

Quran award winner meets Amir, hails his support



Venezuela army trafficking food as country goes hungry



Sichuan cannot get enough spicy marinated rabbit heads



UK cycling legend Wiggins bows out



150 FILLS
NO: 17095
40 PAGES

KUWAIT, IRAQ EYE CLOSER TIES, SIGN 4 AGREEMENTS

KUWAIT TO START IMPORTING GAS FROM IRAQ

Min 12°
Max 21°
High Tide 13:12 & 23:25
Low Tide 06:40 & 18:05

AN EXTRA SECOND TO SEE OUT 2016

PARIS: As if 2016 has not been long enough, the year's dying minute will last an extra second to make up for time lost to Earth's slowing rotation, timekeepers say. Countries that use Coordinated Universal Time - several West African nations, Britain, Ireland and Iceland - will add the leap second during the midnight countdown to 2017 - making the year's final minute 61 seconds long. For others, the timing will be determined by the time zone they live in, relative to UTC.

"This extra second, or leap second, makes it possible to align astronomical time, which is irregular and determined by Earth's rotation, with UTC which is extremely stable and has been determined by atomic clocks since 1967," the Paris Observatory said in a statement. The observatory houses the International Earth Rotation and Reference Systems Service (IERS), responsible for synchronizing time.

"The sequence of dates of the UTC second markers will be: 2016 December 31 23h 59m 59s, 2016 December 31 23h 59m 60s, 2017 January 1, 0h 0m 0s," the IERS website states. The adjustment is necessary because Earth's rotation is not regular - it sometimes speeds up, sometimes slows down, but is gradually slowing overall. This is caused by factors including the Moon's gravitational Earth-braking forces, which give rise to the ocean tides.

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BAGHDAD: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (left) and Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari sign an agreement during the sixth session of a joint Kuwaiti-Iraqi ministerial committee yesterday. — KUNA

BAGHDAD/KUWAIT: The sixth session of a joint Kuwaiti-Iraqi ministerial committee convened in the Iraqi capital yesterday, with participation of a Kuwaiti delegation headed by First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. On the Iraqi side, the delegation was headed by Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari. Official discussions were held during the two-day meeting over increased cooperation between both nations.

The Kuwaiti foreign minister traced the history of bilateral ties, noting that such meetings are imperative to meet the collective aspirations of the peoples of both nations. Moreover, he underscored Kuwait's firm support of Iraq in the country's fight against terrorism, noting that concerted efforts are required to exterminate this scourge. At the conclusion of the session, a series of four agreements were signed between both countries, dealing with culture, industry, security and aviation. Kuwait's delegation to the joint Kuwaiti-Iraqi ministerial committee's session included senior officials from the country's government and private sectors.

During the concluding session, the Iraqi foreign minister recalled the good positions and support of HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah towards Iraq during difficult circumstances since 2003. He thanked Kuwait for its backing of Iraq in its war against the so-called Islamic State (IS), for its condemnation of terrorist attacks in Iraq, for its swift response to requests to join efforts to extinguish oilfield fires in the country, and for its agreement to delay due compensations.

Jaafari congratulated Kuwait on the election of the new parliament and formation of a new government, wishing it everlasting security, stability and welfare.

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KUWAIT: Lawmakers are seen during a session of the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KERRY SLAMS ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

NETANYAHU HITS BACK AT 'SKEWED' SPEECH

RUSSIA, TURKEY 'AGREE' ON SYRIA CEASEFIRE PLAN

ISTANBUL: Turkish state media yesterday said Turkey and Russia had agreed a nationwide truce plan for Syria but none of the key players in the conflict offered an immediate confirmation. The state-run Anadolu news agency said the plan aims to expand a ceasefire in the city of Aleppo - brokered by Turkey and Russia earlier this month to allow the evacuation of civilians - to the whole country. If successful, the plan would form the basis of upcoming political negotiations between the Damascus regime and the opposition, overseen by Russia and Turkey in the Kazakh capital Astana, it added.

But in a speech in Ankara after the report was published, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made no reference to the plan, while Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said he could not answer on an issue "about which I don't have enough information". Meanwhile, a Syrian rebel source, who asked not to be named, told AFP that details still had to be submitted to opposition fighters and said there was no agreement as yet. "The armed revolutionary factions have not received any official proposal for a ceasefire in Syria," Labib Nahhas, head of foreign relations for the powerful Ahrar Al-Sham rebel group added on his official Twitter account. "News talking about their approval of a ceasefire is incorrect."

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WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State John Kerry warned yesterday that Israel's building of settlements was endangering Middle East peace, expressing unusually frank frustration with the long-time American ally. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shot back at Kerry and accused him of showing bias against the Jewish state. In a 70-minute speech just weeks before the Obama administration hands over to President-elect Donald Trump, Kerry said Israel "will never have true peace" with the Arab world if it does not reach an accord based on Israelis and Palestinians living in their own states.

His remarks added to strain in the US-Israeli relationship - characterized by personal acrimony between President Barack Obama and Netanyahu - after the United States cleared the way for a UN resolution last week that demanded an end to Israeli settlement building. "Despite our best efforts over the years, the two-state solution is now in serious jeopardy," Kerry said at the State Department. "We cannot, in good conscience, do nothing, and say nothing, when we see the hope of peace slipping away."

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WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State John Kerry lays out his vision for peace between Israel and the Palestinians yesterday at the Dean Acheson Auditorium at the Department of State. — AFP

MPs URGE INITIATIVE FOR RECONCILIATION

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MPs called yesterday for a national reconciliation initiative to resolve the country's political crisis, which should include releasing political prisoners, returning citizenships that were revoked and ending a clampdown on political dissent. The call was made by senior opposition MP Ali Al-Deqbasi, who was among the former lawmakers who ended a four-year boycott of the parliamentary polls and won a National

Assembly seat last month.

His call was echoed by a number of other MPs as the Assembly began to debate the Amiri speech given during the Assembly's inaugural session on Dec 11. Deqbasi said the country is living through very serious regional conditions, terrorist networks were busted and the country was the target of a deadly terrorist attack. He called for caution and for national unity to be able to deal with the dangers.

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HONOLULU: US President Barack Obama (left) and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe place wreaths at the USS Arizona Memorial on Tuesday at Pearl Harbor. — AFP

US, JAPAN MOVING PAST LEGACY OF WAR

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii: The leaders of war-time enemies America and Japan made a poignant joint pilgrimage to Pearl Harbor Tuesday, issuing symbolic declarations about the power of reconciliation and warning against the drumbeat of conflict. Seventy-five years after Japanese pilots brought war to idyllic Hawaii and dragged the United States into World War II, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe offered his "sincere and everlasting condolences".

Abe and US President Barack Obama paid homage to the more than 2,400 Americans killed on Dec 7, 1941, delivering a wreath of peace lilies and standing in silence before a shrine to those lost on the USS Arizona - roughly half of all those killed. Abe's visit is a high-profile

mark of contrition by a leader for whom Japan's wartime past is often a sensitive domestic issue. "We must never repeat the horrors of war," he said. "What has bonded us together is the power of reconciliation, made possible through the spirit of tolerance."

Obama - who last May made a solemn pilgrimage to Hiroshima, the target of a US nuclear bomb that effectively ended the war - issued remarks that rang with history and America's current hypercharged politics. "I welcome you here in the spirit of friendship," he told Abe. "I hope that, together, we send a message to the world that there is more to be won in peace than in war, that reconciliation carries more rewards than retribution. Even when hatred burns

hottest, even when the tug of tribalism is at its most primal, we must resist the urge to turn inward," Obama said against the backdrop of the USS Arizona. "We must resist the urge to demonize those who are different."

The meeting comes as Obama prepares to leave office and with Abe leading Japan into uncharted waters after remarks by incoming US president Donald Trump clouded US-Japanese relations. Trump, who takes office on Jan 20, appeared during his campaign to suggest Japan break a taboo and develop its own nuclear weapons. He caused consternation again last week when he threatened to revive the global nuclear arms race.

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (second right) meets with Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri (second left) and renowned Quran reciter Khalid Jassim Al-Enati (left), in presence of Undersecretary of the Awqaf Ministry Fared Amadi. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (second right) meets with Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri (second left) and renowned Quran reciter Khalid Jassim Al-Enati (left), in presence of Undersecretary of the Awqaf Ministry Fared Amadi.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Faleh Al-Azb.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri and renowned Quran reciter Khalid Jassim Al-Enati, in presence of other officials.

AMIR MEETS WINNER OF QATARI QURAN AWARD

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for the Municipality Mohammad Nasser Al-Jabri and renowned Quran reciter Khalid Jassim Al-Enati.

Enati recently won the 'First of the Firsts' competition which is part of the international branch of the Qatari Sheikh Jassim bin Mohamed Al Thani Holy Quran contest. His Highness the Amir lauded the distinct honorable achievement, which offers a source of pride, wishing Al-Enati all the best in the future.

Meanwhile, Enati said that he had the honor of meeting with His Highness the Amir who urged him and all Kuwaitis to do their best for the development of their dear nation. Enati later met with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as well.

In other news, His Highness the Amir received Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Faleh Al-Azb, who presented to him an analytical study of the 2016 National Assembly elections and the 15th legislative

term. Dr Azb later presented copies for the study to His Highness the Crown Prince and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince, Highness the Prime Minister and Speaker Ghanem. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince met with His Highness the Prime Minister, Speaker Ghanem, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. —KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Faleh Al-Azb.

IRAQ COMMENDS KUWAIT'S HELP IN SECURITY EFFORTS



BAGHDAD: Iraqi President Fuad Masum meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi.

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi yesterday lauded Kuwait's relentless support to his country, especially regarding Iraq's efforts to maintain security and stability. Abadi made the remark during a meeting with Kuwait's visiting Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. During the meeting, the Iraqi premier lauded the current level of close and firm relations between Kuwait and Iraq in all fields.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti minister reaffirmed Kuwait's unshakable position based on backing Iraq's security and stability, while praising progress made by the Iraqi government to shore up the political process in the country and to fight terrorism. On the meeting, he said they had discussed ways of further promoting and developing Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations in all fields, pointing to bilateral cooperation over major issues of mutual interest.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled arrived in Baghdad earlier yesterday to lead Kuwait's delegation to the joint ministerial committee meeting. He also met with Iraqi President Fuad Masum, and conveyed to him greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The two sides also discussed bilateral ties and the recent security and political developments in Iraq and the region. Meanwhile, Masum hailed the strong Kuwaiti support of Iraq's stability, also stressing the importance of boosting joint cooperation on all levels. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled reiterated Kuwait's continuous efforts to safeguard Iraq's security. Furthermore, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met with Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament Salim Al-Jabouri, and the two sides discussed bilateral ties and the recent regional and international developments.

In addition, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, and they stressed the necessity of continuing holding joint gatherings and completing efforts to consolidate bilateral cooperation in all fields. They also exchanged views on the latest regional and international developments. The meetings were attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Iraq Salem Al-Zamanan, and senior officials at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—KUNA



Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim Al-Jabouri.

In Brief

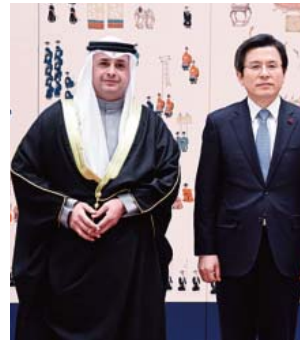
AIR TRAFFIC NOT AFFECTED BY FOG

KUWAIT: Air traffic at Kuwait International Airport was normal yesterday despite the mild fog, said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Horizontal visibility was at 2,000 to 2,800 meters at one point before it gradually improved, DGCA's spokesman Mansour Al-Hashemi said. Kuwait witnessed foggy weather yesterday morning which reduced visibility on the ground.—KUNA



DIPLOMAT PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT

KUWAIT: Ambassador Bader Mohammad Al-Awadi yesterday presented his credentials as Kuwait's new Ambassador to Acting President of South Korea Hwang Kyo-ahn. Ambassador Al-Awadi said in a statement that he delivered greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Korean leader.—KUNA



ASSEMBLY NOMINATES REPRESENTATIVES

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Parliament elected in a session yesterday MPs Ali Al-Diqbasi, Khaled Al-Otaibi, Dr Waleed Al-Tabtabai and Askar Al-Enezi to be its representatives in the Arab Parliament. According to Arab Parliament regulations, "each member nation is represented by a total of four MPs, as women are also eligible to be nominated."—KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A diver takes out a pearl from an oyster collected during the annual pearl diving voyage carried out in August this year.—Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT'S KRCS SENDS 20 TRUCKS OF RELIEF AID TO SYRIA FROM TURKEY



GAZIANTEP: Kuwait Red Crescent Society's Chairman Dr Helal Al-Sayer inspects relief aid to be distributed to Syrians displaced from eastern Aleppo.—KUNA

GAZIANTEP: Twenty trucks filled with relief aid material began their journey from Gaziantep, southeastern Turkey, heading to Syria to provide help to displaced Syrians from eastern Aleppo, Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) chairman Dr Helal Al-Sayer said yesterday.

The convoy - that carries humanitarian aid, winter supplies, and fuel - conveys a message that the Kuwaiti people will always stick to their role in supporting their Syrian brothers and sisters, Sayer said. Kuwaitis will spare no effort to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to Syrians amid the severe winter in their country, he stressed.

The convoy is part of the relief campaign launched by the KRCS under 'Cry for Aleppo' to help the displaced from the major Syrian city, Sayer said. He lauded the rapid and positive response and assistance offered by the Kuwaiti benefactors for the aid campaign.

Sayer had announced Tuesday that KRCS plans a series of relief aid campaigns to ease the suffering of Syrian refugees, particularly those facing harsh winter temperatures in refugee camps in neighboring countries.

In a statement upon arrival to Gaziantep to follow up KRCS humanitarian projects and activities on behalf of the Syrian refugees there, Sayer stated that Kuwait would continue its support to Syrian displaced in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. He noted that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has made clear directives to offer helping hand to Syrian people to alleviate their suffering.—KUNA



KUWAIT: KISR's Director General Dr Samira Al-Sayed (center) participates in a campaign to release around 165,000 fish into territorial waters.—KUNA

KISR RELEASES 165,000 FISH IN BID TO BOOST FOOD SECURITY

KUWAIT: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has released around 165,000 fish into territorial waters in efforts to enhance food security. In a speech yesterday during the closing ceremony for a campaign aiming to boost fish stocks, KISR's Director General Dr Samira Al-Sayed said that similar measures will continue to ensure sufficient fish stocks. Moreover, she noted that there has been an acute shortage of fish stocks as a

result of environmental degradation and population growth, adding that the endeavor was carried out in a span of three months.

On the project, Sayed said that the objective is to generate awareness on the need to restore environmental richness, noting that KISR is in need of logistical and pecuniary support in order to bring its goal of boosting fish stocks to fruition.

Meanwhile, head of Kuwait

National Petroleum Company's (KNPC) public relations department Khaled Al-Enezi cited concerted efforts by the government to undertake this initiative. "This is a long-term project that aims to increase the fish population in Kuwaiti territorial waters, which will in turn, ensure food security in the country." With a rich maritime tradition, seafood such as fish is a staple of the Kuwaiti diet.—KUNA



Kuwait Red Crescent Society workers pose for a group photo with Chairman Dr Helal Al-Sayer.



KRCS workers stack up boxes of humanitarian aid to be delivered to displaced Syrians from eastern Aleppo.

DIVE TEAM REMOVES SIX TONS OF WASTE FROM FAHAHEEL WATERS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Dive Team affiliated with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation, lifted plastic and wooden waste weighing six tons from boat-gathering area in Fahaheel waters. The team's relentless efforts to clean the area and Kuwaiti coasts in Fahaheel will not stop and will continue to remove harmful waste to the environment and all threats to marine navigation, the team's leader Waleed Al-Fadhel said on Tuesday.

Fadhel asserted importance on removing all hazardous materials and waste dumped by fishing and cruising boats,

which sail heavily in the Fahaheel area, noting that such area requires a daily and weekly cleanup operations.

The team leader said his team found a fishing net that has captured many sea birds and due to neglect the birds were all rotten. The team used specialized boats provided by Al-Koot Marine administration, including heavy lifting equipment to lift the waste, Fadhel added. He called on boat owners and fishermen to preserve the environment of the sea, and called for tightening relevant laws against violators to protect the marine environment of Kuwait.—KUNA



Large group of people at the official release of iPhone 7 and iPhone 7 Plus.



Ooredoo's team pose for a group photo at the iftar tent.

OOREDOO CONCLUDES 2016 WITH MŞORE PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH

IN TANDEM WITH THE DEEP-ROOTED VALUES OF ITS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network in 2016, reiterated its position as a supporter and enabler of youth through more of its varied partnerships with reputable institutes, and its own unique initiatives. This stems from Ooredoo's deep-rooted belief in the importance of youth in building the future of the

tion in summer internship programs for fresh graduates, held annually in collaboration with the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP). The internships give graduates a rounded experience on the various roles and functions of Ooredoo's different departments and divisions.

The company has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kuwait International Law School. The memorandum of understanding between the two entities gives Kuwait International Law School students the opportunity to intern at Ooredoo Kuwait and get exposed to the various functions fulfilled by different departments across the organization. High-scoring students can also get an opportunity to intern in some of Ooredoo Group's operating companies outside Kuwait.

Youth Initiatives

Ooredoo has launched this year, and for the second consecutive year, its own volunteer program that succeeded in attracting hundreds of youth from across Kuwait. The program, launched in collaboration with Spread the Passion, aims to prepare youth with all the essential skills necessary for them to volunteer, before matching them with volunteering opportunities. The company is also a proud sponsor of Ata Hub, a Kuwaiti online community for non-government entities and volunteer groups aimed at helping all volunteers find the right volunteer opportunities.

