near Big Jamia Farwaniya. Available on December 25, Contact 66826412 or 97512782
 13-12-2016

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Chejalla Nageshwar Raju (old name) S/o. Chejarla Pedda Chengal Raju, R/o. H.No. 2/150, Bomavaram (V) & (P), Obulavaripalli (M), Y.S.R. Kadapa, Dist., A.P. hereby state that I have changed my name as CHEJARLA NAGESWAR RAJU (new name). (C 5247)
 13-12-2016

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



Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is
1889988

PRAYER TIMINGS

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



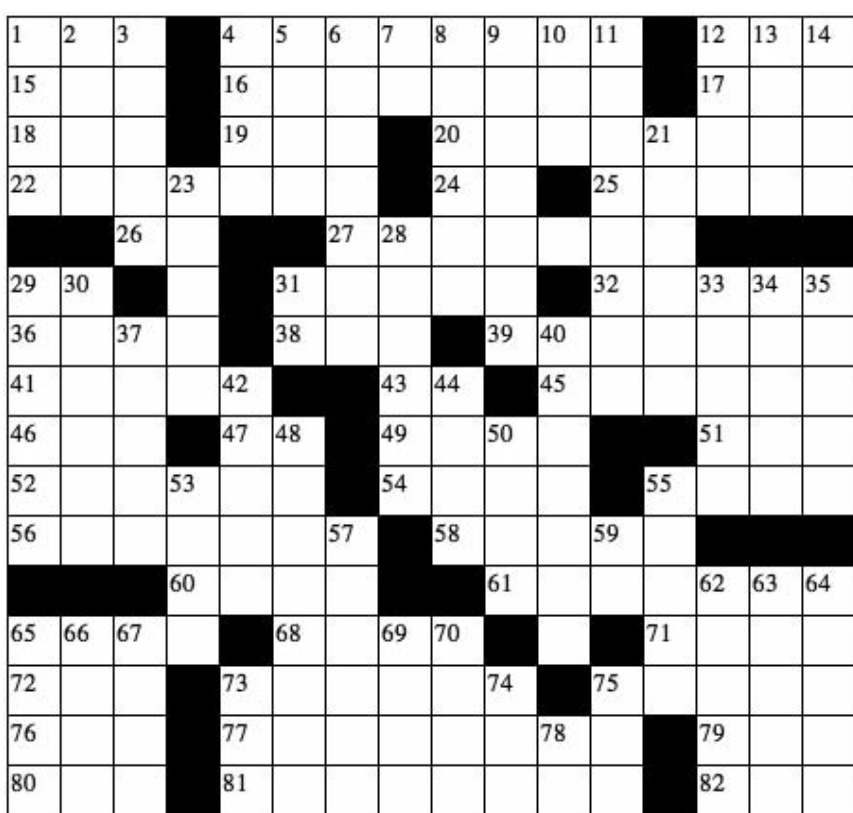
Flight Schedule

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 13/12/2016				ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	KLM	411	Amsterdam	01:35	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	MSC	412	Asyut	01:55	KAC	785	Jeddah	15:15
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	15:20
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50	THY	773	Istanbul	02:25	KAC	513	Tehran	15:25
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20	KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:55	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	QTR	1072	Doha	16:10	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55	QTR	1079	Doha	15:40
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	FDB	051	Dubai	16:25	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:35	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
MSC	411	Asyut	01:00	CLX	784	Luxembourg	16:40	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45	KAC	777	Riyadh	16:00
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	RJA	640	Amman	16:55	KKK	6505	Istanbul	03:55	KAC	745	Dammam	16:00
KAC	102	London	01:25	KAC	118	New York	17:00	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	KAC	283	Dhaka	16:15
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	MSR	613	Cairo	04:10	KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:30
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	JZR	325	Al Najaf	17:50	KAC	167	Paris	04:25	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	NIA	251	Alexandria	17:55	QTR	1077	Doha	04:40	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00	FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	FDB	063	Dubai	18:10	QTR	1087	Doha	05:50	KAC	615	Bahrain	17:35
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	JZR	177	Dubai	18:20	JZR	560	Sohag	06:05	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:35	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30	KAC	343	Chennai	17:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	QTR	1080	Doha	18:50	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	06:35	JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	KAC	746	Dammam	19:10	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25	KAC	153	Istanbul	06:50	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	KAC	502	Beirut	19:30	RJA	645	Amman	07:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25	KAC	778	Riyadh	19:35	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
BAW	157	London	06:40	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45	KAC	541	Cairo	07:15	CLX	713	Luxembourg	18:30
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	KAC	514	Tehran	19:50	KAC	773	Riyadh	07:30	JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	07:45	NIA	252	Alexandria	18:55
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	KAC	168	Paris	19:55	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:55	FDB	064	Dubai	19:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05	KAC	563	Amman	08:00	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:15
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	OMA	647	Muscat	20:10	KAC	679	Dubai	08:10	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35	BAW	156	London	08:40	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	562	Amman	20:40	FDB	054	Dubai	08:55	QTR	1081	Doha	19:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45	KAC	117	New York	09:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50	KAC	691	Muscat	09:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
AVV	651	Asyut	10:10	KAC	616	Bahrain	20:50	KAC	791	Madinah	09:00	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55	KAC	101	London	09:35	KAC	361	Colombo	20:35
IRA	675	Lar	10:40	KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	UAE	856	Dubai	09:55	MSR	607	Luxor	21:05
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20	KAC	671	Dubai	10:05	OMA	648	Muscat	21:10
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	ALK	229	Colombo	21:25	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:25
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:35	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	21:30
QTR	8511	Doha	12:00	UAE	859	Dubai	21:40	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:35
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45	AVV	652	Sohag	11:10	DLH	634	Doha	21:35
SYR	341	Damascus	12:30	QTR	1082	Doha</									

CROSSWORD 1459



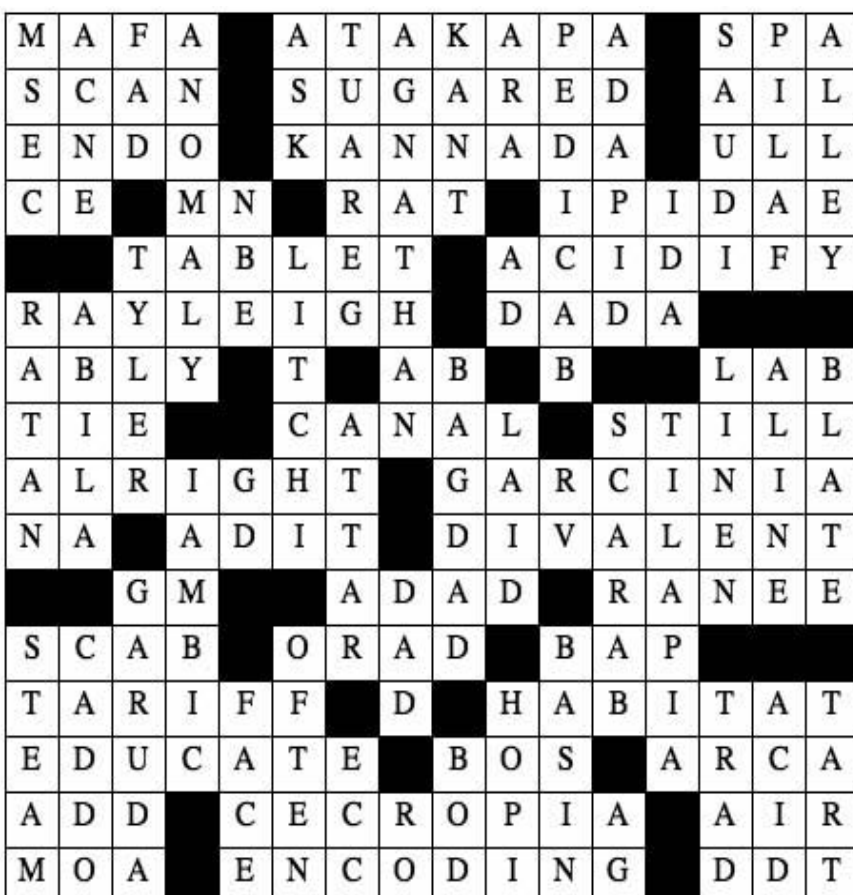
ACROSS

1. The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
4. A firearm that is held and fired with one hand.
11. South African term for 'boss'.
15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
16. In an ideal manner.
17. A sensation (as of a cold breeze or bright light) that precedes the onset of certain disorders such as a migraine attack or epileptic seizure.
18. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
19. Any of several plant glycoproteins that act like specific antibodies but are not antibodies in that they are not evoked by an antigenic stimulus.
20. (statistics) Relating to or constituting the most frequent value in a distribution.
21. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
23. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
25. Cook and make edible by putting in a hot oven.
26. A large number of things or people considered together.
27. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
28. Pale gray.
35. Being or occurring in fact or actuality.
39. The month following February and preceding April.
41. Comb-plate or locomotor organ consisting of a row of strong cilia whose bases are fused.
43. Pertaining to or resembling amoebae.
45. A bachelor's degree in library science.
47. (prefix) In front of or before in space.
48. In a murderous frenzy as if possessed by a demon.
50. Having a squat and fleshy build.
51. A public promotion of some product or service.
52. A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.
53. Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
56. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
59. The time when something begins (especially life).
61. In some classifications considered a genus of subfamily Melinae.
64. The capital and largest city of Iran.
68. The condition of being honored (esteemed or respected or well regarded).
71. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
72. A branch of the Tai languages.
73. Showing empathy or ready comprehension of others' states.
75. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
76. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
77. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
78. A doctor's degree in education.

DOWN

1. By bad luck.
2. Kamarupan languages spoken in northeastern India and western Burma.
3. The act of scanning.
4. Of or relating to or located near a hilum.
5. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
6. Articles of clothing worn about the neck.
7. Marked by features of the immediate and usually discounted past.
8. Marked by lack of intellectual depth.
9. The inner and longer of the two bones of the human forearm.
10. A Mid-Atlantic state.
11. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
12. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
13. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
14. The general activity of selling.
22. Any group or radical of the form RCO- where R is an organic group.
24. With no effort to conceal.
29. Having or joined by a seam or seams.
30. Living quarters reserved for wives and concubines and female relatives in a Muslim household.
31. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
32. An intuitive awareness.
33. Predacious long-bodied large-eyed insect of warm regions.
34. The wool of a sheep or similar animal.
36. A Loloish language.
37. Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.
38. 100 penni equal 1 markka.
40. Sheet glass cut in shapes for windows or doors.
42. Flightless New Zealand birds similar to gallinules.
44. Italian lawn bowling (played on a long narrow dirt court).
46. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
49. A Loloish language.
54. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
55. Chinese tree cultivated especially in Philippines and India for its edible fruit.
57. Praise, glorify, or honor.
58. A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
60. A case or sheath especially a pollen sac or moss capsule.
62. United States tennis player who was the first Black to win United States and English singles championships (1943-1993).
63. Relatively deep or strong.
65. Any competition.
66. In bed.
67. An aromatic ointment used in antiquity.
69. A local computer network for communication between computers.
70. A reptile genus of Iguanidae.
74. A soft yellowish-white trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

In just about any social circle, you shine-others will be impressed with your knowledge of rather conceptual and spiritual ideas and your ability to present them to others. You could be working with a school system or church office as a secretary or helper. You may find yourself giving a lecture or perhaps teaching some math technique. A question and answer period after the lecture may tempt you to invite people to some private sessions for extra help. You may want to be careful not to go too far in helping those that may need a different sort of counseling than you are able to offer, however. Hugs tend to bring a comfortable feeling of acceptance-that may be all that is needed in many cases. We create our future when we dream.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You should find this a nearly perfect time to be assertive and to move forward in your career. You have all of the drive and energy that you could possibly want-it should not be too hard to channel. Your path is open and clear for whatever you want to accomplish. This afternoon you have an opportunity to sign up for an exercise program and a friend will sign up with you. This is a good thing and will help you maintain a good health habit. They may be giving classes in how to choose healthy meals and partake in healthy dieting. It would be good to make the time for these courses. It won't be long before you and your friend will be taking some shopping trips for a new and better-fitting suit or other clothing. Harmony rules and this is a happy time.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Feeling in touch or in harmony with those around you helps you to enjoy open communication. It is a time when you should not be surprised at some sort of extra support or recognition, particularly regarding your work situation. Expect a little added boost. A round table discussion will give all that are present, food for ideas and thoughts. Others may find you quite charismatic or commanding in speaking. People will have no problem in relating to just what you mean. Your optimism and faith will be strong and carry you through to success. The kids in your home seem to want everything they see on television-a talk is due. You may find enjoyment in reading a book later this evening and while you are at it, you encourage young people to read.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your conservative mind explodes when it has the opportunity to be free and create. You could be working in the wonderful world of computer gaming, or for a group of creative and independent young people that are toy makers, auctioneers on the internet, writers or entertainment organizers, etc. Whatever you do-change some of the ways you choose a job. An example might be that talents in math do not mean you have to be an accountant all of your life. Your profession should be something you really enjoy-this is where you will have an opportunity to meet the people that have similar likes with you. You are the type of person that makes a positive difference, so find the best condition for meeting the most people while experiencing the most satisfaction!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There are new backup systems that you look into so that your ideas are not lost-then you move into action. Perhaps politics, law, education, travel and religion could be some of the areas you review. You long for new and exciting challenges and experiences. Metaphysical or philosophical musings could capture your attention. This should be a super day for getting things accomplished. You should find your hand and eye coordination good, making just about any task run smoothly. This afternoon you return calls and visit with friends-perhaps making plans for get-togethers. You may even feel like exercising and getting out of doors later this afternoon. You enjoy taking care of your animals this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may be in an interesting job these days-detective or researcher. You can update and increase your problem-solving abilities faster than most-so you may find people requesting your help. Today moves along quickly and before you know it, this workday has ended. Visiting more with neighbors or family this afternoon could help to take care of some unfinished personal business. Sharing your feelings with others becomes important. Being out among people and learning different opinions takes on more significance for you. In talking with others you discover a food-sampling party. You have not ever been to one of these before and promise yourself to remember this so you can attend one. You gain a lot of new ideas for gifts today.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