Supporting Entrepreneurs

In terms of supporting entrepreneurs, Ooredoo partnered with Murouj Market, at the attractive trendy location where a pop-up market takes place once a month. The market includes local farm produce, artisanal food products and crafts, with a 'street food' section aimed at highlighting the culinary diversity of Kuwait's local food community. The market also offers a section dedicated for children's activities.

Ooredoo is also a sponsor of ATAHUB initiative, an online and mobile platform that aims to raise the community awareness, collaboration and engagement in initiatives that have a positive return on the society and its needs. Additionally, Ooredoo proudly sponsored Jaribha, an online platform is based on the concept of "reward crowd-funding", where business creators can achieve their project goals through the support of people in return for rewards.

Humanitarian Aid

With partners such as the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and Abdullah Al-Nouri

Charity Organization, Ooredoo held a number of charity drives for the displaced people of Aleppo. The activities included donations via SMS and via links posted on Ooredoo's social media channels. Taking the charity drive to the hot spots of youth activities, Ooredoo held several charity events at Murouj Market, where a donation box for winter clothes and blankets was placed, in addition to the "Tree of Life" initiative, where visitors write messages and tie them to a tree, and Ooredoo donates KD 1 for each message to the participating charity organizations.

iPhone 7 Launch

Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network in 2016, celebrated the launch of the iPhone 7 at its headquarters before the midnight hour of the official iPhone launch date, the 24th of September. The special celebration was attended by hundreds of customers, who waited for midnight to sign up to the latest plans with the iPhone 7 and iPhone 7 Plus.

The event was presented by social media influencers Bibi Alabdulmohsen and Yaqoub Boushehri, and comes as yet another testament for Ooredoo's belief in youth and the social mediums that are closer to them. The hosts, both of whom have a substantial followers base on social media channels, held a number of competitions on stage, awarding winners valuable prizes from Ooredoo. The event also included musical performances by a band from the Netherlands, who use fire, water, and light in their visually stunning shows.

Celebrating Success

Ooredoo was proud to be among the first companies to host Kuwaiti shooting champion Fehaid Al Deehani upon his return to Kuwait with the gold medal from the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio, after his historical achievement. The reception took place at the company's headquarters and was attended by Ooredoo's executive managers and departments' heads. It included a celebratory traditional Ardha dance. Employees and visitors to the head office branch were able to meet and greet the Olympic champion. Al Deehani was awarded with a diamond line with free local calls, messages and internet as a token of appreciation for his achievement.

Hala February

Celebrating Kuwait's biggest annual event, Ooredoo was proud to be the main sponsor for Hala February 2016. Ooredoo's partnership with this festival reflects the company's belief in its social responsibility toward the community and in the importance of effectively taking part in national events and activities. The



Ooredoo's CEO Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Thani is pictured with Information and Youth Affairs Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

festive activities included Hala February camp in Bneider, which involved a dedicated area to support small businesses. Other activities included educational, cultural and religious symposiums in addition to children activities.

One of the most exciting parts of Hala February Festival 2016 was the musical concerts, which captured the interest of many people inside and out Kuwait. Sixteen popular singers from the Middle East participated in concerts where hundreds of attendees were amused, participating singers were Abadi Al Johar, Asala Nasri, Fahad Al Kubaisi, Cheb Khaled and Tamer Hosni, Shamma Hamdan, Saad Al Mujarad, Ibrahim Dashti, Hatem Iraqi, MUSAED AL BALUSHI, Nabil Shuai, Ahlam, Hind Al Bahrania, Shereen and Hussein Aljasmai.

Achievements and Awards

The year came with a number of achievements for Ooredoo, culminating in winning the "Speedtest Awards Winner 2016" by Ookla, the company that operates the famous website Speedtest.net, a tool that measures network speed on users' devices. The awards are based on speed test results conducted by hundreds of thousands of actual smartphone users in Kuwait.

Ooredoo also won a number of awards from the Global Association for Contact Centre & Customer Engagement Best Practices, including: Best Contact Centre Director in EMEA, Excellence in the Support Professional categories for IT and HR, and Best Contact Centre Operational Manager.

The mobile operator also won in the categories of best Ramadan television commercial,

best products and services television commercial, and innovative public relations team category at the fourth 'Creativity Awards' night by the Arab Media Forum held early December.

Closer Connection

Keeping up with its yearly habit, Ooredoo has released a television commercial for Ramadan that managed to reach over 1 million views on YouTube within 48 hours of its release on the first day of Ramadan. The commercial this year focused on the true spiritual essence of Ramadan, and was entitled "Closer Connection" in reference to the connection between man and God. The star-studded production's lyrics are written by Emirati lyricist Ali Al-Khawar and the music is composed by Kuwaiti composer Fahad Al-Nasser. The song is a duet performed by Saudi singer Rashed Al-Majed and Egyptian star Angham, and features Tunisian singer Lutfi Boushnaq. The lyrics focus on the simplicity of making a strong connection with God by asking for His help sincerely and honestly, and it touches on the themes of God's support and unconditional love to all people, regardless of their background. The video features a number of well-known character, including Turkish actor Burak Ozcivit, Kuwaiti retired actress Raja Mohammed and the actor couple Fouad Ali and Haya Abdulsalam, in addition to a number of social media influencers known for their philanthropic work, such as Safa Al-Failakawi, an advocate of adoption, in addition to Kuwaiti university students in the USA, Group 228, Dr Majeda Al-Yatama, Sundus Al-Qattan, and Oman footballer Ali Al-Habsi.



Ooredoo's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub participates in a festival hosted by the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs on the International Volunteer Day.

Kuwait. Commenting on this, Ooredoo's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub said: "We are keen on collaborating with different entities in both private and public sectors in order to enrich the experience of Kuwait's youth. Through this, we hope to translate the vision expressed by His Highness the Emir of Kuwait, who mentioned on numerous occasions the importance of participation between private sector in empowering youth."

Alayoub added: "Through our sustainable investment in the abilities of our youth, we hope to create a generation that is ready to take on tomorrow's challenges. This reflects our core values of caring, connecting, and challenging."

Collaboration and Cooperation

Ooredoo is proud to be the first company to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs. The memorandum aims at enhancing cooperation between the two entities to support youth-related projects.

Ooredoo is also committed to its participa-



Ooredoo's CEO Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Thani presents a gift to Information and Youth Affairs Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.



Ooredoo's CEO Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Thani arrive at the Hala February Festival.



Olympic Gold Medalist Bader Al-Dehani is honored by Ooredoo.



Ooredoo participates in distributing aid to Syrian refugees.



Ooredoo's team receives an award.



Ooredoo's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub participates in distributing iftar meals during Ramadan.



Participants at the workshop pose for a group photo.

PREPARATIONS TO HOLD OIL OUTPUT COMMISSION IN JANUARY: KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Preparations are underway to hold a meeting for the Kuwait-chaired special commission tasked with monitoring adherence to crude oil cut on January 21-22 in Vienna, the State of Kuwait Oil Minister announced yesterday.

Issam Al-Marzouq, also the Minister of Water, said in a statement that the decision by OPEC and non-OPEC oil-producing countries to slash the output of crude oil would be in effect on January 1st, adding that the OPEC secretary general will visit Kuwait on the 9th of the same

month. On his meeting with his Iraqi counterpart, Jabar Al-Luaibi, earlier here, Minister Al-Marzouq confirmed that he agreed with his guest on importing Iraqi oil, first 50 million cubic feet per day, to be gradually lifted to 200 million cb per day, explaining the date for effecting the deal would be set after forecast meetings of the relevant technical panels. He indicated that the committees would set transport mechanisms and pricing. On the call made by Al-Luaibi on Kuwaiti companies to invest in Iraq, Al-Marzouq

stated that the Kuwaiti government supports the private sector for launching investments in the neighboring country.

Asked whether subsidiary companies of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation could take part in these investments, the minister said Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUPPEC) and Kuwait Petroleum International (Q8) operate according to trade bases, affirming the KPC welcomes any enterprise "proceeds of which are compatible with its strategy." — KUNA

3,888 PATIENTS UNDERWENT LAPAROSCOPIC PROCEDURES

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: There are 3,888 patients who underwent laparoscopic procedures from Jan to Oct 2016, including 500 cases that required intervention during the procedure, either to remove a benign or malignant tumor or to stop bleeding. This was stated by Dr Wafa Al-Hashash, internist, gastroenterologist, liver and liver transplant consultant and head of the gastroenterology and liver unit at the Sabah Health Zone.

Hashash told a workshop held at the gastroenterology and liver unit that modern surgery equipment and the GI tract laparoscope can be used to stop bleeding and remove varicose, benign and malignant tumors without leaving any traces by using electrocautery equipment and water

cutting with a multipurpose tube instead of an injection. This process guarantees the doctor and patient total safety and no penetrations during the process, besides the use of argon gas that helps the area to clot without touching the tissue.

Hashash said that among the advantages of this system in the GI tract is the ability to control bleeding without touching the tissue, especially since ionic argon gas was successfully used in open surgeries. She said that it is safe to use it in the treatment of the stomach, duodenum and colon. Among the modern methods is to isolate a part of the tissue with the use of pressurized water, as it has been proven as a safe treatment method, without touching the layer near it, to reduce the possibility of penetrating any healthy tissue.

COURT ORDERS PAPER TO COMPENSATE DEFENDANT

By Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A court yesterday sentenced a local newspaper to pay the second defendant in the Al-Sadeq Mosque bombing case, Jarrah Nimer, compensation of KD 5,000 for slander, after he was acquitted by the criminal court and the courts of appeal and cassation. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) had published Nimer's photo on his arrest, saying that he owned the vehicle that dropped the prime suspect at the mosque, which brought him a great deal of backlash on social media networks, although the courts later acquitted him.

Fishermen decry 'unfair treatment'

Chairman of Kuwait Fishermen Union Thaher Al-Sowayyan stressed that fishermen have been unfairly treated by unstudied decisions concerning their profession without even consulting them. Sowayyan added that Kuwaiti fishermen suffered considerable losses this season because of a lack of expatriate labor working on their fishing boats, after the authorities decided to stamp their passports after sailing out to international waters for shrimping and on their return to Kuwait.

"This decision made many of them quit and many expat fishermen were not allowed to reenter Kuwait," he underlined, adding that MoI also mandated all Kuwaiti fishing boats to use the Um Al-Maradem exit, which doubled the distance, cost and duration of the trip from five to 10 days. "Half the Kuwaiti fishing fleet might stop operating and some have already stopped, while owners are still paying local banks, companies, the industrial bank and brokers," he reminded, noting that after being fed up with the new decisions, over 100 expatriate fishermen who had their passports with them fled the country, leaving boats behind without even notifying their sponsors. Sowayyan added that recruiting new workers is also getting harder because the runaway fishermen still hold valid residencies in their passports and sponsors cannot get new ones until previous sponsorships are cancelled. "These idle boats will lead to a lack of local catches, and thus fish prices will skyrocket," he explained, urging MoI to allocate another closer exit and use special passport-like documents for sailing in and out instead of leaving the passports with fishermen.

He also urged the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) to protect the profession and MPs to give the issue due care. Sowayyan said that the total shrimp catch in Nov 2016 was 353,736 tons compared to 371,427 tons in the same period last year. "This means that local markets were deprived of 118,000 tons of shrimp," he underlined, pointing out that the union will hold a seminar next month to discuss the problem and possible solutions.

NURSERIES TO BE TRANSFERRED TO THE EDUCATION MINISTRY

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Social Affairs and Labor Minister and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Subaih said the transfer of nurseries to the education ministry is proceeding according to the legal process. She said the transfer was scheduled for Jan 1, 2017, but might be delayed by a month, as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) is waiting the view of the fatwa and legislation department of the transfer decision to ensure its legality.

The second article of the law says: "It is not allowed to establish a private nursery until a license is received from MSAL." Article 4 says: "The applicant cannot make contracts or deals in the name of the nursery, or accept children before receiving the license, and is not allowed to move the nursery or change its specifications without prior written approval from MSAL."

Roadmap

Chairman of the parliament's bedoons committee MP Nasser Al-Dousary said a roadmap has been prepared for the committee's action that relies on several priorities. Among these priorities are holders of forged passports, adjusting bedoons' legal status and resolving the issue of security restrictions by the central apparatus, which hinders transactions for this group. The panel aims to grant children of bedoons the right to study in government schools, universities and colleges in all grades, in addition to

employing them in government jobs instead of expatriates.

New directors

Hashim Sayyed Hashim, CEO of Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries (KIPI) issued a decision appointing Abdullah Al-Awadhi as acting director of health, environmental safety, security and fire operations. He also appointed Yousuf Al-Baker as acting director of liquid gas operations. Ismail Ali Ahmad was appointed as acting director of general services.

Banks closed

The Central Bank announced that it will be closed on Jan 1, 2017 and will resume its activities on Jan 2, 2017. Other banks' official holiday will be on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, with their airport branches continuing to operate as usual.

Development projects

The preparation and follow-up team at the Secretariat General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development concluded its field visits for development projects of 2016. The team headed by Suad Al-Awadhi visited the site of the new Adan Hospital in the presence of the project engineer at the health ministry Ibrahim Al-Naham. Awadh said that this visit was the last field visit scheduled for this year. She said the new Adan Hospital project costs nearly KD 232 million, adding that the project is made up of seven buildings including those of maternity, surgery, central services, physiotherapy, rehabilitation and parking.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEETS

KUWAIT: Municipal Council's President Muhalhel Al-Khaled yesterday opened the council's extraordinary meeting and endorsed the meeting's minutes that had been suspended since October. He also approved a request made by the members to go on spring leave from Jan 2 till Feb 21, 2017. The council's legal department manager Mohammed Al-Jasser strongly called for declaring seats vacant in the five constituencies. The meeting discussed the Ministry of Awqaf's request to build residences for imams and muezzins in various governorates, illegal apartments in private residence areas and the violations committed by both the municipality and the Awqaf Ministry in this regard.

DOCTORS' PROTECTION LAW NEEDED: MINISTER

KUWAIT: A committee will be established soon to formulate a draft law protecting doctors and healthcare providers' from physical and verbal assaults, Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said yesterday. The much needed law will be ready within three months from the start of the commission's work, Harbi said. The minister called on Kuwait medical bodies to provide their vision for the draft law. Kuwait medical association strongly condemned the recent assault against an Amiri hospital official and called for holding the assailant legally accountable. — KUNA

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VALUES OF FORGIVENESS

By Khalid Al-Tarrah

A tennis match between Japan and America paved a path to restore diplomatic relations between the two countries following a historic diplomatic break up due to the Hiroshima bombing. While in the 1980s, the so called "eye diplomacy" following the invention of Ophthalmologist Fedorov, the former Soviet pilot, led to the opening of diplomatic channels between Gulf countries and the Soviet Union before its collapse. Things seem more complicated in Kuwait despite the democratic freedom it enjoys and which is protected by the constitution, as signs of differences between the executive and legislative authorities appeared while the 2016 National Assembly is still in its infancy. These signs appeared because of a Christmas tree placed in a cooperative society located where a large number of foreigners live.

The crisis that was started by a lawmaker prompted the concerned minister to remove all traces of the Christmas tree so that the government or the minister herself would avoid being subjected to a parliamentary siege. The MP worked for many years at the Fatwa and Legislation Department, and his experience qualifies him to be aware of the law, and the values of forgiveness that were confirmed by all heavenly religions. I do not think that the MP and Minister know the rights Christian Kuwaitis possess, just like other citizens, in addition to having foreign and Arab Christian communities who deserve respect regardless of their religion.

The tree almost created a clash, if only it wasn't for the minister's political enthusiasm. Do we expect a legislation in cooperation with the MP whose feelings were provoked by a tree, to uproot it by banning Christmas celebrations? Kuwait earned the 'Humanitarian Center' title. Humanity does not only mean aiding poor countries, rather it also includes honoring principles and values of forgiveness that are supposed to prevail socially and politically, so that we remove the roots of struggle regardless of its nature. The Kuwaiti society has a history of forgiveness, which was reflected by Dr Khalifa Al-Wuqayan in his book "Culture in Kuwait" which proposes spreading and instilling values of forgiveness.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



الواقي

Al-Rai

GONE BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN

By Dr Khaled Al-Saleh

A nine-year-old child and a sixty-year-old woman were my colleagues at Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) before the Iraqi Invasion. Both were left behind by their families after they left Kuwait. The child recovered through chemotherapy and has become a permanent resident there. The old lady, who was bedridden, also remained there until the Invasion. The hospital became their home, and the staff became their families. The child was loved by all and became the flower of the ward, and the lady, a blessing.

The child no longer cared about his real family though at times I felt that he missed them, but the old

lady kept giving excuses for her own family. She was sick and prayed a lot and shared stories about her family. I lived with them for months until the Invasion. They both disappeared, and till now I do not know their whereabouts. They were nowhere to be found after the Invasion.

There are unforgettable stories at the KCCC. There are stories that always remain fresh in your memory. Despite the renovation of the hospital's wards, every time I pass through that particular ward I picture them both as if they never left. It is like a part of their souls were left behind as an impression reminding us of them.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

It is like a part of their souls were left behind as an impression reminding us of them

Crime

Report

CUSTOMERS FIGHT WITH CAR MECHANIC

KUWAIT: Two Kuwaiti citizens attacked a Syrian car mechanic and an Egyptian cashier with a stick over a dispute in regards to spare parts. Their actions were caught on camera. A security source said that two citizens who went to repair a car in Doha argued with the mechanic and accused him of not doing his job properly. The mechanic became angry and left the car, so they beat him up with a stick. They also beat up the cashier and escaped, according to the complainant's remarks in their statements to local police. A case was filed for investigations.

Break-in

A citizen accused her former brother-in-law of entering her house in Ali Sabah Al-Salem while she was at work and causing property damage. In her statements to police, the woman said that her maid answered the door, only for the man to force his way inside. The man scattered the complainant's belongings all around the house as he seemed to be looking for something, then escaped, according to her statements. She did not specify whether the man has taken anything from the house with him before he left. Police are investigating.

Harasser caught

A citizen in her twenties said that she was harassed by a man who stopped her while she was driving on Second Ring Road. Police had reported to the scene after the woman made an emergency call and said that someone was chasing her. They managed to arrest the harasser and took him to Al-Qadisiya police station, where a complaint was lodged.

Officers insulted

Two policemen pressed charges against a citizen for being drunk. They also charged the man's son and a third person for insulting them while on duty. The two detectives filed a complaint at Maidan Hawally police station about the incident. Detectives were asked to arrest the suspects.

Scam

A taxi driver told a citizen that he could help him hire a housemaid in exchange for KD 500, but took the money and disappeared, the man told police. A complaint was lodged and police are investigating. — Translated by Kuwait Times

RAYYAN DESIGN JOINS HORECA 2017

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, Rayyan Design Company; a leading company in interior designing, recently announced its intention to join over 70 other companies specialized in hospitality, hotel equipment, catering, transport, and kitchen design, which are taking part in the Horeca exhibition.

Speaking on the occasion, Rayyan Design's Marketing Manager Hebah Al-Hamwi said that her company pro-

vides creative interior design solutions that combine experience and modernity in restaurant and cafe interior design. She added that the company's creations depend on projects' marketing studies.

Moreover, Hamwi pointed that, with help of its highly skilled and experienced staff, Rayyan Design has been constantly developing ever since it was founded by interior designer Mohammed Rayyan in 1998. She added that Rayyan Design is a pioneer in using recycled materials in its projects.

In addition, Hamwi said that Rayyan Design owns one of the most important German trademarks; Object Carpet,

which is highly valued by regional and international leading interior design consultancy companies.

Speaking about Horeca, Hamwi stressed its importance as an exhibition that gathers a large group of experts and companies specialized in hospitality, hotel equipment and catering. "Thus, it is highly important to take part in order to exchange expertise on the latest restaurant and cafe interior designs, materials, furniture and illumination," she 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.



Hebah Al-Hamwi

HCA NHS Ventures



Committed to collaboration

HCA NHS Ventures is a subsidiary of HCA International which was set up in 2006, the HCA NHS Ventures division leads on private partnerships with NHS Trusts across the country.

Harley Street at UCH is a joint partnership with top teaching hospital University College London Hospital, formed in 2006. Based on level 15 in the tower at UCLH, the 18 bed acute facility is a specialist cancer centre for complex and rare conditions. Patient rooms are private and en-suite offering panoramic views across London. We offer medical and surgical care including day case chemotherapy and a comprehensive JACIE accredited bone marrow and stem cell transplant service one of only a few in the UK. The centre offers the pioneering cord blood transplant; this treatment significantly widens the opportunity to find a suitable unrelated donor particularly beneficial for international patients.

The Young Person's Unit at Harley Street at UCH is the only private teenage cancer unit in Europe, treating any form of cancer in 13-19 year olds and further establishes the relationship with UCLH. The 6 bedded Unit treats all kinds of cancers and provides high quality care. All rooms are private and en-suite with views across central London. There are facilities in each room for a parent or guardian to stay with patients throughout their treatment and international entertainment packages, including internet access to keep in touch with friends and family abroad. Patients also have access to educational facilities and an entertainment lounge. 5* catering is provided with specially adapted menus to suit international patient requirements.

State-of-the-art technology includes the revolutionary TrueBeam STxTM, the latest radiotherapy and radiosurgical equipment which the most advanced linear accelerator in the world and is the first of its kind to be installed in the UK.

Harley Street at Queen's is a joint partnership with Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals Trust, based at Queen's Hospital Romford, offering advanced cancer, neurosurgical and general surgery treatment. It is the only centre of its kind in Essex and includes a dedicated High Dependency Unit, Chemotherapy Day Care Unit and advanced radiotherapy through a dedicated linear accelerator including

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The Christie Clinic is the latest HCA NHS Venture and a partnership with The Christie NHS Foundation Trust in Manchester. The £35million development houses a state-of-the-art cancer clinic with 34 inpatient rooms, 10 chemotherapy chairs, advanced radiotherapy, sophisticated operating theatres and private patient pharmacy. This impressive facility takes the HCA standard of care outside of London to Manchester and the North of England. Located in the heart of Manchester The Christie Clinic offers light and airy private en-suite rooms, with international entertainment packages and is in close proximity to the city centre.



KUWAIT UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR GIVES PRESENTATION ON COMPUTER GRAPHICS

KUWAIT: Muhammad Sarfraz from the Department of Information Science at Kuwait University's College of Computing Sciences and Engineering gave a presentation recently on computer graphics (CG). It identified the field of computer graphics as a significant area of study and practice in the world of computing today. In addition to its critical importance in the traditional fields of automobile, aircraft manufacturing, shipbuilding, shoe industry, and general product design, more recently, computer graphics have proven to be indispensable in a variety of modern industries, including robotics, medical imaging, visualization, Textile, Fashion, Painting, Art, Archeology, Games and even media and many others.

The presentation aimed to explain the tool of splining for graphics design. Specific concentration was made on a new spline approach which is quadratic in nature but acts like a cubic as far as geometric features are concerned. The talk focused on interdisciplinary methods and affiliate research in the area. Shape control and design was the main area to focus in the presentation. Furthermore, the presentation provided the audience with a



Professor Muhammad Sarfraz

variety of techniques, applications and examples necessary for various real-life problems. The major goal of the talk was to stimulate views and provide a source where researchers and practitioners can find the latest developments in the field.

Muhammad Sarfraz is a Professor and Vice Dean of Research and Graduate Studies in Kuwait University, Kuwait. He received his

PhD from Brunel University, UK, in 1990. His research interests include computer graphics, CAD/CAM, pattern recognition, computer vision, image processing, and soft computing. He is currently working on various projects related to academia and industry.

Sarfraz has been keynote and invited speaker at various platforms around the globe. He has advised and supervised more than 55 students for their MSc and PhD theses. He has published around 300 publications in the form of various Books, Book Chapters, journal papers and conference papers.

Sarfraz is member of various professional societies including IEEE, ACM, IVS, IACSIT, and IOSO. He is a Chair, member of the International Advisory Committees and Organizing Committees of various international conferences, symposiums and workshops. He is the reviewer, for many international Journals, Conferences, meetings, and workshops around the world. He is editor and guest editor of various international conference proceedings, books, and journals. He has achieved a variety of awards in education, research, and administrative services.



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) distributed winter clothes to cleaning and construction workers as part of its annual campaign to help outdoor laborers cope with bad weather conditions.



Five dead, many injured as train hits bus near Tunis

VENEZUELA MILITARY TRAFFICKING FOOD

GENERALS MAKE HUGE PROFITS AS COUNTRY GOES HUNGRY

PUERTO CABELLO, Venezuela: When hunger drew tens of thousands of Venezuelans to the streets last summer in protest, President Nicolas Maduro turned to the military to manage the country's diminished food supply, putting generals in charge of everything from butter to rice. But instead of fighting hunger, the military is making money from it, an Associated Press investigation shows. That's what grocer Jose Campos found when he ran out of pantry staples this year. In the middle of the night, he would travel to an illegal market run by the military to buy corn flour - at 100 times the government-set price. "The military would be watching over whole bags of money," Campos said. "They always had what I needed."

With much of the oil country on the verge of starvation and malnourished children dying in pediatric wards, food trafficking has become big business in Venezuela. And the military is at the heart of the graft, according to documents and interviews with more than 60 officials, company owners and workers, including five former generals.

As a result, food is not reaching those who most need it. The US government has taken notice. Prosecutors have opened investigations against senior Venezuelan officials for laundering riches from food contracts through the US financial system, according to several people with direct knowledge of the probes. No charges have been brought. "Lately, food is a better business than drugs," said retired Gen. Cliver Alcalá, who helped oversee border security.

The late President Hugo Chavez created a Food Ministry in 2004. His socialist government nationalized and then neglected farms and factories, and domestic produc-

tion dried up. When the price of oil collapsed in 2014, the government no longer could afford to import all the country needed. Hungry Venezuelans began rioting, and so Maduro handed the generals complete power over food. The government now imports nearly all the country's food, and corruption drives prices sky-high, said Werner Gutierrez, agronomy professor at the University of Zulia. "If Venezuela paid market prices, we'd be able to double our imports," Gutierrez said. "Instead, people are starving."

Corruption

In large part due to concerns of graft, the three largest global food traders, all based in the US, have stopped selling directly to the Venezuelan government. One South American businessman says he paid millions in kickbacks to Venezuelan officials as the hunger crisis worsened, including \$8 million to people who work for the food minister, Gen Rodolfo Marco Torres. The businessman insisted on speaking anonymously because he did not want to acknowledge participating in corruption.

He explained that vendors like him can afford to pay off officials because they build large profit margins into what they bill the state. A single \$52 million contract of his to import yellow corn last year, seen by AP, included a potential overpayment of more than \$20 million, compared with market prices at the time. Marco Torres did not respond to requests for comment by phone, email and hand-delivered letter. In the past, he has said he will not be lured into fights with an unpatriotic opposition.

Some contracts go to companies that have no experience dealing in food or seem to exist only on paper. Financial doc-



CARACAS: In this Feb 14, 2004 file photo, the military creates a perimeter at a government-subsidized food market in the Venezuelan capital. The late President Hugo Chavez began handing the military control over food, and the wider economy, following opposition attempts to overthrow him in 2002. —AP

uments obtained by AP show that Marco Torres did business with Panama-registered Atlas Systems International, which has all the hallmarks of a shell company. Another government food supplier, J A Comercio de Generos Alimenticios, lists on its website a nonexistent address in an industrial city near Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The two companies transferred more than \$5.5 million in 2012 and 2013 to a

Geneva account controlled by the brothers-in-law of the then-food minister, Gen. Carlos Osorio, according to bank and internal company documents seen by AP. Osorio, recently appointed to oversee transparency in the military, did not respond to requests for comment, but in the past dismissed charges of corruption as personal attacks from the opposition. The socialist administration says it takes graft

seriously. "The state has an obligation to root out corruption in all levels of public administration," the defense minister, Gen. Vladimir Padrino Lopez, said this fall.

Dirty Dealing

And yet dirty dealing persists from the port to the markets, according to dozens of people working in Puerto Cabello, which handles the majority of imported food.

Officials sometimes keep ships waiting at sea until they are paid off, according to a stevedore who spoke anonymously because he feared losing his job. After the cargo is unloaded, customs officials take their cut, refusing to even start the process of nationalizing goods without a payment, four customs workers said.

"It's an unbroken chain of bribery from when your ship comes in until the food is driven out in trucks," said Luis Pena, a director at the Caracas-based importer Premier Foods. If importers try to get through the process without greasing the wheels, food sits and spoils, Pena said. Rotting food is a problem even as 90 percent of Venezuelans say they can't afford enough to eat. The demands for bribes delay shipments, and state officials sometimes neglect to distribute what they import.

Puerto Cabello crane operator Daniel Arteaga watched last winter as state workers buried hundreds of containers of spoiled chicken, meat and beans. "All these refrigerated containers, and meanwhile people are waiting in food lines each week just to buy a single chicken," Arteaga said. The corruption doesn't stop once cargo leaves the port, according to truck drivers. The military has set up checkpoints along highways to catch food traffickers, and truck drivers say they have to pay bribes to about half of them.

At the end of the food chain, some soldiers partake in selling food directly to citizens, according to business owners. Bakery owner Jose Ferreira cuts two cheques for each purchase of sugar: One for the official price of 2 cents a pound and one for the kickback of 60 cents a pound. He keeps copies of both checks in his books, seen by the AP, in case he is ever audited. "We have no other option," he said. —AP

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ALEPPO: MASSIVE TASK OF REBUILDING SHATTERED CITY

ALEPPO: Midnight means lights out in Syria's Aleppo: as the clock strikes 12, over-worked power generators shut off across the city, plunging war-ravaged neighborhoods and heritage sites into darkness. It will take many months and millions of dollars to breathe life back into Aleppo's devastated water, electricity, and transportation networks. Four years of fighting have transformed it from Syria's industrial and commercial powerhouse to a divided and dysfunctional city.

"We sold our vacuum cleaner - what's the point in having one if we don't have electricity?" asked Umm Fayeze, a housewife who lives in the central district of Furqan. "It's been two years since we used our washing machine. We wash everything by hand, but the water is too cold now and I can't take it anymore," the mother-of-two told AFP, sitting in the dark amid piles of dirty laundry.

Forces loyal to President Bashar Al-Assad declared full control over Syria's second city last week, after a landmark evacuation deal ended years of clashes. Rocket fire, air strikes and shelling partly or totally destroyed more than half Aleppo's infrastructure and buildings, according to a "preliminary, optimistic evaluation" by local authorities.

The main power station at Safirah to the southeast has been off line for two years because of the fighting. Aleppo's residents are forced to rely on noisy generators that supply electricity through a web of thick cables snaking through scarred streets. But they are shut down at midnight to save diesel supplies. Umm Fayeze's husband walks home every night from his sweetshop using a small torch to guide the way through pitch-black darkness. "We have two projects that will re-establish electricity to Aleppo," an electricity ministry official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. He said new power lines would be laid from the neighboring province of Hama within a year, but that it would cost more than four billion Syrian pounds, or about \$8 million.

Residents are also impatient for water shortages to end, with the main pumping station currently operating at just a third of its capacity. "We can only pump water to 20 percent of Aleppo. Before the crisis, it was 70 percent," said Issa Korj, chief mechanic at the Suleiman al-Halabi water plant. He said it would take "many months" to repair the facility, but even then, water provision was likely to remain a problem for residents.

Most of the water pumped to Aleppo comes from the Euphrates Dam in the adja-



ALEPPO: A Syrian worker stands in front of a reservoir on Tuesday at the water station in the Suleiman Al-Halabi neighborhood. — AFP

cent province of Raqa, which is held by the Islamic State jihadist group. "They regularly cut off the water," said Fakher Hamdo, who heads Aleppo's water administration. He added that global economic sanctions imposed on Syria since 2011 make spare parts nearly impossible to import.

'Aleppo is one'

But before any major rebuilding projects can begin, local authorities must clear away barricades and sand berms that had divided Aleppo between the rebel-controlled east and the government-held west. Bulldozers can already be seen in the

bombed-out streets, clearing rubble and dismantling metal barriers. "The municipality immediately mobilised to open up the main thoroughfares," said city administrator Nadim Rahmoun. "Opening up the roads will allow us to pump life back into the city with economic and social activity and public services," he added.

Aleppo's Old City - a renowned UNESCO World Heritage site - is at the heart of this effort. The district witnessed some of the most brutal moments of the battle for Aleppo, and restoring its celebrated buildings will pose major challenges. Municipal teams are carefully sorting through the rubble, setting aside original centuries-old stonework that will be used in the restoration. In the nearby district of Aqyul, Abduljawad Najed, 32, had to negotiate heaps of sand to check on his brother's house. "It took more than an hour and a half," he said.

After the barricades were cleared, the same journey took Najed 10 minutes. "Things were much easier and I was able to come by car," he said, loading some household effects into his small pick-up. Najed's enthusiasm was shared by furniture store owner Zakariya, 42. "Thank God, all the roads are now linked together. Aleppo is one again," he said. — AFP



MOSUL: Iraqi pro-government forces patrol the eastern part of this embattled city yesterday, during an ongoing military operation against Islamic State (IS) group militants. — AFP

AIR STRIKE DISABLES LAST MOSUL BRIDGE

BAGHDAD: An air strike has disabled the last bridge linking eastern and western Mosul, a city Iraqi forces are fighting to retake from jihadists, residents and a provincial official said. Iraqi forces have advanced into eastern Mosul - which is divided by the Tigris River - and have retaken some neighborhoods on that side of the city, which has been held by the Islamic State group for more than two and a half years. But the western part of Mosul, the last Iraqi city where IS holds significant territory, remains in the hands of the jihadists.

"Aerial bombing... cut the bridge, and it is not possible to cross it," Mosul resident Abu Ali told AFP. Abu Ali said he had crossed the river on Wednesday in a boat, now the only way to do so, as other bridges were previous-

ly disabled. Another Mosul resident who did not want to be identified by name said a strike had cut the bridge, as did an official from Nineveh province, of which Mosul is the capital. "Al-Atiq bridge was targeted by an air strike," making it unusable, said Hashim Briskani, the deputy head of the Nineveh province security committee. Briskani said it had been the last bridge connecting east and west Mosul.

Abu Ali and Briskani both said the strike was on Tuesday. The US-led coalition carrying out air strikes against IS said it had "disabled two bridges" in the Mosul area on Tuesday, and a third the day before. IS overran large areas north and west of Baghdad in 2014, but Iraqi forces backed by US-led air strikes have since regained much of the territory they lost. — AFP

ISRAEL APPROVES SETTLER BUILDING IN JERUSALEM

TRUMP CONDEMNS 'DISRESPECT' OF ISRAEL

JERUSALEM: Israel approved construction of a multi-storey building for settlers in annexed East Jerusalem yesterday, an NGO said, after postponing authorization of hundreds of other homes ahead of a speech on the Middle East by the US secretary of state. The Obama administration provoked the Israeli government's fury on Friday by failing to block the passage of an anti-settlement resolution in the UN Security Council.

Secretary of State John Kerry was to give further voice to international opposition to settlements in an address that a State Department official said would lay out his vision for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. US President-elect Donald Trump has joined Israeli leaders in attacking the outgoing Obama administration's move at the UN. "We cannot continue to let Israel be treated with such total disdain and disrespect. They used to have a great friend in the US, but not anymore," Trump, a Republican, wrote in a new Twitter posting. "Stay strong Israel, January 20th is fast approaching!," Trump said, citing the day he takes office. Hours before Kerry's speech, a Jerusalem municipal committee pulled back from approving 492 new homes for Israelis in East Jerusalem, an area that Israel captured along with the West Bank in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The chairman of the committee and one of its members said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had asked for the vote to be delayed, concerned approval for those projects would add ammunition to Kerry's expected anti-settlement arguments.