There is a great deal of mental activity going on with you today. You seriously contemplate how to contain your temptation to communicate with others-there is work to accomplish. Knowledge, the exchange of ideas and the idea of being smart as a fox are usually the things that have a special appeal. Today, however, is not the time... A schedule must be met. One way to help yourself refrain from outbursts might be to keep a notepad handy for recording ideas that might come to you from time to time. When you next take a step outside your office, you will be able to chat with friends. Figuring out new ways to communicate is something you truly enjoy. New technology has you plotting about how to budget your money.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You often look for ways to be of service to others. You may have finally finished your part of a group project a little early and decide to look for ways that will help the others in this group. Your mind is quite clear and natural. Taking a different approach to things, assessing new ideas and a breakthrough in thinking are right up your alley. You enjoy learning as well as teaching and may decide to try a few different ways of working to be of help to others. This afternoon, on the home front, you have many ideas that will be helpful to you and to family members for budgeting and gift purchasing. Ideas could be flowing from and to you. There are openings for all the family members to participate in this activity. Take on a give and take attitude.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your attitude is positive and you do not want to miss the beauty of those first glowing rays that push the darkness away. Instead of the rooster or the sun, an internal alarm clock wakes you now; you continue to move enthusiastically forward in life. The way you take on responsibilities, as compared to your youth, may be a surprise to the person that raised you and taught you about a day's work. Compliments are easy to find and praise from a distant relative brings big smiles this afternoon. You have empathy, compassion and charity to share with others. You would do well as a humanitarian, art dealer or counselor. You find religion, metaphysics or welfare work very satisfying. You enjoy celebrating tonight. Happy birthday!



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a time in which you discover new and different reasons to relish and applaud life. A kind of mini-revolution may find you developing your value system, allowing you to like new things. You have a different approach to love and compassion. Someone that you are close to could look up to you for guidance and perhaps seek a recommendation concerning a very personal issue. You should have no difficulty in understanding a situation. Your ability to cut to the chase and get at what lies beneath the surface is highly beneficial to the conclusion of most situations. This afternoon proves interesting as you volunteer to help with a family affair. Children bring a multitude of laughter as you help at a birthday party or some other extravaganza.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You use your mind to make clear choices and to think things through. Career decisions are unwavering and easy to chart. You see your way through ideas, concepts and your ability to communicate and express them to others. It should be a great time to get many things done as there are very few interruptions and progress seems to move along rather quickly. You could be tempted to write, work on a car or sew into the late hours of the night because the rhythm of your work is productive. Be sure to hug family members this evening-perhaps a dinner and a shopping trip is in order. Shopping early for gifts, decorations or that special party costume will be a wise choice. Who knows, you might discover a new shopping area.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

As you begin to become involved in your working day, you find that the day moves along very quickly. As the going-home time nears, you consider meeting friends for dinner. If you are in a relationship, this would be a good evening for you to do the cooking. You should find it a rather fortunate day for making plans or decisions and finding your way through whatever you may encounter. You should feel quite successful and have no problems in coping. Good advice from a guide or older person may be gaining your attention soon. Expect a good day. Anything of a domestic nature or having to do with things from the past will dissolve. Chasing down a rat or a mouse may bring some excitement into your life this evening-it also brings up a story-time idea.

WORD SEARCH

90's Songs 3

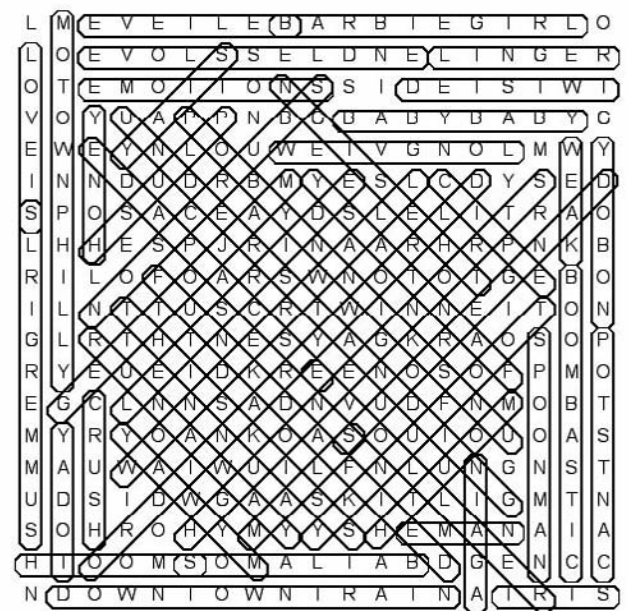
Find and circle all of the 1990's songs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional song.



- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| ANGELS | HANDS | LULLABY | THE POWER |
| ANOTHER NIGHT | HIGH ENOUGH | MIAMI | THIS HOUSE |
| BABY | HOLD ON | MY BODY | TOGETHER AGAIN |
| BLACK | HOOK | ONE WEEK | TOO MUCH |
| CANDY RAIN | HYPNOTIZE | POISON | TUBTHUMPING |
| CUPID | I BELIEVE | REGULATE | UNPRETTY |
| DITTY | IMPULSIVE | RELEASE ME | WATERFALLS |
| DREAMLOVER | INSENSITIVE | SABOTAGE | WHAT'S UP |
| EVERY MORNING | IRONIC | SHINE | WHATTA MAN |
| FLY AWAY | JEREMY | SHY GUY | WILD NIGHT |
| FORTUNATE | KISS ME | SWEET LADY | ZOMBIE |
| FROZEN | LAST NIGHT | TEMPTATION | |

Yesterday Solution

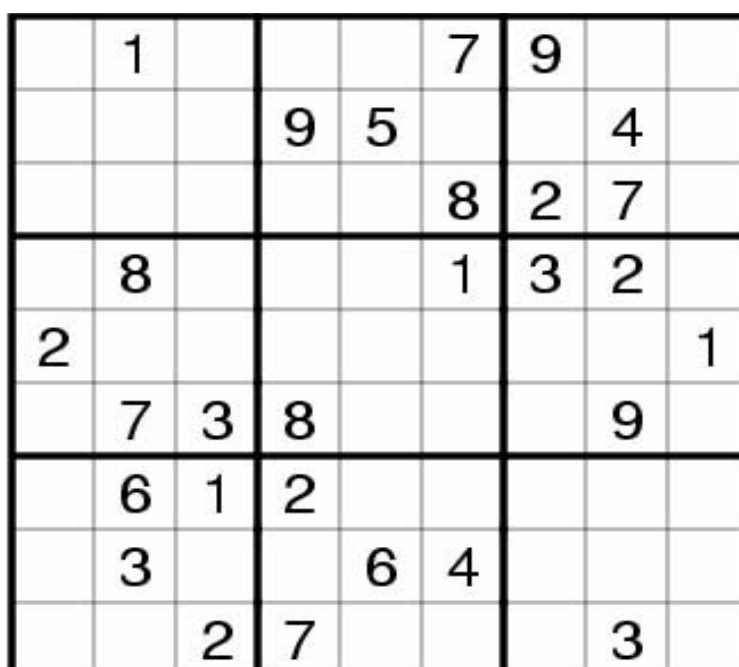
90's Songs 2



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

The hidden song title is: LOSING MY RELIGION

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

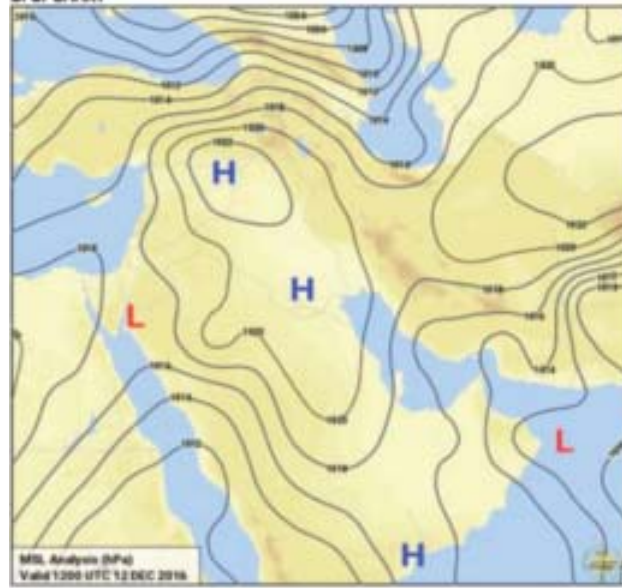
Issued 12/12/2016-19:00 LT UTC +3hr

MIN Temperature 6 °C

By Night : Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h

By Day : Sunny with light to moderate north westerly to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Expected Weather	sunny + scattered clouds	partly cloudy + chance for drizzle	clouds to decrease + raising dust over open areas	sunny
Min Temp °C	06	12	10	06
Max Temp °C	20	23	18	16
Wind Direction	north westerly to light variable	south easterly changing to north westerly later on	north westerly	north westerly to northerly
Wind Speed km/h	06 - 26	15 - 38	15 - 40	08 - 30

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C EXP	Max °C REC
KUWAIT CITY	11	19
KUWAIT AIRPORT	06	18
ABDALY	05	18
BUBYAN	07	18
JAHRA	09	19
FAILAKA ISLAND	09	18
SALMIYAH	13	18
AHMADI	12	18
JAL ALIYAH	08	18
QAROH ISLAND	15	17
UMH AL-MARADEM	15	18
NUWAISIB	08	21
WAFRA	08	20
HANAGISH	07	17
SALMY	05	16
MUTRIBA	05	21

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	17
Min Temp (°C)	01
Max Rel Hum (%)	72
Min Rel Hum (%)	16
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	28 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise

06:34

Sunset

16:51

Tomorrow Prayer Times

Fajr	05:09
Sunrise	06:34
Zuhr	11:42
Asr	14:32
Sunset	16:51
Isha	18:13



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem	22636920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarouf	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

Psychologists /Psychotherapists	Soor Center Tel: 2290-1677 Fax
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In this image released by The Weinstein Company, Dev Patel appears in a scene from 'Lion.' — AP photos



This image released by Fox Searchlight shows Natalie Portman as Jackie Kennedy in the film, "Jackie."



This image released by Lionsgate shows Ryan Gosling, left, and Emma Stone in a scene from, "La La Land."



This image released by Twentieth Century Fox shows Ryan Reynolds in a scene from the film, 'Deadpool.'



This image released by Summit shows Andrew Garfield in a scene from 'Hacksaw Ridge.'

GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS: 'LA LA LAND' TOPS 2017 NODS, 'MOONLIGHT' CLOSE BEHIND

"La La Land," a musical ode to Los Angeles, topped the Golden Globe nominations yesterday, picking up seven nods. It was followed closely behind by "Moonlight," a low-budget coming-of-age drama that received six nods. The two films have dominated the awards season so far, along with "Manchester by the Sea," which picked up five nominations yesterday, including a best drama nod. Unlike the Oscars, the Globes segregate comedies and musicals from dramatic films, and they recognize television programming. They also do not award below-the-line categories such as film editing, cinematography, or makeup. "La La Land" will compete in the best musical or comedy category, alongside "20th Century Women," "Deadpool," "Florence Foster Jenkins," and "Sing Street." In addition to "Manchester" and "Moonlight," the films competing for drama honors are "Hacksaw Ridge," "Hell or High Water," and "Lion."

On the television front, "American Crime Story: The People v. O.J. Simpson" was tops with five nods. "The People vs. O.J. Simpson" is an acclaimed look at the football star's murder trial. It got Globes attention for the work of Sarah Paulson as Marcia Clark, Sterling K. Brown as Christopher Darden, and John Travolta as Robert Shapiro. FX backed the program. Globe voters chose to honor several new shows. "Game of Thrones" was the only veteran among best TV drama nominations. The group included "The Crown," "Stranger Things," "This Is Us," and "Westworld," all of which are in their initial seasons. "Atlanta," a critically acclaimed look at the Atlanta rap scene, got a best comedy nod. It will head off against "Black-ish," "Veep," as well as previous winners "Mozart In The Jungle" and "Transparent."