A spokesman for the Israeli leader declined to make immediate comment. The panel meets regularly and the building projects that were removed from the agenda yesterday could come up for a vote in the future. Ir Amim, a group which opposes Israeli settlement in occupied territory where Palestinians seek to establish a state, said the committee nonetheless permitted construction of a four-storey building for settlers in Silwan, a Palestinian neighborhood where they have been expanding their enclave. "Today, while attention has been focused on



JERUSALEM: A general view taken yesterday shows Israeli construction cranes and excavators at a building site of new housing units in the Jewish settlement of Neve Yaakov in the northern area of east Jerusalem. — AFP

the removal of ... building permits ... the committee proceeded to approve a controversial project in one of the most flammable neighborhoods in East Jerusalem," Ir Amim said in a statement. In his speech, Kerry was to discuss Washington's withholding of its Security Council veto in the 14-0 vote that called for a halt to Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories. Saeb Erekat, secretary-general of the Palestine Liberation Organization, called on Israel "to take the high ground and declare a cessation of settlement activities, including East Jerusalem, so we can give the peace process the chance it deserves by the resumption of meaningful negotiations."

'Shameful'

Washington's move at the United Nations broke its longstanding policy of diplomatic shielding of

Israel. Condemned by Israel as "shameful," it was widely seen as a parting shot by President Barack Obama against Netanyahu and his pro-settlement policies. The two leaders have had a rocky relationship, divided over the decades-old Israeli policy of building Jewish settlements in occupied territory as well as on how to prevent Iran arming itself with nuclear weapons.

Washington considers the settlement activity illegitimate and most countries view it as an obstacle to peace. Israel cites a biblical, historical and political connection to the land - which the Palestinians also claim - as well as security interests. Some 570,000 Israelis now live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem amid mounting international concern that a two-state solution to the dispute is in jeopardy, with peace talks stalled since 2014. — Reuters

HOMELESS IN GRAVES SHOCK IRAN

TEHRAN: Images of homeless drug addicts living in empty graves just outside the Iranian capital have deeply shocked the public and prompted reactions even from President Hassan Rouhani. Shahrivand newspaper on Tuesday published the images in a report on the homeless people - about 50 men and women - who dwell in a cemetery in the town of Shahriar, 30 km west of Tehran.

The story and the haunting images of the homeless staring into the camera from inside the unused grave slots spread quickly on social media, where users and celebrities reacted with expressions of alarm and sadness. Oscar-winning Iranian director Asghar Farhadi aired his frustration in a letter to Rouhani. "I read the report... and now my entire being is filled with

shame and sorrow," he wrote. "With this letter, I intend to share my shame with you and all those who have had any responsibility in this country" in the past few decades, he added.

The president responded to Farhadi's "painful" letter yesterday. "Who can see human beings hurt from social issues who take shelter in graves... and not feel ashamed?" Rouhani said in a speech about government supervision. "I have heard about people in western countries who sleep on cardboard under bridges out of poverty, or those who sleep in metro stations, but not in graves," he said. "To solve these issues we must all unite and leave aside partisan issues and differences and address the basic problems of the country." In a follow-up report, Shahrivand said the grave-dwellers were forcibly removed

from the cemetery, after promises from authorities to resolve the issue. Some of those who lived in the graves had done so for 10 years, according to the daily. "Aren't we humans? Are we foreigners? We are Iranian too," an unnamed homeless man told the newspaper in a video. He asked authorities to build a shelter in the area. The report is a rare glimpse into the lives of homeless people in the Iranian capital.

In October another report on homeless people occupying in sewage canals on Tehran's highways triggered similar reactions. Poverty has worsened in recent years in Iran. The official unemployment rate has risen to 12.7 percent this year from 10.6 percent in 2014, while joblessness among teens and young adults has reached 27 percent. — AFP

FIVE KILLED AS TRAIN HITS BUS NEAR TUNIS

TUNIS: At least five people were killed and more than 50 injured yesterday when a train slammed into a public bus before dawn near Tunis, the Tunisian interior ministry said.

The articulated bus was torn in two when it was struck on the tracks at around 6:00 am (0500 GMT) near Sidi Fathallah, some 10 km south of the capital. Five people including a child were killed and another 52 were taken to hospital, many with serious injuries, the ministry said. Among the injured were eight soldiers, Mosaïque FM radio station reported.

A local court official said signals and safety gates had been out of service at the time of the crash. "This failure is at the root of the collision," Moez Bouraoui, a court spokesman from Ben Arous south of the capital, told Mosaïque FM. The national railway company said it had begun an investigation to determine the cause of the accident. President Beji Caid Essebsi visited some of the injured at the Ben Arous hospital. "I have been told that the signals have not been working for more than 15 days," Essebsi said. "This is not normal... we must put an end to laziness, it is everyone's responsibility."

Transport Minister Anis Ghedira called for new measures against the destruction and theft of safety barriers. "We must organize awareness

campaigns on the importance of this equipment that protects lives," he said. Authorities in Tunisia have called for greater caution on the roads following accidents including a collision between a bus and a lorry in August that killed 16 people and injured 85. A 2015 World Health

Organization report said Tunisia had the second worst traffic death rate per capita in North Africa, behind war-torn Libya. Tunisia logged 24.4 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, according to data from previous years, fewer than Libya's 73.4 but far more than 2.9 in Britain. — AFP



JEBEL JALLOUD, Tunisia: Tunisian security officers gather at the site of a collision after a train slammed into a public bus and tore it in two near Sidi Fathallah yesterday. — AFP



Announcement from Ministry of Commerce & Industry Consumer Protection Department

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TRUMP EXPANDS INNER CIRCLE WITH SECURITY OFFICIAL, ENVOY

WEST PALM BEACH, Florida: President-elect Donald Trump tapped an experienced hand from the George W Bush era and a longtime Trump Organization official to become members of his inner circle when he assumes office next month. Thomas Bossert will become an assistant to the president for homeland security and counterterrorism. A statement from Trump's transition team said Bossert will advise the president on issues related to homeland security, counterterrorism and cybersecurity, and coordinate the Cabinet's process for making and executing policy in those areas.

The president-elect also appointed one of his main advisers on US-Israel relations during the campaign and transition as special representative for international negotiations. Jason Greenblatt has worked for the Trump Organization for over two decades and currently serves as its executive vice president and chief legal officer. The homeland security position notably "is being elevated and restored to its independent status alongside the national security adviser", the statement said. Policymakers have long debated whether such national security jobs should operate independently from the White House.

Bossert will work closely with Trump's pick for national security adviser, retired Lt Gen Michael Flynn. Bossert is currently president of the risk management consulting firm CDS Consulting. He previously served as deputy assistant to the president for homeland security under Bush. Donald Trump's West Wing is shaping up to have multiple power centers. Chief of Staff Reince Priebus and senior adviser Steve Bannon will work as "equal partners", according to Trump, and counselor Kellyanne Conway is also expected to have autonomy. Trump's influential son-in-law, Jared Kushner, will have a direct line to the president as well.

Rivalries

Trump has long stoked rivalries among his staff in business and during his presidential campaign. But some critics fear doing so in the White House could sow confusion and slow decision-making. Discussing the appointment of Greenblatt, Trump said he "has a history of negotiating substantial, complex transactions on my behalf", and has the expertise to "bring parties together and build consensus on difficult and sensitive topics".

Trump recently named his other top adviser on Israel, David Friedman, as his pick for US ambassador to Israel. The billionaire-turned-president-elect is spending the holidays at his Florida resort, where he's held a steady stream of meetings with senior staffers, advisers and business executives. A number of key posts in his administration remain; his transition team says he will fill those positions in the coming days.

Meanwhile the president-elect continued the debate over whether he would have won an election against President Barack Obama. Trump posted on Twitter Tuesday, "President Obama campaigned hard (and personally) in very important swing states, and lost. The voters wanted to MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!" It wasn't immediately clear whether Trump was referring to Obama's own presidential runs, or the campaigning the president did in 2016 on Hillary Clinton's behalf. Obama swept most key swing states in his two bids for the White House, but Clinton fell short, losing to Trump.

A dispute erupted a day earlier between Obama and Trump, spurred by Obama's hypothetical musings that had he run again, he would have been victorious. Obama suggested he still holds enough sway over the coalition of voters that elected him twice to get them to vote for him once again. Trump's response: "NO WAY!"

Later Tuesday, Trump thanked himself for a surge in a key gauge of consumer confidence. He wrote on Twitter that The Conference Board had reported that its consumer confidence index had climbed to 113.7 in December. Trump noted that's the highest the index has climbed in more than 15 years, then added, "Thanks Donald!" —AP

DIPLOMATIC SECURITY CHALLENGES REMAIN FOR TRUMP WHITE HOUSE

KEEPING DIPLOMATS SAFE A COSTLY BUSINESS

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump hammered rival Hillary Clinton during the presidential campaign for failing to prevent the attack on the US mission in Benghazi, Libya, when she was secretary of state. Soon he'll be the one responsible for protecting America's diplomats, but he's offered virtually no insight into how he'll do that. After the 2012 Benghazi attack, Congress boosted spending on security to protect the tens of thousands of Americans and foreign staff that make up the US diplomatic service. Security experts and career diplomats say there have been improvements, but that significant shortfalls remain.

Last week's assassination of Russia's ambassador to Turkey, Andrei Karlov, was a chilling reminder that diplomats are increasingly exposed to threats, even in countries that are typically not regarded as hardship posts. The assassin shouted, "Don't forget Aleppo," apparently referring to Russia's military engagement in Syria. It's not clear whether having a brashly outspoken figure like Trump in the White House will compound diplomatic security challenges. The foreign policy of Trump and his pick for secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, remains somewhat of an enigma.

The Trump transition team didn't respond to questions about how his administration will address diplomatic security issues. Keeping diplomats safe is a costly business. In the last budget year, Congress approved \$3.39 billion for the Diplomatic Security Bureau's functions around the world. That accounts for about 7 percent of the State Department's overall budget. Diplomatic security has also become highly contentious since the killings of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans at Benghazi.

The Republican-led House Select Committee on Benghazi concluded in June that there were lethal mistakes by the Obama administration, though it found no "smoking gun" pointing to wrongdoing by Clinton. The committee included Rep Mike Pompeo, Trump's pick to head the CIA. Another member of the committee, Rep Jim Jordan, criticized the Obama administration for refusing to



BENHAZI, Libya: In this Sept 12, 2012 file photo, glass, debris and overturned furniture are strewn inside a room in the gutted US consulate after an attack that killed four Americans, including Ambassador Chris Stevens. —AP

create the position of undersecretary for diplomatic security. He called it the most important change "to enhance diplomatic security". He claimed committee Democrats "stonewalled and played games while we searched for the truth".

Losing interest

The top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, Rep Adam Schiff of California, accused Republicans of losing interest in diplomatic security now that the election is over. "Since the issue is no longer a useful cudgel against Secretary Clinton, I fear the (Republican) majority's commitment to diplomatic security will once again fade, and the State Department could face cuts both to security budgets and to core diplomatic functions," Schiff said.

A 2012 government inquiry following the Benghazi attacks made more than two dozen recommendations for security improvements, highlighting serious lapses in management and

leadership that left the consulate vulnerable. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security declined to answer specific questions on the areas where improvement is still needed, but said that diplomatic security "constantly balances available resources to provide a safe and secure environment for the conduct of US diplomacy".

Security experts and diplomats say more can be done within individual diplomatic missions to improve safety. Mission security chiefs can use more training, and ambassadors and other mission leaders should also be given greater authority over security matters since they are most familiar with conditions on the ground, experts say. Fred Burton, a former diplomatic security agent, said mission security officials "never had that ability to speak for ourselves at these kinds of decision-making meetings because you're pushed down on this flow chart and then you're left ... with all the challenges of being in a place like Benghazi."

Burton, author of "Under Fire: The

Untold Story of the Attack in Benghazi", said he's not optimistic the problem can be fixed unless Tillerson is confirmed "and his desire is to restructure the bureaucracy inside State".

Traditionally, host countries have been obligated by treaty to protect diplomatic facilities. But with non-state actors gaining ground and capable of destabilizing governments, it's falling to the US to take all precautions to protect its diplomats while still giving them the freedom to do their jobs.

Robert Ford, a former ambassador to Syria, said the most helpful way Congress and the administration could advance diplomatic security is by providing "strong support for locally determined security resource needs". "Security issues cannot realistically be micro-managed from Washington-based officials because only the people on the ground have an up-to-date sense of conditions and the evolution of threats," he said. —AP

TRUMP SIGNALS US' SHIFT FROM OBAMA MULTILATERALISM FOCUS

WASHINGTON: For eight years, President Barack Obama's foreign policy doctrine has been rooted in a belief that while the United States can take action around the world on its own, it rarely should. "Multilateralism regulates hubris," Obama declared. His successor, President-elect Donald Trump, has derided some of the same international partnerships Obama and his recent predecessors have promoted, raising the prospect that the Republican's "America First" agenda might well mean an America more willing to act alone.

"The United Nations has such great

financial obligations to the longstanding US-European military alliance.

Trump has also challenged the necessity of multilateralism in his economic agenda, pledging to scrap the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade accord in favor of one-on-one agreements that he says will be more favorable to US businesses and workers. With Trump still about three weeks away from taking office, it's unclear how his campaign rhetoric will translate into action. Even as he has criticized the UN and NATO, he has vowed to "aggressively pursue joint and coalition mili-

partners at times, telling The Atlantic magazine earlier this year that some US allies were "free riders" eager for Washington to solve the world's problems. Obama also has pushed NATO partners to live up to an agreement that they spend at least 2 percent of their country's gross domestic product on defense, a guideline only a few members adhere to.

Coalitions

But the president's major foreign policy decisions have highlighted his belief that the US is better served acting in concert with other nations - and that a lack of involvement from allies should be a warning sign to Washington. Both Republican Presidents George H W and George W Bush were also proponents of coalition-building before taking drastic action overseas.

With the support of the UN Security Council and NATO allies, Obama joined the bombing campaign in Libya in 2011. He backed away from plans to launch airstrikes against Syria in 2013, spooked in part by the British Parliament's refusal to authorize its military to participate and scant willingness among other allies to join the effort. On the diplomatic front, Obama's administration worked alongside five other nations to secure a landmark nuclear accord with Iran and partnered with the European Union to level economic sanctions against Russia for its provocations in Ukraine.

Like much of Obama's approach to foreign policy, his preference for acting as part of a coalition was shaped by lessons learned from the Iraq war he inherited from George W Bush. While numerous other countries were part of the war at the start, the US had by far the largest commitment and bore the brunt of the casualties and the financial burden. Responsibility for quelling the sectarian violence and instability that consumed Iraq after the 2003 invasion also fell predominantly to the US.

During a foreign policy address in 2014, Obama chastised those who criticized him for seeking to share burdens with other countries and who saw working through institutions such as the UN as a "sign of weakness". When crises arise that do not directly threaten the US but still demand action, Obama said, "We have to work with others because collective action in these circumstances is more likely to succeed, more likely to be sustained (and) less likely to lead to costly mistakes." —AP



WASHINGTON: This file photo taken on Nov 10, 2016 shows US President Barack Obama and President-Elect Donald Trump shaking hands during a transition planning meeting in the Oval Office at the White House. —AFP

potential but right now it is just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time," Trump tweeted days after the UN Security Council approved a resolution condemning Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Both Israel and Trump called on the US to use its veto power to block the measure, but the Obama administration instead abstained.

Trump's criticism of the United Nations is shared by some in his party, including a handful of GOP lawmakers who have called for Congress to withhold funding for the body following the settlements vote. Some of Trump's other positions have drawn swift rebuke from Republicans, particularly his criticism of NATO during the presidential campaign and his suggestion that the US might not defend partners that don't fulfil

tary operations" with allies to take on the Islamic State militant group. What those military operations might entail is uncertain, given that Trump's views on national security have been both isolationist and muscular, including his recent call for expanding US nuclear capabilities.

Richard Grenell, who served as US spokesman at the United Nations during President George W Bush's administration and has been working with Trump's transition team, downplayed the prospect that Trump will withdraw from or even disregard the UN and NATO once he takes office. "Trump is talking about reforming these organizations so that they live up to their ideals, not about abandoning them," Grenell said in an interview.

Obama has also been critical of US

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CHINA: OPEN TO VATICAN BUT CATHOLICS MUST BE PATRIOTS

BEIJING: China's head of religious affairs said that Beijing is willing to have constructive dialogue with the Vatican but stressed that Catholics should "hold up high the flag of patriotism" and adapt Catholicism to Chinese society. Wang Zuo'an, the director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, made the remarks Tuesday at a meeting of China's official Catholic Church, which includes bishops, priests and lay Catholics, state media reported.

Beijing insists that the party-controlled Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association has the authority to appoint Chinese bishops, a decision the Holy See says belongs to the pope alone. This dispute over bishop nominations is the most vexing stumbling block preventing the re-establishment of diplomatic relations.

China severed relations with the Holy See in 1951 after the Communists took over, and the officially atheistic government closed churches and imprisoned priests, some for decades. Worship is officially allowed only in state-authorized churches outside the pope's authority, although many of China's estimated 12 million Catholics are thought to attend underground churches.

Wang said the Chinese government hoped that

the Vatican can adopt a flexible and pragmatic attitude, and take concrete actions to create favorable conditions for improving relations, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. No details were given of what actions Beijing expects.

The ruling Communist Party has long feared that opposition to its rule could be spread by religious and other civic groups outside its control. In May last year, President Xi Jinping called for religions to adapt to Chinese society, which he termed the "sinicization of religion." On Tuesday, Wang stressed the importance of patriotism within religion and "pushing ahead with the sinicization of Catholicism."

Pope Francis said earlier this year that Beijing and the Vatican have resumed working groups on the naming of bishops issue and that he is "optimistic" for an agreement, but that it will take time. Just last week, the Vatican said it was saddened that the ordination of two new Chinese bishops was marred by the presence of a bishop ordained without the pope's consent. It also said it was awaiting the outcome of this week's meeting of the Chinese Catholic Church and hoped it would give Catholics in China confidence in the Vatican-China dialogue. — AP



BEIJING: In this photo taken Wednesday, Dec 24, 2014, a man prays during mass on the eve of Christmas at the South Cathedral official Catholic church. —AP



NIKIMEGEN: People walk in front of the Nijmegen railway station in Nijmegen, The Netherlands. — AFP

GERMAN POLICE DETAIN ALLEGED CONTACT OF MARKET ATTACKER

40-YEAR-OLD TUNISIAN MAN MAY BE INVOLVED

BERLIN: German prosecutors said yesterday that they have detained a Tunisian man they think may have been involved in last week's truck attack on a Christmas market in Berlin. The 40-year-old, who wasn't identified, was detained in Berlin during a search of his home and business, federal prosecutors said.

The man's telephone number was saved in the cellphone of Anis Amri, a fellow Tunisian

believed to have driven a truck into the market on Dec 19. Amri, 24, was killed in a shootout with Italian police in a suburb of Milan early Friday. Of the new suspect, prosecutors said in a statement that "further investigations indicate that he may have been involved in the attack."

Twelve people died in the truck attack and dozens more were injured. The Italian State group has claimed responsibility. Prosecutors

have until Thursday evening to determine whether the case against the 40-year-old is strong enough for them to seek a formal arrest warrant. That would allow them to keep him in custody pending possible charges.

Investigators are trying to determine whether Amri had a support network in planning and carrying out the attack, and in fleeing Berlin. They're also trying to piece together the route he took from Berlin to Milan. Italian police have said Amri traveled through France, and French authorities said on Tuesday that he made a stop in the eastern French city of Lyon.

Via Netherlands

Yesterday, Dutch authorities said they are checking to see if he fled first through the Netherlands, Germany's western neighbor. "There are indications that he did travel via the Netherlands" on his way to Lyon, Wim de Bruin, a spokesman for the Dutch national prosecutor's office, said. De Bruin refused to provide further details.

However, an Italian anti-terrorism investigator said the only evidence currently linking Amri to the Netherlands is a SIM card found in his possession after he was killed. German authorities are working on that strand of the investigation, the investigator said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the probe on the record. Amri had no phone with him in Milan, only the loose SIM card.

According to police, Amri also had a pocket knife and a few hundred euros in cash in a backpack that he was carrying when officers on a routine patrol stopped him to ask for identification in the Milan suburb of Sesto San Giovanni on Friday. He also carried a .22 pistol that he then used to shoot a police officer, hitting him in the shoulder.

The Italian investigator said the weapon appeared to be the same one used in Germany to kill the Polish driver of the truck that was commandeered for the Christmas market attack, but that final ballistic tests were still being carried out.

The body of the Polish driver, Lukasz Urban, was returned to Poland on Tuesday, said Aldoma Lema, a spokeswoman for prosecutors in the Polish city of Szczecin. There has been speculation over whether Urban still was alive at the time of the attack and struggled with Amri. His body was found in the truck's cab.

German daily Bild reported Tuesday, without citing sources, that autopsy results showed Urban was shot in the head several hours before the attack and would have been dead or unconscious by that time. Lema said she could not give the time of his death. Another autopsy was performed in Poland on Wednesday and preliminary findings won't be known for three weeks, she said. — AP

LOCKERS LIGHTEN LOAD FOR LISBON'S HOMELESS

LISBON: Everything Fabio Ferreira Silva owns fits inside one of the 12 bright yellow lockers in front of Lisbon's riverside Santa Apolonia rail station. Silva and other homeless people use the metal cabinets to store their belongings, which they used to drag around the hilly, cobblestone streets of the Portuguese capital in boxes, bags or shopping carts.

"These lockers are very important," he said holding open the door to his locker where he stores a blanket, clothes, a mobile phone charger, toiletries and personal documents. "Imagine having to walk up everywhere with everything in the rain." The so-called "solidarity lockers" were set up by the small charity ACA to make life easier for the city's homeless and help them get back on track.

The first dozen lockers—which have an outer slot for mail and a rod to hang clothes—were set up in 2013 in Arroios, a residential neighborhood in central Lisbon with wide boulevards. Another 12 lockers were put up outside the Santa Apolonia train station last year and the association is waiting for approval from city officials to install 36 more. Each set of 12 lockers costs 11,700 euros (\$12,950) to make and install. Lisbon city hall covers 60 percent of the cost with the rest coming from donations by the public.

'Gain their trust'

The lockers—which are 1.8 meters tall and 50 centimeters wide—are assigned to a homeless person for one year and users have 24 hour access to their belongings. Other cities around the world such as Vancouver and Salt Lake City have set up lockers for the homeless but they are for day use only. Charities estimate there are just over 800 homeless people in Lisbon.

To obtain and keep using a locker a homeless person has to promise to keep the area around them clean and stay in reg-

ular contact with the ACA's street team. Members of the squad help locker users obtain documents, get medical treatment, secure a state pension or find housing. "That is the key to the project's success," said architect Duarte Paiva who designed the lockers and founded ACA in 2007. "Having a locker is very important but it is not enough. People need solutions to their problems. Often the homeless are suspicious of social services. This is a way to gain their trust."

The street team is helping Silva, who moved to Portugal from Guinea Bissau, a tiny, coup-prone former Portuguese colony in West Africa three years ago, to get a residency permit. He has struggled to find steady work without the permit and has been sleeping on the streets since his sister—an unemployed single mother of two — kicked him out of her house in September because she could not afford to support him any longer. "I really just need to be able to work," said Silva, 37, who was stylishly dressed in a clean, pink button-down shirt and cap.

'Not a little thing'

Joana Guerreiro, a psychologist on ACA's street team, said the lockers "empower people". "Having a key to your own space also gives people purpose to their lives and a sense of control," she said. Forty-five people have used a locker since the project was launched. Many like Marcio Miguel, 36, credit the project with helping them get off the streets. He moved to Lisbon from Portugal's mid-Atlantic Azores islands earlier this year but quickly found himself living on the streets after he lost his construction job because he abused cocaine and heroin. Before having a locker he would hide his belongings—clothes, food, documents—to avoid having to carry everything with him. His stuff was often gone when he returned. — AFP



LISBON: Emilio smiles as he shows the content of his locker near Santa Apolonia train station. —AFP

MIGRANT NUMBERS WHO LEFT GERMANY RISES SHARPLY BY '16

BERLIN: Around 55,000 migrants who were not eligible for or were refused asylum left Germany voluntarily between January and November 2016, up by 20,000 from the total number who left voluntarily in 2015, a newspaper reported yesterday. Germany has toughened its stance on immigration in recent months, prompted by concerns about security and integration after admitting more than 1.1 million migrants from the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere since early 2015.

Last week a failed asylum seeker who had sworn allegiance to the Islamic State militant group killed 12 people when he rammed a truck into a Christmas market in Berlin, fuelling growing criticism of Chancellor Angela Merkel's immigration policy. The Sueddeutsche Zeitung quoted government data showing the number who returned to their homes in the first 11 months of the year. Most returned to Albania, Serbia, Iraq, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iran, the newspaper said. Those leaving are eligible for one-off support of up to 3,000 euros.

German security officials previously told Reuters that the number of those deported after their asylum requests were rejected rose to almost 23,800 from January to November-up from almost 20,900 in all of 2015. There has also been a rise in the number of refugees turned away at the borders. A report by the Neue Osnabruecker Zeitung daily said police had turned back 19,720 refugees through the first 11 months-up from 8,913 in all of 2015. Most were from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Nigeria. They had been registered in other EU countries.

As public support for her pro-refugee policies wane ahead of September's federal election, Merkel has said it is vital to focus resources on those fleeing war, and to keep public support by deporting foreigners to countries where there is no persecution. A string of attacks and security alerts involving

refugees and migrants this year has boosted support for the anti-immigration Alternative for Germany party, which could complicate Merkel's re-election hopes. Late on Tuesday, seven refugees from Syria and Iraq aged 15 to 21 were detained in Berlin on charges of attempted murder for trying to set fire to a homeless man in an underground station.

Greece to improve conditions

Greece, a frontline country for migrants fleeing to Europe from war and poverty, vowed yesterday to improve living conditions in its overcrowded island camps. The number making the sea crossing from Turkey to Greece has fallen sharply this year under a European Union deal with Turkey. It stipulates that people arriving after March 20 are to be held on five Aegean islands and sent back if their asylum applications are not accepted.

According to figures from UN refugee agency UNHCR, 173,208 people have reached Greece this year, down from 856,723 in 2015. Some 60,000 migrants, mostly Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans, are still scattered across the country, which is struggling to emerge from a debt crisis. About 15,000 are in overcrowded island camps that have grown violent as the slow processing of asylum requests adds to frustration over living conditions.

"We are planning to have new, small venues on the islands, either by setting up small, two-storey houses, in order to empty the tents, or by finding other places ... to improve conditions," Greek Migration Minister Yannis Mouzalas told reporters. "It will need time but we will do it." He said authorities would also set up small detention centres and boost policing. Mouzalas acknowledged that slow processing of asylum requests was an "Achilles heel" but said Athens was hiring more staff to speed it up. — Agencies

SPAIN DETAINS TWO SUSPECTED JIHADISTS

MADRID: Spanish authorities said yesterday they had arrested two suspected jihadists in Madrid and found bullets and weapon magazines while conducting raids linked to the detentions. According to the Europa Press news agency, the magazines were of the type used for assault rifles such as the AK-47, but a police spokeswoman was unable to confirm this when contacted by AFP.

The interior ministry said the two men were Spanish and had been detained for "glorifying terrorism," without giving any further details. The arrests come as Spain strengthens security during the holiday season. Authorities in Madrid are taking unprecedented measures for New Year's Eve, when thousands gather in the central Puerta del Sol square for traditional celebrations that see Spaniards swallow 12 grapes for each stroke of midnight.

All those entering the square will be searched. Bollards will be used on nearby roads alongside police vans to guard

against truck attacks like those that hit Nice in France in July, and Berlin on December 19. Barcelona has taken similar measures. According to Spanish authorities, 175 alleged jihadists have been detained since 2015, when Spain increased its terror alert to category four on a five-point scale.

Spain has been mentioned on extremist websites as a possible attack target for historical reasons, given much of its territory was under Muslim rule from 711 to 1492. But unlike France or Belgium, the country is less exposed to the risk of return of radicalized nationals who went to fight abroad and plan to commit extremist acts on home soil. Only around 200 Spaniards are estimated to have gone abroad to fight, compared to thousands from nearby France and Belgium. Madrid, however, was hit by coordinated train bombings by an Al-Qaeda inspired group in March 2004 that left 191 dead. — AFP

RISE IN BABY TRAFFICKING IN INDIA CUTS ADOPTION RATES

MUMBAI: An increase in baby trafficking in India is reducing the number of children available for adoption and fuelling the lucrative trade as more couples wait to adopt, government officials said yesterday. Government figures show currently 1,700 children are available for adoption in India, the world's second most populous country with 1.25 billion people, while some 12,400 families want to adopt. About 3,010 babies were adopted in 2015/16.

Government officials overseeing adoptions said an increasingly long wait to adopt was closely linked to a rise in human trafficking in the country, with two baby selling rackets busted in India over the past two months. "There are more such rackets (of baby trafficking)," said Deepak Kumar, chief of the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA),

India's main body to monitor and regulate adoptions. "In India, we expect the pool of children available for adoption should outnumber the number of waitlisted parents, but there are touts and in some cases even agencies that sell children to childless couples."

Under Indian laws children who have been surrendered by their birth parents or brought in by the police are declared legally free for adoption after various legal processes are completed. This includes giving birth parents up to 60 days to reconsider their decision. To ensure transparency, the adoption process in India went online last year with waitlisted families and the children available for adoption featured on a website. But Kumar said traffickers often tried to get hold of these babies before the

parents - often unwed mothers - made it to the government department to surrender the child.

Social stigma

Last week, police in Mumbai arrested a gang that was convincing single mothers - who can face social stigma or ostracization in India - to part with their babies then selling them to childless couples in various states across the country. In West Bengal, police found babies were being stolen from women who delivered at clinics, with medical staff telling them their child was stillborn. Some were even given the bodies of stillborn babies preserved by the clinics to dupe them.

Officials said monitoring the waiting list for adoptions was one way to try to identify and track

down the traffickers but they were aware that "bypass mechanisms" were taking root. One adoption agency owner, who did not wish to be identified, said he often received calls from waitlisted families saying they had been offered a child from an unwed mother at a price and wonder if they should go ahead. Two agencies in the western state of Maharashtra were recently shut down for selling babies for amounts ranging between 200,000 and 600,000 rupees (\$3,000-\$9,000), Kumar said. Adoption experts suggested that problem areas of the country should be identified. "It would help check the malaise if low adoption figures in certain states of India are analyzed," said Sunil Arora, president of the Federation of Adoptive Agencies. — Reuters

SERIAL TESTERS: INDIA'S FLAWED GENERIC DRUG TRIALS BUSINESS

HYDERABAD: Vasudeva Prakash left his job as a mechanic in Hyderabad three years ago for what he calls a more lucrative career: taking part in clinical trials on generic drugs. For two years, Prakash participated in trials of drugs being tested to treat HIV/AIDS and other diseases for contract research organizations (CROs) hired by global pharmaceutical companies. The drugs tested at Indian CROs have been key in getting several hundred medicines approved for sale around the world.

Yet, Prakash did not follow international guidelines for testing - and the CROs that hired him didn't require him to. He says that to earn more money he would participate in back-to-back trials on different drugs with gaps of only a few weeks or even a few days, instead of waiting the 90 days that the World Health Organization recommends.

Half of more than a dozen volunteers interviewed by Reuters across four cities - Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and New Delhi - also said they waited much less than 90 days between trials. In the past three-to-four years, they said they spent several months at a time in different cities so that they could participate in as many studies as possible.

Prakash provided documentation proving he underwent trials with short gaps at Apotex Research Pvt Ltd, owned by Canadian drugmaker Apotex Inc; Lotus Labs, owned by US generics giant Actavis; Ethics Bio Lab, owned since last year by US drugmaker Par Pharmaceutical Inc; and India's Semler Research Center Pvt Ltd, among others. Ethics Bio and Apotex did not respond to requests for comment. Lotus Labs and Semler said they had systems in place to check for cross-participation by trial volunteers.

The guidelines of the WHO, which decides on approvals for drugs sold in several countries dependent on United Nations programs for basic medicines, are not legally-binding for the CROs. While India has guidelines on clinical trials, they don't specify the length of time participants should take between trials.

Still, the serial testing of some volunteers is raising new questions about the level of oversight of India's generic drug trials industry, after some CROs came under recent international regulatory scrutiny. Last year, the European Medicines Agency banned about 700 medicines across Europe after an investigation revealed data tampering in some trials of generic drugs in India.

International medical experts said that undergoing back-to-back trials endangers the health of patients participating. It can also compromise clinical data gathered through these trials, on the basis of which drugmakers seek approval to sell generic medicines around the world. "The time gap between participation in two different trials should be 90 days minimum," said Stephanie Croft, a lead inspector at the WHO. "When is incomplete or incorrect it could pose a serious risk to patients."

Gyanendra Nath Singh, head of India's national drug watchdog, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), said that it has been trying to inspect more CROs in the past two years. The watchdog is also considering the introduction of a track-and-trace system through which patients can be tracked across CROs, he told Reuters. "We are emphasizing on good regulatory practices - some reports have shown that the CROs have deviated from (the) system," said Singh. India's Health Ministry did not respond to requests for comment.

Global reach

Several large international drugmakers, including Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd and Mylan NV, rely on CROs in India to

carry out tests on cheaper versions of branded drugs. The aim of these so-called "bioequivalence" studies is to gauge whether non-branded drugs are equally safe and effective. The faster the trials are undertaken, the faster the drugs can come to market.

In some major markets, such as the United States, being the first to launch generic guarantees market exclusivity for a period of time, which can reap millions more in sales. International and local regulators have struggled to keep its oversight in line with the growth of an industry that expanded rapidly in the 2000s, as drugmakers shipped clinical trial work to India to save money. The market is estimated to have crossed \$1 billion in 2016, according to consultants Frost and Sullivan.

Over the past two years, international regulators have suspended or banned medicines tested by four major Indian CROs after finding manipulation of clinical trial data and other violations. Issues found at Indian CROs are "a big problem that is gaining more and more attention from all sorts of agencies," said Anders Fuglsang, a consultant and former regulator long involved in audits and inspections of CROs around the world on behalf of international regulatory agencies and companies.

Last year, the European Union banned about 700 medicines that had been approved based on clinical trial data provided by GVK Biosciences, then India's largest CRO. European regulators said they found GVK had manipulated data concerning the heart readings of patients taking part in the study. GVK denied any violation, but several large drugmakers that had won drug approvals based on GVK's data were asked to re-apply for approval with fresh evidence.

Such re-testing is a headache for drugmakers, as it is expensive, and delays lead to a loss in sales, said Nilesh Gupta, managing director of India's Lupin Ltd, which was one of the companies to be affected by a US ban on trials by Semler earlier this year. GVK, part of the Indian conglomerate GVK Group, has since limited its business interests in the generic drugs testing business, said Shankar Chelluri, a spokesman for the company. Overall, sentiment towards the generic drug trials business is weak, Chelluri said.

Another CRO, Quest Life Sciences, was found last year to have manipulated clinical data on certain trials, according to inspection reports from the WHO and the UK's medicines authority. The Spanish and German regulators had also found problems with Quest's trials, and the WHO said it found Quest had falsified data on drugs including the antibiotic doxycycline hyclate and HIV/AIDS drugs lamivudine, zidovudine and nevirapine.

Quest managing director TS Jaishankar said his CRO, which has conducted dozens of generic drug trials for companies including India's top drugmaker Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, has since invested heavily in improving its systems and been cleared by all international regulators. In a response to Reuters, a spokeswoman for the European Medicines Agency said they were "closely monitoring" the involvement of Quest in the drug approval applications they receive.