If "Manchester," "Moonlight," and "La La Land" were widely expected to be showered with Globes

attention, there were nevertheless some big surprises. "Nocturnal Animals," a noir-ish thriller, got several top nods for Tom Ford, who was honored for writing the screenplay and for writing the film. It was also a big morning for "Hacksaw Ridge" and its director Mel Gibson. The World War II drama was nominated for best drama, while Gibson was nominated for his directing. Gibson is a controversial figure in the industry. His career went into a tailspin after he was arrested for drug driving in 2006 and

was caught on tape making anti-Semitic remarks to his arresting officer. "The Tonight Show's" Jimmy Fallon will host the Globes broadcast, which is set to air on January 8 live from the Beverly Hilton. Fallon is the third person to emcee the program, following Ricky Gervais and the tag-team of Tina Fey and Amy Poehler.

Upcoming release

The Globes unveiled its picks for best animated feature, a group that included box office smashes "Moana" and "Zootopia," as well as "Sing," an upcoming release about a music competition for animals. The group also recognized "Kubo and the Two Strings," a stop-motion fantasy action-adventure film, and "My Life as a Zucchini," a lesser-known French-Swiss stop motion animated. "Finding Dory," the year's biggest domestic hit, was shut out. The Globes are voted on by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, an intimate group of roughly 100 foreign journalists. The organization has been criticized in the past for being overly cozy with studios and for accepting gifts, but it has tried to tighten rules in recent years.

It has also raised eyebrows over some of its selections, infamously handing out an award to Pia Zadora in the 1980's as best newcomer and more recently recognizing "The Tourist" and "Burlesque," two critically derided pictures from 2010 that got top nominations. But as television programming, the Globes get high marks. The champagne flows freely during the broadcast, creating a looser, boozier atmosphere than the more staid Academy Awards. — Reuters



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows Meryl Streep in a scene from 'Florence Foster Jenkins.'



This image released by Disney shows Judy Hopps, voiced by Ginnifer Goodwin, left, Nick Wilde, voiced by Jason Bateman, second left, in a scene from the animated film, "Zootopia."

Lionel Richie, Mariah Carey joining forces for 2017 tour

Get ready to party all night long with Lionel Richie and Mariah Carey. The singers announced yesterday they are joining forces for the All The Hits Tour, which kicks off in Baltimore on March 15, 2017. Tickets for the 35-date tour, starring Richie with Carey as a special guest, go on sale Saturday. Both Richie and Carey have a string of hits that remain popular today. Richie's catalog includes "All Night Long (All Night)," "Hello" and "Stuck on You."

In addition to Grammy wins, he's won an Oscar and Golden Globe. Carey is only behind Elvis Presley for most No. 1 songs on Billboard's Hot 100 chart with 18. Her hits include "Vision of Love," "Hero" and "We Belong Together." The tour will wrap in Fort Lauderdale on May 27. — AP



In this file photo, Lionel Richie performs on the Pyramid stage at Glastonbury music festival on Worthy Farm, Glastonbury, England. — AP

John launching competition to make videos for 70s hits

Elton John is giving filmmakers a chance to create music videos for his 1970s hits that were released before music videos were popular. The English singer announced yesterday, in celebration of his 50th anniversary with songwriting partner Bernie Taupin, that he's launching a competition with YouTube for aspiring video creators to make music videos for "Rocket Man," "Tiny Dancer" and "Bennie and the Jets."

Entries for "Elton John: The Cut" open Jan 9, 2017. The competition closes on Jan 23 and creators must be at least 16. John, Taupin, a panel of YouTube creators and industry players will pick three winners, and music videos will premiere next summer. Winners will also receive \$10,000 from YouTube. Pulse Films will help the filmmakers with production. — AP



In this Thursday, May 26, 2016, file photo, musician Elton John performs during an event. — AP

FEATURES

DUBAI FILM FESTIVAL DIRECTOR MASOUD AMRALLA AL-ALI ON HELPING ARAB CINEMA



Masoud Amralla Al-Ali

Widely respected as a top Arab cinema expert, Dubai Film Festival artistic director Masoud Amralla Al-Ali has been instrumental in creating the top platform for local pics in the Arab world. He spoke to Variety about how the event has helped foster a film industry from scratch in the Gulf and some of the main challenges faced by Arab cinema at large. Excerpts: Why did you pick "Miss Sloane" as the opening movie? It's topical, it's recent. It talks about what's happening in the US and how this can affect the world.

Also the female character is very strong. All of these elements played into it. We have lots of female directors in the Arab world, maybe more than in the West. This year for the first time we have three films from Qatar by female filmmakers. We also have three from Saudi Arabia. I just came from a press conference [for Lebanese film "Solitaire"] where the only male on the panel was the moderator. So "Miss Sloane" connects with everything we are doing. There are six Emirati feature films at the festival, which is a first. And there is also one ["Rashid & Rajab"] currently shooting in Dubai. How did the Gulf industry come such a long way?

I think the festivals in the Gulf - especially the first festival I started in Abu Dhabi a while back just dedicated to Emirati

directors - started a movement. When Dubai began, in the first edition we had a small section with five shorts called Emerging Emiratis. Today we have the Muhr section dedicated to Emirati cinema which has feature films besides short films. I think festivals played a big role in helping the filmmakers find a way by creating an environment where we not only showcased films, but also pushed the industry with our funds and co-production market. The biggest obstacle Arab cinema at large faces today is getting Arab movies to play on local screens. The Dubai Film Market has addressed this by creating a distribution prize. But what else can be done? The Arab world doesn't have a [film industry] system. It's all a bit chaotic. When it comes to distribution, there is really a missing link. The efforts [marketing and distribution company] Mad Solutions is doing [in micro distribution, driven by social media] can help.

Industry initiatives

And there are also other new distributors doing a great job. Now there is now a plan to launch Arab film awards [like the Oscars]. But a lot remains to be fixed. The awards you just mentioned and the new Arab Film Institute which will launch

them, have just been announced. How do you feel about this initiative? We certainly need more industry initiatives, and something like this can help to provide more exposure for Arab cinema. The shuttering [two years ago] of the Abu Dhabi Film festival was a loss, and then subsequently losing their Sanad film fund was a further loss. We [at the festival] are doing new things to promote Arab cinema internationally. This year we started promoting two Arab films for Golden Globes consideration. Paradoxically when Arab movies do well outside the Arab world sometimes that provides the path for them to find a home in their own region.