India, like other countries, has ethics committees - groups of independent experts - meant to approve the design and conduct of clinical trials. Their stamp of approval is required by foreign regulators considering allowing a generic drug to be sold. However, these committees depend on the CROs for reimbursement in exchange for reviewing trials. Three members of different committees Reuters spoke to said national guidelines did not clearly define their roles and responsibilities. — Reuters



RURA: Indian officials and bystanders gather beside the wreckage of train carriages. — AP

INDIAN TRAIN DERAILS INJURING 61; CRASH RAISING CONCERN

NEW DELHI: A train derailed in India yesterday injuring 61 people, police and rail officials said, the third significant accident in recent months that has raised concern about the safety of the ageing rail network. The train came off the tracks and crashed near the northern city of Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh state early in the morning.

"Our latest assessment is that 61 people got injured in the accident and two sustained grievous injuries," said Anil Kumar Saxena, spokesman for Indian Railways. The train had just pulled out of the station and its speed was "rather slow", he said. Television footage

from the scene showed mangled, toppled carriages. Two coaches had fallen off a bridge into a small canal while some passengers were seen picking up their luggage from near the tracks.

India's creaking railway system is the world's fourth largest. It runs 11,000 trains a day, including 7,000 passenger trains carrying more than 20 million people. But it has a poor safety record, with thousands of people dying every year in derailments, collisions and other accidents. This was the third accident significant in recent months.

On Nov 20, at least 146 people were killed

when a train derailed near the same city. A train rammed into a van taking children to school at a level crossing in north India in July, killing eight of them. Railways minister Suresh Prabhu has promised to replace old tracks and upgrade safety systems. The government spends more than 90 percent of the railways' revenues on operational costs, leaving little for upgrades of the colonial-era system. Some analysts estimate the railways need 20 trillion rupees (\$293.21 billion) of investment by 2020, and India is turning to partnerships with private companies and seeking loans from other countries to upgrade the network. — Reuters

KOREAN POLITICIANS CALL FOR NULLIFYING SEX SLAVE DEAL

SEOUL: South Korea's opposition politicians yesterday called for nullifying a settlement reached between Seoul and Tokyo on compensation for South Korean women forced into sexual slavery by Japan's military in World War II. Their statements on the anniversary of the deal came amid growing efforts to erase some of the key policies of impeached President Park Geun-hye. Facing political and public pressure, the Education Ministry on Tuesday backtracked from a much-criticized plan to require middle and high schools to use only state-issued history textbooks from next year.

Woo Sang-ho, floor leader of the main opposition Democratic Party, said the party will work to invalidate the sex slave agreement if it wins the presidential elections that could take place in just months, echoing similar promises made by the party's potential candidates. Kim Gyeong-rok, spokesman of the People's Party, criticized the Park administration for "selling away" the victims' honor and dignity, and said the issue couldn't be resolved without Japan offering a sincere apology and admitting legal responsibility.

Under the agreement, Japan pledged to give 1 billion yen (\$8.5 million) to a foundation to help support the former sex slaves. South Korea, in exchange, vowed to refrain from criticizing Japan over the issue. The deal was widely criticized in South Korea, where many thought the government settled for far too less. Hundreds of protesters gathered around a statue of a girl symbolizing South Korean sexual slavery victims near a street in Seoul where Japan has been reconstructing its embassy building, calling for the agreement to be scrapped and the foundation to be dissolved.

It's unclear whether South Korea could reverse an agreement both governments described as "irreversible." Park's conservative ruling party criticized Woo, accusing him of attacking the deal without proposing alternatives and acting like his party already won the presidential race. Park, who was impeached by the country's opposition-controlled parliament over a corruption scandal on Dec 9, had endorsed the state history textbooks, saying it would inspire patriotism in students. Her critics saw the books as an attempt to whitewash the brutal dictatorships that preceded the country's bloody transition toward democracy in the 1980s.

Park is the daughter of slain military dictator Park Chung-hee, whose legacy as a successful economic strategist is marred by records of violent civilian oppression. Education Minister Lee Joon-sik said schools could keep using history



SEOUL: A woman places a flower in front of portraits of the deceased former South Korean sex slaves who were forced to serve for the Japanese military in World War II, during a rally against Japanese government in front of the Japanese embassy. — AP

textbooks made by private publishers next year, although they can also choose to use state textbooks on a trial basis. South Korea's Constitutional Court has up to six months to

decide whether Park should permanently step down or be reinstated. If she is formally removed from office, a presidential election must be held within 60 days. — AP

SUSPECTS HELD AFTER PAKISTAN ALCOHOL POISONING KILLS 34

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani police yesterday caught three men accused of preparing homemade liquor mixed with aftershave that killed 34 people including a fourth suspect after they consumed the toxic brew on Christmas Eve. More than a hundred people were also sickened in the incident, one of the country's deadliest cases of mass alcohol poisoning, which happened in a Christian neighborhood in the town of Toba Tek Singh some 340 kilometers south of Islamabad. "Four people have been identified who prepared and distributed the toxic liquor," senior police official Atif Imran, who is investigating the case, told AFP, adding the group had also consumed the alcohol themselves. "One of them died because of the liquor, two others are in critical condition while the fourth is in police custody," he added.

The suspect in police custody had confessed to preparing the brew by mixing it with 20 liters of aftershave and other chemicals. The development was confirmed by another senior police official Usman Akram Gondal. Though legal breweries exist in Pakistan, alcohol sales and consumption are banned for Muslims and tightly regulated for minorities and foreigners.

While wealthy Pakistanis buy foreign alcohol on the black market at heavily inflated prices, the poor often resort to home brews that can contain methanol, commonly used in anti-freeze and fuel. Eleven Christians died in October after consuming toxic liquor at a party in Punjab province. In October 2014 29 drinkers were killed after consuming methanol-tainted liquor over the Eid public holidays. — AFP



NEW DELHI: India's Congress Party supporters shout slogans during the party's foundation day celebrations in New Delhi yesterday. The party celebrated its 131st foundation day during an event at its headquarters in the Indian capital. — AFP

JAPAN HAILS PEARL HARBOR VISIT, BRACES FOR TRUMP

TOKYO: Japanese yesterday hailed a historic visit by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Pearl Harbor, praising his message of reconciliation with the United States but wary of the future after Donald Trump takes office. Interest in Abe's visit to the site of Japan's December 7, 1941 attack that drew the US into World War II has been high, with many favorably comparing it to President Barack Obama's journey this year to Hiroshima.

Both visits were highly choreographed and in their remarks—Obama in Hiroshima and Abe in Hawaii—neither apologized or even explicitly said their countries carried out the respective attacks. But despite the careful words, the symbolism of their standing together again, this time at Pearl Harbor, was clear to most in Japan. National broadcaster NHK provided live coverage of their joint address around 7 am Japan time (2200 GMT Tuesday).

It was delivered after the two men visited the memorial to the battleship USS Arizona, sunk in the

surprise Japanese attack. Kuniyoshi Takimoto, 95, a former navy aircraft mechanic on a carrier that took part in the raid, praised Abe's words. "It was a beautiful message that deeply reflected the sentiment of both American and Japanese people," he told AFP.

But Takimoto was also critical of Abe's hawkish policy to expand the role of Japan's constitutionally constrained military, including enabling combat missions abroad. "The beautiful message has a catch," he said. Abe's visit was slightly overshadowed by one of his own ministers, who visited the controversial Yasukuni war shrine in Tokyo just hours after Abe went to Pearl Harbor. Masahiro Imamura, minister in charge of the reconstruction of northern Japan after the 2011 tsunami, was quoted by public broadcaster NHK as saying the timing of his visit was "a coincidence".

'Sincere apology'

But Haruko Satou, professor of international pol-

itics at Osaka University, suggested that while Imamura's true intention was unknown the timing was suspicious. "It's natural to think that he chose the same day when Prime Minister Abe visited Pearl Harbor," Satou told AFP. Imamura's action is "likely to have a negative impact on Japan's diplomacy and offset the positive image of Abe's historic visit", she said.

Abe's visit was also closely watched in China, where it was noted that he stressed ties with the US over Asia. "If Japan really wants to reconcile over historical issues, Abe chose the wrong place," the nationalist Global Times newspaper commented, saying he should visit Nanjing, the site of a 1937 Japanese massacre, or elsewhere in China.

China's foreign ministry also weighed in, with spokeswoman Hua Chunying calling for a "sincere apology" to Asian countries that suffered from Japanese militarism. Abe aimed to highlight the significance of close military and economic relations

with the US as Trump prepares to assume power amid major questions about his policies, several Japanese media outlets said.

Trump, during his campaign, accused Japan of not paying its fair share in supporting the military alliance, and suggested Tokyo could even develop its own nuclear deterrent. Abe's speech also expressed Japan's appreciation for US reconstruction aid after World War II. Commentator Takashi Ryuzaki said that comment was designed to engage the US public who supported Trump.

"Rather than offering an apology, the message of gratitude for what America did after the war was expressed," Ryuzaki said on a TBS morning show. The desire for a continued solid Japan-US relationship is what most Japanese, including Tokyoite Kazuko Masuda, 57, say they want. "Mr Trump utters all those strong words... but I really hope he as an individual is the kind of person who walks an honorable path," she said. —AFP



This photo taken on December 23, 2016 shows Chinese J-15 fighter jets being launched from the deck of the Liaoning aircraft carrier during military drills in the Yellow Sea, off China's east coast. — AFP

CHINA FLEXES MILITARY MUSCLE BEFORE TRUMP TAKES OFFICE

BEIJING SEEKS GREATER GLOBAL POWER

BEIJING: An aircraft carrier in the Pacific and a newly upgraded combat aircraft: China's military is showing off its newest equipment less than a month before the swearing-in of US President-elect Donald Trump, who has raised tensions between Beijing and Taipei. In recent days state media announced that the country's only aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, was on its way to the Pacific for the first time, while a new fighter, the FC-31, had its debut flight test. They are the latest steps in the years-long build-up of China's military, as Beijing seeks greater global power to match its economic might and asserts itself more aggressively in its own backyard, but the timing raises questions about its intentions.

The show of strength comes after Trump broke four decades of US policy by accepting a phone call from Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, even though China objects to any official contact between its foreign partners and leaders of Taiwan. China views self-ruling Taiwan as part of its territory awaiting unification, by force if necessary, even though the two sides split in 1949 after a civil war.

With its escort warships, the Liaoning is in the South China Sea on Monday, according to the Taiwanese defense ministry which monitored the carrier's passage off its shores. The maneuvers were preceded by exercises on "refueling and confrontation in flight," according to the official news agency Xinhua. "The threat from our enemy is increasing day by day," Taiwan's defence minister Feng Shih-kuan said Tuesday during a promotion ceremony for gen-

erals. "We need to maintain combat vigilance at any time."

'Signal to Trump?'

The demonstration of China's naval capacity comes amid mounting concern on the mainland about the momentum of Taiwan's independence movement, worries fuelled by Trump's suggestion that he would consider recognizing the self-ruled island as an independent nation. Nevertheless, it is "impossible to say whether the timing is intended to send a signal to Trump," said Bonnie Glaser, a China expert at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"I'm more inclined to see this as an inevitable development and possibly a long planned exercise." Beijing has a long way to go before it can claim military superiority over Taiwan's main protector Washington, which has 10 aircraft carriers in service and a network of naval bases all around the globe, said David Kelly, research director of Beijing-based consulting firm China Policy. For China, the presence of the Liaoning is above all "symbolic" and aimed at its "domestic audience", Kelly said.

For now, experts say the People's Liberation Army Navy would have little hope of countering the smaller but technologically superior US-backed Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, let alone the US Seventh Fleet. The second-hand, Soviet-built Liaoning has "almost no strategic significance", Kelly said. But, he added, "it reminds the US that China can apply pressure on this region".

In mid-December the Chinese navy announced that the vessel had conducted its first live-fire exercises, including tests with a dozen missiles. Beijing says the exercises are routine, but state media have expressed pleasure that the Liaoning is battle-ready and that another aircraft carrier, entirely Chinese-made, is under construction. "Aircraft carriers are strategic tools which should be used to show China's strength to the world and shape the outside world's attitude toward China," said the often nationalist Global Times.

'Intense thinking'

Although the US spends far more on its military than China does, Beijing's growing assertiveness in strategic regions like the South China Sea coupled with the uncertainty surrounding Trump's policies has set off jitters among Washington's allies in Asia. In recent years Beijing has strengthened its claims to the South China Sea and fuelled regional tensions by expanding tiny reefs and islets into artificial islands hosting military facilities.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan have contested Beijing's claims while Washington has repeatedly called on China to uphold freedom of navigation, sending ships and aircraft to pass close to the new islands. Beijing is also modernizing its air force. The China Daily reported Monday that it recently tested a new prototype stealth fighter, an improved version of the FC-31 Gyrfalcon previously known as the J-31. — AFP

CHINA MIDDLE CLASS IN UPROAR OVER ALLEGED POLICE BRUTALITY

BEIJING: Thousands among China's middle class are signing online petitions to protest the dropping of an alleged police brutality case, representing a rare but concerted display of white-collar outrage with Beijing. The signatories of at least two online petitions organized through university alumni networks are infuriated by the Beijing prosecutors' decision last Friday to drop charges against five police over the death of Lei Yang, a 29-year old graduate of prestigious Renmin University, in police custody in May. The five police were previously accused by investigators of using improper force and covering up Lei's death.

The response to the authorities' handling of Lei's death is the latest manifestation of simmering urban discontent in China, where Communist Party leaders are facing higher expectations - and increasing questions - from the expanding middle class over hot-button issues ranging from environmental pollution to unfairness in the judiciary. "When something occurs in society that is so dark, so impossible to accept, then it's like an inner fire in our bones that's been sparked," said Yu Li, a signatory who works in the IT sector in Beijing.

Social woes

The organizers of the petitions said they did not wish to take the protest to the street for fear of swift government retribution. For the same reason, they spoke on condition of anonymity. But the case has threatened to erode the legitimacy of the party among an influential social segment that's already impatient with yearslong social woes, including food safety scandals and widespread corruption.

The petitions, which sought a "correction" of the decision to not prosecute the officers, have gathered more than 2,400 signatories of former students of Renmin and some of China's other top universities. They range from graduates of 1980s chemistry departments to students who received graduate business degrees in the 2000s, as well as prominent academics and the current CEO of a foodstuffs company.

The list has expanded to include alumni of Tsinghua University, Peking University, and Zhejiang University and Fudan University in eastern China. Organizers of

the movement said many of the signatories have gathered in more than two dozen WeChat messaging groups, where they were venting and sharing legal analyses, essays and even poetry about Lei's case.

As the online campaign spiraled this week, authorities scrambled to quell discussion. Censors blocked all searches on China's popular microblog site, Weibo, for "Lei Yang case" while propaganda authorities distributed notices against carrying the story in news outlets, according to China Digital Times, an overseas website that publishes what are believed to be official censorship orders.

In a country seemingly inured to police brutality against migrant workers or farmers, commentators say the Lei case has attracted nationwide attention precisely because of his white-collar background as an environmentalist with a state-affiliated think tank.

Zhang Wen, a well-known liberal Chinese social commentator, said China has often had cases of social justice that involved farmers or migrant workers clashing with local authorities, "but because of their class status, their cases do not mobilize this mass opposition or create awareness." "But Lei Yang's case has broken through geographic or even class barriers," he said. "If it could happen to him it could happen to any of us. Any of us could be Lei Yang."

Not lost on many in China's educated class is the fact that Renmin University - which means People's University - was founded by the Communist Party in its early guerrilla days. It's unusual for organized criticism to emerge from a school that boasts a long tradition of producing political thinkers, economists, and historians who join the party establishment. Yu, the signatory from Beijing, said he never characterized himself as politically active until news of the Lei case this year stunned him.

"We expected the case to be open, to be conducted according to law in due time," said Yu, who entered Renmin University's business school in 1996. "Instead, what we saw was that they judge cases from a political perspective with stability as the first consideration," he said in an interview. "They value more the loyalty of the police force rather than the cries of the people." — AP



BEIJING: A police car drives past a Chinese government's propaganda billboard reading "China Rule by Law" on a street. — AP

OUSTED ANTI-CHINA LAWMAKERS MAKE FINAL APPEAL OVER BAN

HONG KONG: Two ousted pro-independence Hong Kong lawmakers yesterday announced they were making a final bid to overturn a controversial Beijing-linked ban preventing them from taking up their seats in parliament. Yau Wai-ching and Baggio Leung were elected in city-wide polls in September but deliberately misread their oaths of office during their swearing-in ceremony, inserting expletives and draping themselves with "Hong Kong is not China" flags.

This prompted a rare interference by Chinese authorities. The pair were amongst a handful of rebel candidates who took seats for the first time after the September polls, advocating either independence or self-determination for the southern Chinese city. The new movement supporting a possible split from Beijing for the semi-autonomous city has gained traction as young pro-democracy campaigners grow increasingly frustrated with a lack of political reform.

Beijing took aim at the pair in a special "interpretation" of the city's constitution in early November that effectively barred them from taking up their seats because of the way they took the oath. Following that decision, Yau and Leung were disqualified by the city's

High Court in mid November and lost an appeal to overturn that ban later in the month.

Yesterday the pair said they had filed appeal documents with the city's Court of Final Appeal, in hopes of setting a precedent for future elections in Hong Kong. "It is shaping Hong Kong's constitutional environment, and even the legitimacy of Legislative Council elections hinge on this case," Yau told AFP. The pair are still struggling to raise the funds to bring the case to the city's highest court. "We're determined to appeal because we can't stop at the Court of Appeal."

The impact this case will have on Hong Kong is too big. Following Yau and Leung's failed appeal last month, the government launched another legal bid to unseat an additional four pro-democracy lawmakers for failing to take their oaths properly, in what the opposition camp has called a witch hunt. Proceedings against the four lawmakers are scheduled to start in February. Thousands are expected to join a rally on New Year's Day calling for the government to drop their bid to disqualify the four lawmakers and to press for universal suffrage. — AFP

KOREAN AIR PLEDGES 'AGGRESSIVE' ACTION FOR UNRULY PASSENGERS

SEOUL: Korean Air said yesterday it would let its crew use stun guns more aggressively and put more male staff aboard flights to clamp down on violence, after an incident involving an unruly passenger. South Korea's flag carrier said it was tightening security after 1980s US pop singer

Richard Marx lashed out at the company on social media for its handling of the incident.

Until now, the use of stun guns or tasers has been limited to situations where there was an "imminent threat to the lives of passengers and crew or to safe navigation", said airline spokesman

Nathan Cho. But "regulations on the use of stun guns or tasers will be changed to allow crew members to use them more aggressively", he added. The airline will also put at least one male crew member on every flight, buy new ropes to tie down unruly passengers quickly and step up crew training in mock-up cabins. Korean Air's 700 male attendants account for only one tenth of its flight attendants. Marx said last week he had to step in to help "clueless and ill-trained" crew restrain a violent passenger on a flight from Hanoi to Seoul's Incheon Airport.

Local television footage showed a male passenger flailing, punching and spitting as female crew members and other passengers struggled to hold him down and tie him to his seat with a rope. Marx posted photos on Twitter and Facebook taken by his wife, TV host and model Daisy Fuentes which showed the passenger grabbing a female flight attendant by her hair and another crew member pointing a taser.

Fuentes said the all-female crew did not know how to use the taser nor how to secure the rope around the man and "never fully got control of him". Marx said the fiasco lasted four hours until he stepped in along with other male passengers. South Korean police are investigating and have sought an arrest warrant for the passenger, identified as a 34-year-old heir to a South Korean cosmetics company. — AFP



SEOUL: This picture taken on December 27, 2016 shows crew members of Korean Air using stun guns at a training center. — AFP

MPS URGE INITIATIVE FOR RECONCILIATION

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"We want a national initiative from all of us here in this chamber including the heads of the two authorities to return the revoked citizenships and release all political prisoners," Deqbasi said. "We want a national initiative to end the ongoing crisis and those who think that the crisis is over after this Assembly election are totally wrong," he said. Deqbasi said that he and thousands of young men were the target of teargas and police beatings, adding "we need to overcome that period and move into a new, clean phase". The lawmaker was referring to street protests organized by the opposition between 2011 and 2014 to protest government policies, especially the government's unilateral amendment of the voting system.

Opposition lawmaker Mubarak Al-Hajraf warned that if the government does not cooperate on various issues, especially of returning revoked citizenships, he will use constitutional tools against ministers. He said that former opposition activist Saad Al-Ajmi, whose citizenship was revoked and he was deported to Saudi Arabia, should be allowed to return to the country.

Opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri said the government should hold to account all those responsible for leading the country into the current state of affairs. He

charged that certain people, whom he did not name, of striking big deals at the expense of the country and who are responsible for the current shortcomings in Kuwait. He said the situation in the country has deteriorated and badly impacted citizens, adding that corruption is rife in all ministries, adding that remaining silent on these situations is a betrayal of the country.

MP Riyadh Al-Adasani accused the government of mismanagement of abundant wealth collected from oil. He said that the economic reform package is devastating for citizens and expatriates, saying that electricity charges have been increased manifold and merchants will increase prices as a result. He said the former interior minister spent KD 23 million on gifts last year, while the government is imposing austerity measures.

The Assembly will continue the debate on the Amiri address on Jan 10, when it is scheduled to also review the government's reform package amid strong opposition to imposing charges. Before debating the Amiri address, the Assembly reassigned the public funds protection committee to investigate a number of issues related to public funds and the Kuwait Investment Authority. The Assembly also asked its educational committee to investigate allegations of fake degrees and other issues related to the ministry of education.



This photo taken on Dec 24, 2016 shows a giant chicken sculpture outside a shopping mall in Taiyuan in north China's Shanxi province. A Chinese shopping mall is ringing in the year of the cock with a giant sculpture of a chicken that looks like US President-Elect Donald Trump. — AFP

RUSSIA, TURKEY 'AGREE' ON SYRIA CEASEFIRE PLAN

Continued from Page 1

An official from the High Negotiations Committee - which oversees political talks of the Syrian rebels - said there was no information about a ceasefire so far. There was also no reaction from the Syrian regime. Anadolu said both sides were working for the ceasefire to come into force at midnight but gave no further details on its implementation. The report came after Ankara hosted a succession of closed-door talks between Russia and Syrian opposition rebels over the last weeks.

Qatar-based channel Al-Jazeera said a new meeting is planned today in Ankara, this time between military representatives of Syrian rebels and Russia. Ankara and Moscow have been on opposing sides in the Syrian civil war, with Turkey seeking the ouster of President Bashar Al-Assad, who is backed by Russia and Iran. But the two countries have recently started to cooperate more closely on Syria, especially after a deal in the summer to normalize ties battered by Turkey's shooting down of a Russian warplane last year.

Turkey remained conspicuously quiet as Assad's forces, backed by Russia, took control last week of Aleppo in the biggest defeat so far for the rebels in the civil war. No date has yet been set for the Astana talks and Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the meeting was still at the planning stage. But the direct involvement of Turkey and Russia comes as Erdogan is increasingly expressing impatience at the role of the United States in Syria.

Previous ceasefire plans had been brokered by US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. They met with only temporary success and failed to lead to a solution for the conflict. It remains unclear how the latest ceasefire plan will apply to Fateh Al-Sham, formerly the Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front, which has worked more closely with the rebels since changing its name.

Erdogan had on Tuesday launched one of his most bitter attacks yet on US and Western policy in Syria, which he said was marked by broken promises. He accused the West of not just supporting Kurdish militia that Ankara regards as a "terror group" but even Islamic State (IS) jihadists. The Turkish strongman said the West was failing to back Turkey's own incursion inside Syria in support of pro-Ankara fighters to oust IS from the border area, which has taken increasing casualties in recent weeks.

But in an angry statement, the US embassy in Ankara rejected the "considerable misinformation circulating in Turkish media" about US operations against IS in Syria. "Assertions the United States government is supporting Daesh (IS) are not true," it added. In continued bloodshed, air strikes carried out by unidentified aircraft killed at least 22 civilians, including 10 children, in a village held by IS in Deir Ezzor province, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Syria's conflict began in 2011 as an uprising against Assad but quickly morphed into a civil war after the regime unleashed a brutal crackdown against dissent. The war has killed more than 310,000 people and forced millions more to flee their homes. — AFP

KUWAIT, IRAQ EYE CLOSER TIES...

Continued from Page 1

He pointed to Iraq's willingness to develop cooperative relations with Kuwait in economic and oil domains according to memos of understanding and agreements signed by both nations. He reiterated his country's commitment to following up on the file of Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons in spite of being fully preoccupied with its ongoing war on terrorism, in addition to the current financial crisis.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said Kuwait is a member of the international coalition against IS in a sign of support to Iraq's anti-terrorism efforts, unity and stability. Congratulating Iraq on the liberation of territories from the control of IS, the Kuwaiti minister said his country has provided Iraq with humanitarian aid worth \$200 million, covering the humanitarian needs of Iraqi internally displaced persons, including \$18 million in urgent humanitarian aid. He added that Kuwait had also offered \$176 million during a donors' conference held in Washington on July 20. Sheikh Sabah also hailed the maritime navigation agreement signed by both countries in December.

Meanwhile, Kuwait is set to begin importing up to 200 million cubic feet of gas daily from Iraq, oil ministers from

the two nations said after talks yesterday. Iraqi Oil Minister Jabbar Al-Luaibi said the project "will see the light very soon". Kuwaiti Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouk said the quantities have been agreed and the start date will be determined after technical committees fix prices and shipping methods. Marzouk said an initial 50 million cubic feet daily will rise gradually to 200 million cubic feet a day.

OPEC member Kuwait is rich in crude oil but poor in gas resources, and has imported gas for years during the summer months to meet demand. Luaibi said they also discussed production from border oilfields and agreed to form a committee and appoint a consultant. The Iraqi minister said without elaborating that the two nations do not have any differences. Kuwait and Iraq had agreed in Aug 2010 "in principle" on a deal to regulate production from the frontier oilfields that once caused conflict between them. But that agreement, which called for a unified international company to drill for oil on the border, was not finalized.

Former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's troops invaded and occupied Kuwait in Aug 1990 following claims over the border oilfields. A number of oilfields lie on the frontier, including Iraq's giant Rumaila field, which extends into Kuwait, where it is known as Ritqa — Agencies

US, JAPAN MOVING PAST LEGACY OF WAR

Continued from Page 1

The US president-elect has also declared his opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, effectively killing a major trade deal that Obama championed and Abe put at the heart of his economic strategy. And - on the campaign trail at least - Trump called into question US security guarantees that shielded Japan through the Cold War and later the rise of an increasingly confident China. What he will do in office is unknown. Three Japanese prime ministers, including Abe's grandfather, visited Hawaii in the 1950s but Abe is the first sitting PM to pay his respects at the USS Arizona Memorial, which was built in the 1960s.

In an emotive speech on the waterfront, he imagined the long-silent voices of American victims chatting about their futures and their dreams, praying for as-yet unborn children before the carnage. "All of that was brought to an end," he said in Japanese. "When I contemplate that solemn reality, I am rendered entirely speechless."

Meanwhile, in Tokyo, cabinet minister Masahiro

Imamura offered prayers at the Yasukuni war shrine that has been a flashpoint for criticism by countries that suffered under Japanese aggression in the first half of the 20th century. "I reported about work to the gods and prayed for our country's peace and prosperity," he said, according to the Asahi Shimbun daily, stressing that the visit had "nothing to do with" Abe's trip to Pearl Harbor. Those honored by the controversial shrine include senior military and political figures convicted of war crimes.

In 1941, the legendary Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto maneuvered six aircraft carriers to within 385 km of Oahu and unleashed two waves of dive bombers. The US Pacific fleet, formerly Japan's main rival in the region, lost 21 warships and 328 planes. After Pearl Harbor, the US Congress declared war on Japan. Three days later, Japan's European ally Nazi Germany declared war on the United States in turn. "Here at Pearl Harbor, America's first battle of the Second World War roused a nation," Obama said. "Here in so many ways, America came of age." Three quarters of a century on, he added, the alliance between the United States and Japan "has never been stronger." — AFP

KERRY SLAMS ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

Continued from Page 1

"The truth is that trends on the ground - violence, terrorism, incitement, settlement expansion and the seemingly endless occupation - are destroying hopes for peace on both sides and increasingly cementing an irreversible one-state reality that most people do not actually want." Kerry condemned Palestinian violence which he said included "hundreds of terrorist attacks in the past year."

His parting words are unlikely to change anything on the ground between Israel and the Palestinians or salvage the Obama administration's record of failed Middle East peace efforts. In a statement, Netanyahu said Kerry "was skewed against Israel". The Israeli leader said Kerry "obsessively dealt with settlements" and barely touched on "the root of the conflict - Palestinian opposition to a Jewish state in any boundaries". The Israelis are looking past Obama and expect they will receive more favorable treatment from Trump, who takes office on Jan. 20. The Republican used his Twitter account yesterday to denounce the Obama administration, including its UN vote and

the nuclear accord it reached with Iran last year. "We cannot continue to let Israel be treated with such total disdain and disrespect. They used to have a great friend in the US, but not anymore," Trump said in a series of tweets. "Stay strong Israel, January 20th is fast approaching!" Trump had openly lobbied against the UN resolution and would be expected to veto any further ones deemed anti-Israel. He has vowed to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and has appointed as ambassador a lawyer who raised money for a major Jewish settlement, has cast doubt on the idea of a two-state solution and even advocated for Israel's annexation of the West Bank, a notion even further to the right than Netanyahu's own stance.

Kerry's speech provided some insights into an issue that he personally feels passionate about and had hoped to resolve during his years as secretary of state. He defended the US decision to allow the passage of a UN resolution demanding an end to Israeli settlements, saying it was intended to preserve the possibility of a two-state solution. The United States abstained in the Dec 23 UN resolution, in what many see as a parting shot by Obama who had an acrimonious relationship with Netanyahu. — Reuters

AN EXTRA SECOND TO SEE OUT 2016

Continued from Page 1

The result is that astronomical time - based on the length of an Earth day gradually falls out of sync with atomic time - which is measured by nearly 400 super-accurate atomic clocks dotted around the world. Atomic time or TAI, in turn, is used to determine UTC, used for civil timekeeping globally. TAI is exactly 36 seconds ahead of UTC, a difference that keeps growing as leap seconds are added, and will reach 37 seconds on January 1.

When leap seconds were introduced in 1972, 10 seconds had to be added to UTC, followed by another roughly every 18 months thereafter, according to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) of

the US Department of Commerce. The last was added on June 30, 2015. "Leap seconds are added in order to keep the difference between UTC and astronomical time (UT1) to less than 0.9 seconds," the NIST website explains. "Usually leap seconds are added when UTC is ahead of UT1 by 0.4 seconds or more."

The process, it added, can create problems for data logging applications and telecommunications systems. "Special attention must be given to these systems each time there is a leap second." 2016 - annus horribilis for many with its rash of celebrity deaths and political upsets - has also had a leap day - Feb 29 - a four-yearly occurrence to keep the calendar synchronized with Earth's movement around the Sun. — AFP

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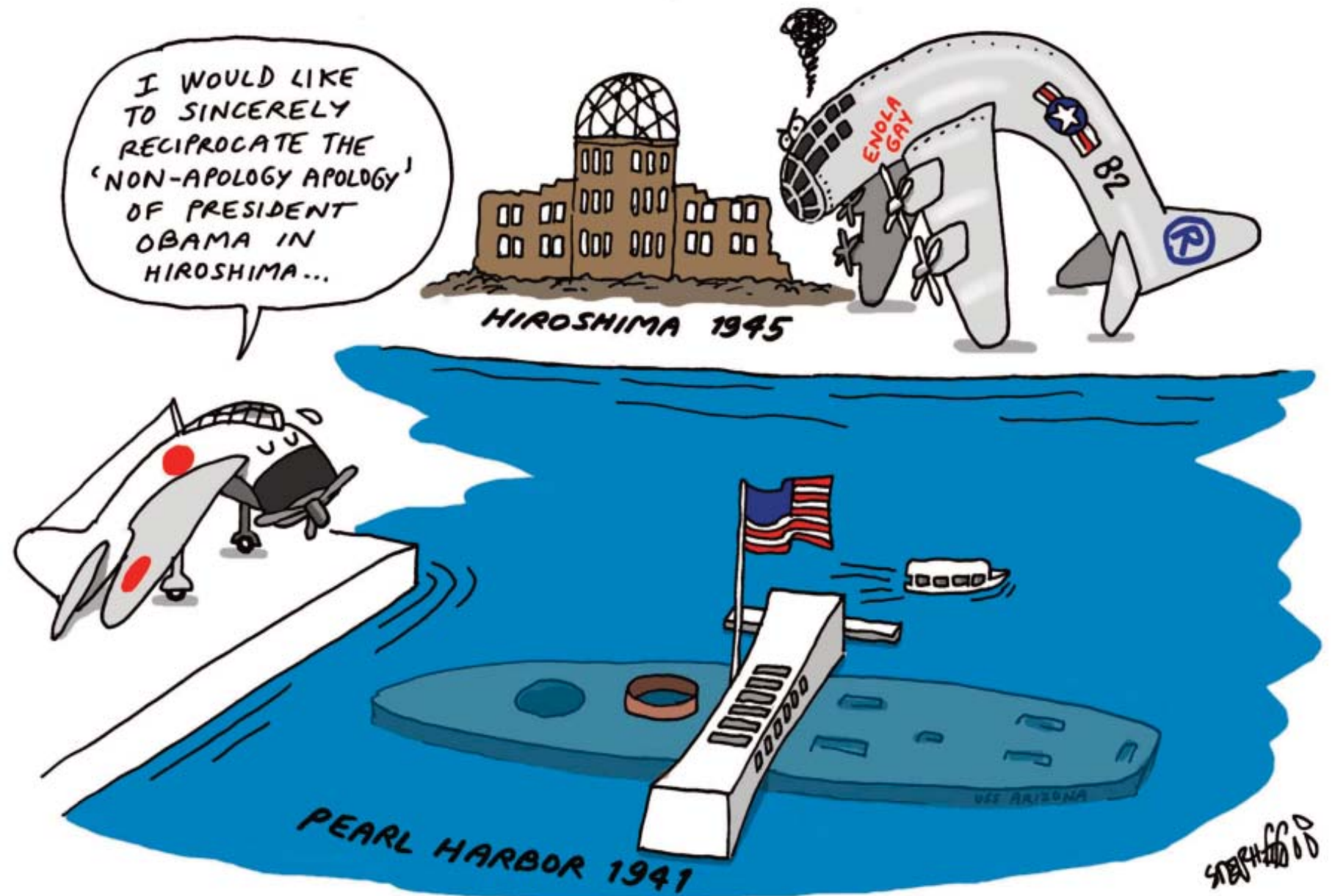
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BLOOD AND BENEFITS: DUTERTE'S FORMULA

Rodrigo Duterte has kept his word. "Forget the laws on human rights," he declared in May at his final presidential campaign rally in Manila. "If I make it to the presidential palace, I will do just as I did as mayor. You drug pushers, hold-up men and do-nothings, you better go out. Because, I'd kill you." More than seven months after winning the presidency, Duterte is rolling out on a national scale the model of government he honed over 22 years and seven terms as mayor of this city on the southern island of Mindanao. Just as in Davao, blood is now flowing in the capital Manila and surrounding areas as the police and vigilantes, inspired by the president, conduct a wave of killings.