What about the Oscars? In 2013 the Dubai Film Festival joined the ranks of festivals qualifying for the Oscar short film competition. But does the UAE have a national film entity that can submit an Emirati feature film for Oscar consideration? Not yet. But we are in the process of setting that up. Until recently we didn't have any movies to submit, but now we do. So we are working on establishing a national motion picture association. — Reuters

13th Dubai International Film Festival



American actress Eva Longoria poses on the red carpet. — AFP photos



Lebanese actress Julia Kassar poses upon her arrival for the screening of the movie 'Solitaire'.



Lebanese director Sophie Boutros poses upon her arrival for the screening of the movie 'Solitaire'.



Lebanese actress Betty Taoutel poses upon her arrival for the screening of the movie 'Solitaire' during 13th Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF).



Samuel L. Jackson speaks on stage at the 13th Dubai International Film Festival in Dubai.



Egyptian actor Bassem Samra.



Egyptian actress Yousra



Tunisian actress Henda Sabri attends the Opening Night Gala ceremony of the 13th Dubai International Film Festival.



French actress and model Olga Kurylenko



Lebanese-French composer Gabriel Yared (left) receives the Lifetime Achievement award on stage.



Indian actress Rekha speaks after receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award on stage.



Egyptian actress Nelly Karim



View of elaborate tombs in the Jardines del Humaya cemetery in Culiacan, Sinaloa state in northwest Mexico. — AFP photos



View of elaborate tombs in the Jardines del Humaya cemetery in Culiacan.



View of elaborate tombs in the Jardines del Humaya cemetery in Culiacan.



Images of folk saint Jesus Malverde, who according to legend was a Robin Hood-type bandit who stole from the rich and gave to the poor, seen in the Malverde chapel in Culiacan, Sinaloa state in northwest Mexico.



Images of folk saint Jesus Malverde, who according to legend was a Robin Hood-type bandit who stole from the rich and gave to the poor, seen in the Malverde chapel in Culiacan.



Images of narco-saint Jesus Malverde -who according to legend was a Robin Hood-type bandit who stole from the rich and gave to the poor- are displayed for sale.

Mexican narcos beat heat in air conditioned tombs

Some drug lords take their ostentatious lifestyle literally to the grave: a cemetery in Mexico is blooming with two-story tombs fitted with living rooms, air conditioning and bulletproof glass. Mexico marked on Sunday 10 years since the government deployed troops in a drug war that has killed tens of thousands of people, with many victims buried unceremoniously in mass graves, dumped on roadsides or left hanging on bridges. But the drug barons of Sinaloa state, the northwestern bastion of imprisoned kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, have given themselves more dignified final resting places at Jardines del Humaya cemetery in the regional capital, Culiacan.

One crypt looks like a chapel with white columns, angels on stained glass windows and a statue of Jesus Christ standing on the roof. Others resemble small modern apartments with glass doors, stairs leading to a second floor and living rooms with couches for mourners. At least two of them were adorned with Christmas trees. A crypt said to hold the remains of a Sinaloa drug cartel hitman has a bulletproof glass door, a cross that lights up in the dark on top of a dome, and surveillance cameras pointing toward the entrance. Inside, a glass case holds four small swords.

As night falls, lights are automatically activated outside several tombs. Many have alarm systems. One has fort-like towers, and another has a roof terrace with fans. Most crypts have large pictures or paintings of the deceased on the wall—several look like young men in their 20s or 30s—but many of these tombs have no name to identify the person. "It's an expression of the power that they once had and a manifestation of their desire for eternity, which is natural in any human being," said Juan Carlos Ayala, a philosophy professor at the Autonomous University of Sinaloa who specializes in "narco culture." "It's also a demonstration for those who survive them that this man was important," Ayala said. New lavish mausoleums were under construction this week, awaiting for more drug cartel honchos to be gunned down. Ayala estimates that some of the crypts cost as much as \$290,000 to build.

'Narco culture'

The luxurious graves have become one of the symbols of the "narco culture" that has spread in the past decade, adding a religious facet to an underworld that has also inspired music, television shows, movies and fashion. "Drug trafficking is permeating the community, through traditional culture, and now we almost have trouble seeing where one ends and the other begins," Ayala said. Some local governments have fined musicians who publicly perform polka-

like ballads known as "narco corridos" that sing the praises of drug barons.

Some federal lawmakers wanted last month to prevent television networks from broadcasting "narco series" during primetime hours over concerns they could influence children. The actors Sean Penn and Kate Del Castillo met with Guzman while he was on the run last year. After his capture in January, it was revealed that Del Castillo, who is Mexican-American, wanted to make a film about Guzman.

author of the book "Devoted to Death: Santa Muerte, the Skeleton Saint."

A green Jesus Malverde Chapel was built in his honor in Culiacan, where people can kneel in front of a bust of the dark-haired and mustachioed saint to pray for miracles. People have left pesos on the walls but also dollar bills and currencies from Canada, Colombia and Cuba, along with pictures and thank you notes. Fernando Lopez, a 35-year-old banker on vacation from central Mexico, visited the chapel "out of curiosity" because "you hear about this place



View of elaborate tombs in the Jardines del Humaya cemetery in Culiacan.

'Supernatural protection'

Narco culture has also intertwined with religion. Criminals, and millions of Mexicans, worship a skeletal death saint known as Santa Muerte, which is rejected by the Roman Catholic church as blasphemous but has even gained followers in the United States. But many also pray to another folk saint called Jesus Malverde, who according to legend was a Robin Hood-type bandit who stole from the rich and gave to the poor until he was hanged in Culiacan in 1909. "There's a strong religious component to narco culture because if anyone needs supernatural protection it's narcos who could be gunned down by rivals or law enforcement at any minute," said Andrew Chesnut, professor of religious studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and

all over Mexico." Nestor Paul Torres, a local 29-year-old flower seller, said he prayed to Malverde after he was wrongly jailed on bank robbery charges. He was acquitted two years later.

While in jail, he made an ornate wooden bust of Malverde, which now stands among other gifts left by worshippers whose prayers were answered. "I got out thanks to him," Torres, a Catholic who wears a cross, said after praying in front of the altar, which is surrounded by candles in a small room. "A lot of people who come here are poor. That doesn't mean we are narcos," he said. "Right now I'm asking for another miracle," said Torres, who plans to hire a musician to sing to Malverde if he helps him buy a car. "I know that he will be able to do it!" — AFP



View of elaborate tombs in the Jardines del Humaya cemetery in Culiacan.

FEATURES



A crowd of young Myanmar headbangers moshing to a heavy metal gig as the Last Days of Beethoven band plays on stage in Yangon. — AFP photos



Myanmar guitar instructor Myo Min Thu practicing in front of his guitar collection in his studio in Yangon.



A young fan joining a crowd of Myanmar headbangers to mosh to a heavy metal gig in Yangon.



A crowd of young Myanmar headbangers moshing to a heavy metal gig in Yangon.



A crowd of young Myanmar headbangers moshing to a heavy metal gig in Yangon.

'It's like freedom': Myanmar heavy metal crashes into the open

Moshing and sweating, the crowd of headbangers scream their angst into the sultry Yangon night, a rare glimpse of a defiant musical subculture now crashing into the open — though sex, drugs and religion remain off the song sheet. Half a century of repressive military rule virtually silenced Myanmar's heavy metal scene and today its musicians are still shunned by most people in the conservative Buddhist country. But a growing coterie of die-hard metal-heads say the aggressive, rasping music gives them a unique release in a nation still struggling to come to terms with its own dark history.

"Listening to metal is the f****g best feeling. It is like freedom, it's good for the soul," 21-year-old mobile phone repairman Thaw Di Yoo told AFP at a recent gig. "It's different from other music, that's why I am only a fan of metal," he said, showing a tattoo depicting the logo of his local heroes-Nightmare Metal Band on his arm. For A Phyu Yang, a 30-year-old marketing manager, metal helps her escape everyday life. "I mostly listen to metal songs when I feel stressed," she said. "It can help chill me out when I'm feeling like that."

For years metal bands were muzzled by strict censorship laws and dissident musicians were jailed and often tortured for supporting the opposition. Banned music was smuggled in on tapes and CDs and an underground scene of punks and headbangers began to grow up out of sight of Myanmar's notorious police in the 90s. Today the arts are flourishing, but metal music is still sidelined in a country where most prefer sickly sweet pop, crooning love songs or Burmese covers of Western hip hop tracks.

'Write against violence'

Like repressive socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and Russia, Myanmar's junta feared the anarchist energy of heavy metal music.

Censors banned anything they thought could prove a spark for revolution—from too much red or black in artworks to the mention of roses in songs, seen as a reference to democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi. While underground metal musicians managed to stay out of jails, their jarring sound and brooding political lyrics were publicly silenced. "Metal is not the type of music that goes on about how much I love you and how much I miss you," guitar instructor Myo Min Thu told AFP in his teaching room, plastered with posters of US bands like Iron Cross and Metallica.

"We could not criticize Christianity or be anti-Buddhist. Politics was the worst at that time and we faced a lot of difficulties about lyrics." Myanmar officially abolished censorship in 2012, the year after the junta handed power to a quasi-civilian regime. Freedom of expression blossomed and many musicians came out in support of Suu Kyi's NLD party as it campaigned for last year's election, the first free vote in a generation. Today Myanmar's heavy metal bands are still too coy to touch on topics like sex and death considered taboo in conservative Myanmar—in stark contrast to their peers in the West. Instead, they are using their new-found freedom to push for social and political change. "In our new album, we mostly write about politics and the situation in the country," said Last Days of Beethoven guitarist Phoe Zaw, 32. "We write against... violence against Muslim people and Buddhist people in Rakhine state, violence against ethnic people in (other) states."

Social media explosion

Still, hardcore metal remains a niche genre. While the number of bands has grown since the end of junta rule, there are still only a few dozen in Yangon and a handful in the rest of the country of more than 50 million. Not many venues will put on metal gigs and bands struggle to find sponsors who will pay for the high-level sound systems they need, while few shops stock the rare albums that make it onto labels. "There are only a few shows here. I can count on my fingers the number of shows in a year," said Phoe Zaw.

"Very few people (organizers) want to hold underground shows, metal shows." But bands say the explosion of social media over the past few years has helped to bring them into the limelight. Now they post their music online instead of handing out CDs in teashops and on the street, and fans can share songs without having to wait for them to be formally released. For musicians who have struggled for years to be heard, the online revolution is offering a new hope. "I think metal music is becoming more popular in Myanmar now," said Aung Myo Linn, from Nightmare Metal Band. "Technology and the Internet is helping as we can share songs through social media like Facebook, YouTube and others, even if we cannot produce albums." — AFP



A crowd of young Myanmar headbangers moshing to a heavy metal gig.

SRI LANKA BIDS FOR XMAS TREE RECORD DESPITE CHURCH SNUB

Cricket legend Arjuna Ranatunga announced yesterday he was reviving his bid to build a record-breaking 100-metre tall Christmas tree in Sri Lanka's capital despite opposition from the Catholic church. Ranatunga, who is also a government minister, said the project was back on track after Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe spoke to the Archbishop of Colombo Malcolm Ranjith. "The work resumed this morning after the prime minister's intervention with the archbishop," Ranatunga said in a statement to AFP. "It will be ready for Christmas."

There was no immediate comment from the archbishop who described the scheme as "wasteful expenditure" last week and said that the estimated \$200,000 cost would have been better spent on alleviating poverty. Ranatunga, who led Sri Lanka to victory in the 1996 World Cup, has been at the forefront of the project to first raise the money and then erect a 325-foot artificial tree in central Colombo. The 53-year-old, who represents a largely Catholic parliamentary constituency, had recently laid the steel base of the tree which was beginning to take shape on Colombo's Galle Face beach-front promenade.

Ranatunga had said that it would be the tallest artificial Christmas tree ever built anywhere in the world. According to Guinness World Records, the largest artificial Christmas tree was erected in the southern Chinese province of Guangzhou last year, measuring around 55 meters. A team in Mexico claimed to have erected a 90-metre tree in 2009.

Last year Sri Lanka's Catholic church urged priests not to put up Christmas trees in their churches over the festive period, with Cardinal Ranjith saying they had no religious significance. Sri Lanka is a mainly Buddhist country but around 1.2 million of its population of 21 million are Catholics. — AFP



A partially-constructed Christmas tree is pictured in Colombo. — AFP photos

German couple decorate their house with over 100 Christmas trees

For one German couple, putting up the Christmas decorations takes eight long weeks. With around 16,000 baubles needed to be placed on over 100 Christmas trees, Thomas and Susanne Jeromin's annual winter wonderland at their house in the small German town of Rinteln has become a seasonal labor of love. "We started off with a normal Christmas tree in the living room as you'd expect and then we thought we could put one in the hallway, one in the kitchen, and over the last five years it's exploded," Thomas Jeromin told Reuters.

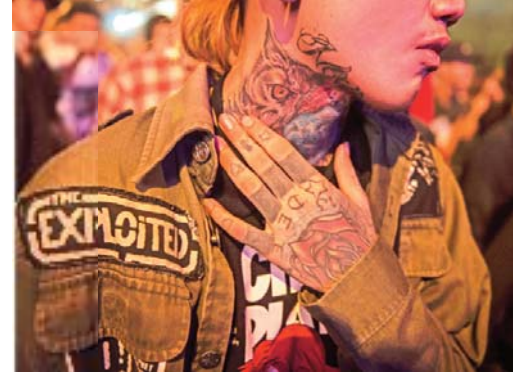
The Christmas-obsessed couple began decorating the 105 square meters (1,130 square feet) of space in their home, 60 km (37 miles) south west of Hannover, in early October, with lights, ornaments and Father Christmas decorations dotted throughout. The Jeromin's bedroom is the only festive-free zone. "It's our retreat for when we've had enough of Christmas," Susanne Jeromin said. — Reuters

Lifestyle

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Mexican biologist Arturo Cross, fancy dressed as Santa Claus, swims in a pool with gars, fish from the Lepisosteidae family, at the Guadalajara Zoo Aquarium in Guadalajara, Mexico. The zoo offers the show during the Christmas season. — AFP

FREEBIE TREASURES: FINDING BEAUTY AND VALUE IN REPURPOSING



This photo shows a discarded snack bar counter which was converted into a book shelf by Glenn Adams, at his home in Augusta, Maine. — AP photos

By Glenn Adams

OK, I admit it. I pick up castoff gloves I find along the side of the road. You never know: These gloves that have blown out of the backs of pickup trucks can, if you're patient, be useful. You just need to hold onto that lonely left until you can match it up with a nearly matching right. Sometimes you get lucky and find a pair straight off, which makes for a very satisfying day.

My freebie treasures are not limited to gloves. It's amazing what's out there free for the picking. I've taken junk skis and made them into a coat rack. Once I made a doll house for my daughter out of old chair seats and kindling wood. The shingles on the doll-house roof were carefully cut from old plastic milk bottles (before they were widely collected for recycling).

I've grown very fond of wood from collapsed barns, a visual blight to many people but pure beauty to me. Cut into the right lengths and corners properly angled, the barn board can be transformed into perfect picture frames. Some now surround old newspaper front pages that I socked away through the years (a super-bold "BUSH WINS" from December 2000 gobbles up the front page of the Bangor Daily News). Barn board forms the perimeter of a big mosaic of Maine's State House that I made from business cards amassed over three decades. (It now hangs in the State House itself.)

Moderate remodeling

While workers were renovating parts of the State House in the 1980s, they tossed an old, light-shaded snack-bar counter (I think maple or birch) out into the parking lot to be hauled off to the landfill. But I got there first, and into the back of my van it went. The bulky thing flew out of the rear hatch, into the street, on a hill, but I scrambled out and shoved it back in. With some moderate remodeling, it has served as a solid and some might say handsome bookcase in my home for years.

I guess my masterpiece would be the bar I fashioned out of a sunken fishing boat. I eyed the 18-foot, hand-made wooden boat lasciviously as it lay in the watery muck for a couple of summers. Finally assured that it was abandoned, I floated it temporarily and towed it home with hopes of refurbishing and permanently floating it. Given its age, that wasn't going to happen.

Armed with an all-purpose saw, I transformed the boat into three pieces, fashioning two of them into a bar and the bow into a back bar with shelves for glasses, mugs and so on. The hemlock bar top (repurposed scrap from another household project) served well for a few years. Then, just a couple of years ago, the state had the old, worn copper removed from

the Maine State House dome and decided to sell the scrap to artisans and schmoes like me. Newly buffed copper from the dome now graces the top of our bar. Fill your steins to dear old Maine!

The propensity to save and reuse old or castoff stuff is well ingrained in the Maine psyche, where Yankee thrift is more or less a given. I once did a story on a Mainer who set a new standard by re-repurposing the huge wooden crate that housed Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis on its return trip to the United States after his historic flight to France. For a while, the 290-square-foot crate served as a bungalow in Hopkinton, New Hampshire. Then Larry Ross of Canaan, Maine, bought it and turned it into a museum to house Lindbergh memorabilia.

Attractive pieces

Lobster traps that have been repurposed into coffee tables are everywhere (including my den). But the urge to coax new lives out of our worn, tired and rejected stuff is not limited to Mainers. The Junk Gypsies have made a career of it. From their Texas-based design studio, sisters Amy and Jolie Sikes search out useful junk and transform it into attractive pieces for the homes of their clients, who include country music stars and Hollywood actors. You can see it on their TV show or in their new book, "Junk Gypsy: Designing a Life at the Crossroads of Wonder and Wander" (Touchstone).

My fixation with the used but not useless started a long time ago. As a kid in New Jersey in the early 1960s, I was helping my father as he remodeled what had been a dilapidated carriage stable into a proper garage to house our Corvair and Chevy Nomad. To say I helped is a bit of a stretch because I mostly stood, watched, and waited for a command to hold a piece of wood or, if I was lucky, hammer in a few nails. At one point, I noticed he was running old pieces of wood through his table saw to be used for the sheathing. I asked why he wasn't using new wood. Peering at me over his glasses, he said in a most serious tone, "Why, son, this is perfectly good wood."

Then he directed me to take the hammer and straighten out some of the old, slightly bent nails he had been pulling from the lumber as he dismantled the building. By then, I understood what he was talking about. I got pretty good at straightening out old rescued nails.

Years later, in my own house, he would chide me if he saw me using "bent nails." But I still use them whenever I can. And I use his same old table saw to cut planks - usually used ones. The saw neatly chewed its way through 7/8-inch oak planks from a tree on our lot that we had to have cut down. I had the trunk milled and planed, and dried it for a couple of years, producing beautiful, solid planks. They are now the cabinets in our cottage's kitchen, and a porch swing that hangs from our backyard rock maple tree. — AP



Photo shows junked skis and poles which were converted into a coat rack by Glenn Adams.



Photo provided by Joe Phelan shows Glenn Adams' "House of Cards" which hangs on the wall at the State House in Augusta, Maine.



Photo shows a discarded lobster trap which was converted into a coffee table by Glenn Adams, at his home in Augusta, Maine.



Photo shows a doll house made of multiple repurposed items - from firewood kindling scraps to wire champagne bottle tops - which was built several years ago by Glenn Adams as a gift to his daughter.



Glenn Adams poses behind a bar he made from parts of a sunken 18-foot boat and copper that once covered the dome at the Maine State House.