A Davao-based human rights group, the Coalition Against Summary Execution (CASE), has compiled figures showing that death squads in the city were responsible for at least 1,400 documented killings between 1998 and 2015. Scaled up, Duterte's war on drugs is now well under way across the nation, and the body count is setting records. Police have killed more than 2,000 people since he was inaugurated on June 30, and are investigating about 3,000 more deaths. Human rights monitors believe many of these were carried out by vigilantes with official sanction, a charge the government denies.

In Davao, Duterte built a personality cult around his crack-down on crime. Part Mao, part Castro, part gun-toting Filipino warlord, the avowedly socialist mayor ruled his city as a lethal enemy of wrongdoers and a champion of the poor. His salute was a clenched fist - a symbol now emblazoned on souvenir mugs and other Duterte memorabilia.

But there is another ingredient in Duterte's appeal that makes him a more complex leader, and a potentially more potent one, than is appreciated abroad: The people of Davao say he gets things done. Residents laud his handling of city services. Businesses praise his pro-growth policy. A top official at the American Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines applauds his team of economic advisers.

Samuel R Matunog, a Davao lawyer, businessman and human rights worker, strongly rejects Duterte's support for violence and killing. But he acknowledges there are elements of his administration worthy of support. "There are so many things that he does that I like," he says. "Most important to him is the basic welfare of working people." With the national levers of power in his grasp, Duterte is trying to apply to the Philippines, a nation of 101 million people, the same recipe of fear and populism that he employed in his efforts to tame Davao, a city of 1.6 million.

'A Bigger Davao City'

To advance the drug war, his political allies have introduced legislation to bring back the death penalty - and to lower the age at which people can be prosecuted for crimes to just 9. Meanwhile, he is promising a raft of measures certain to please wage earners and the poor - including free tuition at state universities and colleges, and free irrigation for rice farmers. He also wants to replicate features of the Cuban health system.

The task of managing the more than \$300 billion national economy dwarfs any challenge Duterte faced in Davao, to be sure. While his war on drugs is well advanced, his promised economic reforms have barely started. "He wants to make the Philippines a bigger Davao City," Jesus Dureza, one of Duterte's closest advisers, said in an interview on the president's plan to boost the economy by eliminating crime and drugs. "But the work is much tougher as corruption and crime are well-entrenched in Manila, at the national level."

As president, Duterte is continuing his take-no-prisoners approach. In Davao, he shamed civil servants on a weekly radio and television program. In Manila, he has publicly humiliated his most outspoken critic, a senator who led an investigation into extrajudicial killings and now faces criminal charges. And he recently demanded the immediate resignation of the heads of the country's top energy regulatory body after reports of corruption at the agency.

In his crackdown on drugs and crime as mayor, most victims were drug users, petty criminals and street children. Most were either shot or stabbed to death in vigilante-style killings, CASE said. In a 2009 report, the international advocacy group Human Rights Watch (HRW) identified a consistent failure by police to seriously investigate these killings. Police in Davao, helped by neighborhood leaders, drew up lists that were used by death squads to target their victims, HRW alleged. The rights group also reported that acting and retired police officers worked as "handlers" for death-squad gunmen in Davao, giving them names and photos of targets, an allegation denied by Davao police.

Duterte denies playing any part in the activities of the so-called death squads in Davao. The president has faced probes into the killings in Davao and since he took office in July, and none has proven he was responsible, a spokesman for Duterte said in response to questions from Reuters. The president's critics "keep on picking on allegations of human rights violations," he said. "If anyone is eroding democracy, it must be the rabid opponents who up to now cannot accept defeat and respect the results of elections."

Shock and Disapproval

But a similar pattern of violence is re-emerging nationally. In October, Reuters revealed the key role that neighborhood "captains" across the nation are playing in the drugs war. Many of the victims killed by law enforcement officers or vigilantes appeared on police "watch lists" that these low-level officials are helping to compile. A later Reuters investigation amassed evidence that suggested officers were summarily gunning down drug suspects and performing perfunctory crime-scene investigations and autopsies.

"When will these killings stop?" said Congressman Gary Alejano, a former military officer and strong critic of Duterte's methods. "The purpose of the war on drugs is to stifle opposition and castrate dissent. It is working." A growing chorus of shock and disapproval has included warnings from senators that there are grounds for impeachment over what Duterte's critics say are extrajudicial killings. But the president is pressing ahead.

Right now, an impeachment motion seems unlikely. Duterte's supporters control both houses of Congress, and his popularity remains high. An opinion poll published by the Social Weather Stations research agency in December showed 77 percent of Filipinos were satisfied with Duterte's performance. It was his promise to spread his city's anti-corruption and law-and-order policies across the country, political analysts here say, that endeared him to millions of Filipino voters. He tapped into disgust with the nation's political elite and the failure of successive governments to tackle poverty and inequality despite years of robust economic growth, they say.

The 71-year-old former prosecutor revels in reminding his countrymen that he is a man to be feared. As mayor, Duterte declared on Dec 16, he even shot three criminals himself during a police operation. "I said I killed about three of them," he said. "I didn't really know how many bullets from my gun went through inside their bodies."

In Congress, his allies are determined to push through the bill that would lower the age of criminality from 15 to 9. The legislation is necessary, they say, because young children are involved in the drug trade. It wouldn't be the first time children have been caught in a Duterte crackdown. In Davao, CASE said it documented 132 incidents of children aged 17 and younger who it says died in vigilante-style killings between 1998 and 2015.

Checks and Balances

As president, Duterte has continued to target official corruption. While at an economic summit in Peru in November, he issued an order: Launch an immediate investigation into the Energy Regulatory Commission. He had just been briefed on the suicide of a top commission official, who was allegedly under pressure to authorize improper deals. On the spot, Duterte demanded the wholesale resignations of the commission's senior management. "I am telling you, I am just a small town province boy, I really don't like corruption," Duterte told reporters in Lima. If the commissioners refuse to quit, the president "will ask Congress to abolish their positions," a Duterte spokesman told Reuters.

He has also brought his populist economics to the capital. Congress has approved a budget of 8.3 billion pesos (\$167 million) for 2017 to provide free tuition at all state colleges and universities. He sent his health minister to Cuba in August to study its national health system. And in recent speeches, Duterte said he had released 2 billion pesos from the regulatory agency that operates most of the country's casinos. This would be split evenly between drug rehabilitation and subsidies for poor families unable to afford prescription drugs.

Duterte inherited a strong economy. To boost growth further he pledges to bolster infrastructure spending and lift caps on foreign ownership. He has also vowed to increase competition in markets dominated by monopolies and duopolies, signaling a willingness to take on the business elite. Still, there are signs it might be difficult to impose his vision on a far-flung nation where checks and balances on executive power are well established.

The management of the Energy Regulatory Commission is still in office. They refuse to resign, instead calling for an impartial inquiry into the suicide. The commission is a quasi-judicial body established by law, so legislation would be required for Duterte to scrap it. Back home in Davao, bureaucrats rarely defied a mayor known as "the Punisher." Duterte's power remains grounded in this city, where his word virtually became law. His daughter, Sara Duterte-Carpio, is now mayor. His son, Paolo, is vice-mayor.

Even after moving in to Malacanang, the presidential palace in Manila, Duterte and his entourage fly to Davao every week. "We are now the Malacanang of the south," says Davao businesswoman and Duterte supporter Belinda Laya-Torres. "He feels at home here."

Vigilante-Style Killings

Duterte became mayor in 1988, two years after the fall of President Ferdinand Marcos. The coastal city was at the center of a communist insurgency that had erupted against the Marcos regime. New People's Army rebels were using the city as a test-

ing ground for urban guerrilla warfare; assassinations, bombings and disappearances were common. In a vicious war of attrition, the rebels targeted police, the military and local officials, while the authorities hit back at suspected communist sympathizers.

Some locals say when Duterte came to power, he proved to be more effective in the use of violence than the rebels or criminals. In its 2009 report, Human Rights Watch discerned a pattern in the vigilante-style killings during his rule. "The assailants usually arrive in twos or threes on a motorcycle without a license plate," the monitoring group wrote. "They wear baseball caps and buttoned shirts or jackets, apparently to conceal their weapons underneath. They shoot or, increasingly, stab their victim without warning...as quickly as they arrive, they ride off - but almost always before the police appear."

Alongside the crime crackdown, Duterte built support with his man-of-the-people persona. He is perceived as frugal and plain-living. The home where he still lives when in Davao is an unassuming two-storey property behind a green metal gate. He eats at unpretentious restaurants and is fond of the strong-smelling fruit durian.

As mayor, he also slashed red tape. Applications for most permits and approvals must be decided within three days, local officials say. In the city tax office, fans rattle in the brightly lit public areas where many of the service windows are open through the lunch hour. The schedule is meant to minimize waiting time. Duterte says he hates seeing citizens queuing.

Rules and regulations were strictly enforced. Firecrackers, dangerous but very popular in the Philippines, are outlawed, a policy Duterte promises to enforce nationwide next year. Smoking in public is banned. Jaywalkers face \$4 fines and orders to perform community service. Bars and restaurants must stop serving alcohol at 1 am. There is a 10 pm curfew on unaccompanied minors.

Despite the strictness of these restrictions, Duterte is no prude. Prostitution is tolerated with registered sex workers required to undergo regular health checks, according to a city official. The authorities check to ensure they are not working under coercion or threat. And the city holds a Christmas party for sex workers, the official said.

Personality Cult

The mayor enhanced his image with a weekly radio-and-television talk show, "Gikan sa Masa, Para sa Masa" - From the Masses, For the Masses. Here, Duterte would take complaints from residents and issue peremptory corrective orders. It became a must for city officials, including the local police, to listen and watch his Sunday program: They would not want to miss his on-the-spot instructions, usually delivered with curses and rebukes.

Everywhere in the city there is evidence of the personality cult he fostered. At one of the more popular restaurants, Marina Tuna, which specializes in the fish for which the city is known, a Duterte cut-out greets guests on the entry stair. The markets are full of Duterte memorabilia and T-shirts. With echoes of Maoist China, a national "learn from Davao" movement is under way. Delegations of visitors from around the country fly in to study the city's blueprint for order, growth and development, local officials say. Overwhelmed with up to 22 groups visiting a day, a US-style 911 emergency response center built by Duterte was forced to restrict access, according to operators at the center.

Poverty levels in the Davao region, which includes the city, are down, and in 2014 the region grew 9.3 percent - a statistic Duterte often cites when he boasts of his hometown. He usually follows this with a reminder that it is safe to walk the streets at night. This security, he says, created the conditions for investment and growth.

The city hosts a thriving business process outsourcing industry providing call centers, telemarketing and online language tutoring for local and foreign companies. Local outsourcing-business owners give Duterte credit for providing the environment for growth. They say the city is safe for their mostly young employees to commute to work at all hours. "We need parents to be comfortable that young people can go out at 10 p.m. and come home early in the morning," says Michael Bian, chief executive officer of a growing outsourced service provider, Six Eleven Global Teleservices. Davao business people and officials also credit Duterte with having the confidence to delegate to experts. He has adopted the same approach as president, business leaders say, appointing experienced economic managers. "He has surrounded himself with a very good team. They are doers," says Ebb Hinchliffe, executive director of the American Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines. "Thank God, he leaves them alone."

Security Threat

Local business leaders and officials acknowledge that the city of Davao still has a long way to go. Apart from a few gleaming modern malls, most of the commercial areas and residential neighborhoods are full of ramshackle buildings packed along narrow, bumpy roads. Tin shacks on stilts line fetid waterways. Public transport is limited and the drainage system is widely acknowledged to be inadequate, according to local business people and international development agencies. —Reuters

Focus

YOUNG MIGRANTS IN LIMBO, AWAIT TRUMP'S MOVE

The mother of Juana and Ines Alejandro took a deep breath, put on a brave face and handed her toddlers over to strangers at the Mexican border to be smuggled into the United States. That was 17 years ago. For the mother, going back to the poverty of her village in Oaxaca in Mexico was out of the question. Smugglers helped her cross the border herself a few days later. She collected her daughters in Arizona and traveled to New York to reunite with her husband, whom she had not seen in two years.

Today, those daughters are 19 and 20 years old, study at a community college in New York and are scared to death that they might be deported after Donald Trump takes power next month. "Being deported is something that does keep me awake at night," Ines says. "How are we going to do it back home? It would mean starting all over again."

In never-never land

The Alejandro family has lived in fear of being found out for years. That has meant going to the doctor only in emergencies, skipping school field trips and never returning to Mexico. Juana and Ines have three siblings who were born in America and are therefore US citizens. But the older daughters and their parents remain in the country illegally. The mother cooks Mexican food that an aunt sells outside a train station. The father helps, and washes dishes at a restaurant or works construction. They declined to be named for this story.

But Juana and Ines's luck changed in 2013 when the United States started implementing a program to give young people like them renewable two-year residence and work permits. It is called DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, for people who were brought to the United States as children and do not have papers. The idea is that they should not be punished with deportation for something in which they had no say. "DACA has opened a lot of doors for me. I feel more secure about saying I am undocumented," says Juana, who studies business administration. "It has removed many worries."

During his presidential campaign, Trump insulted Mexicans by saying some Mexican immigrants were rapists and drug dealers. He also pledged to end the DACA program immediately. But he has changed his tune since then. "They got brought here at a very young age. They've worked here. They've gone to school here. Some were good students. Some have wonderful jobs," Trump told Time magazine after his election. "And they're in never-never land because they don't know what's going to happen. 'We're going to work something out that's going to make people happy and proud,'" he added without providing details.

A group of Democratic and Republican senators this month presented a bill that would protect such young people from deportation for three years and allow them to work if Trump scraps the DACA program.

A cherished dream

An estimated 1.8 million young people in the United States face the same dilemma as Juana and Ines. Brought into the country by their parents illegally as children, they grew up here, speak perfect English and went to elementary school here. Some 65,000 graduate from high school each year. Most want to go on to university, but only five to 10 percent can afford it. Some 741,000 have applied for protection under DACA.

They have been living in legal limbo for years, waiting for a miracle. It even has a name: A bill called the "Dream Act", which would grant such people permanent residency and a work permit. However, the bill has been languishing in Congress for 15 years. Young people like the Alejandro daughters are called "dreamers." "Most of the people like my parents pay their taxes and give as much as they can back to this country," Ines says. "I am here just for my education. The US is full of opportunities I wouldn't have in Mexico." "My parents do work a lot," Juana adds. "They barely sleep at night just to help us pay tuition, and we have to work as well."

If DACA ends, however, it will be hard for the two girls to stay in school even if they are not deported, she says. Still, despite the fear and uncertainty, the two sisters have stepped forward and made their status known, and are helping other undocumented students like them. They formed a "Dream Team" at Hostos Community College - where they study - a group the school supports. "I'd tell the president-elect," Ines says, "that we are not all horrible people." —AFP

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GASCOIGNE IN HOSPITAL AFTER LONDON HOTEL ROW

LONDON: The former England footballer Paul Gascoigne was involved in a fracas in a London hotel, several witnesses said, and taken to hospital after sustaining a head injury. The Metropolitan Police said officers were called to a disturbance at London's Ace Hotel in Shoreditch on Tuesday night before a 49-year-old man was taken to hospital. A Scotland Yard spokeswoman said: "The man has been taken to an east London hospital where he remains in a stable condition." Witness Alvin Carpio said Gascoigne, who has faced a long struggle with alcoholism, was kicked down the stairs after an altercation with another guest. Another witness posted on Facebook that it was "a shame" to see Gascoigne in such a state. Gascoigne's spokesman, Terry Baker confirmed to the Daily Mirror that Gascoigne was treated in hospital for a head wound. Mr Baker added: "He hasn't been arrested. He's about to be released and sent home." In September Gascoigne was fined £1,000 after pleaded guilty to racially aggravated abuse at his one-man show. — Reuters

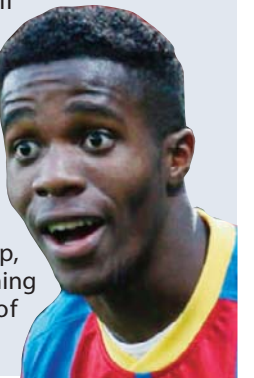


SANTA CATERINA DOWNHILL CANCELLED

SANTA CATERINA VALFURVA: Strong winds prompted organizers to cancel a men's World Cup downhill race yesterday. The upper part of the Deborah Compagnoni course was considered too dangerous. The International Ski Federation said that due to an already congested schedule the race will not be made up, leaving only six more downhill races this season after the two already contested. The cancellation was good news for Aksel Lund Svindal, the Norwegian leading the downhill standings who is taking this week off to rest a sore knee. Svindal holds an 18-point lead over teammate Kjetil Jansrud in the downhill standings. The cancellation was also positive for overall World Cup leader Marcel Hirscher, who does not race downhill. The next downhill on the schedule are the classic Lauberhorn and Hahnenkamm races in Wengen, Switzerland, and Kitzbuehel, Austria, on Jan. 14 and 21, respectively. An Alpine combined event is scheduled for Santa Caterina today. — AP

ZAHA, BAILLY IN IVORY COAST SQUAD

ABIDJAN: A cluster of Premier League stars including Eric Bailly and Wilfried Zaha was named yesterday in defending champions the Ivory Coast's 24-player squad for the upcoming Africa Cup of Nations. Crystal Palace winger Zaha features in the list released by the team's French manager Michel Dussuyer despite playing two games for England. But as those caps were both in friendlies the 24-year-old remains eligible to line up for the country of his birth. He made it plain to the Ivorian Football Federation in November that he wanted to play for Ivory Coast rather than the Three Lions of Gareth Southgate. Missing from the squad for the tournament in Gabon starting on January 14 was the Elephant's injured Chinese-based captain Gervinho. Paris Saint-Germain defender Serge Aurier and Stoke City forward Wilfried Bony also figured. The Ivory Coast warm up for the defence of their 2015 title with friendlies against Sweden and Uganda. At the Nations Cup, Ivory Coast and Togo meet on January 16 in the opening Group C match followed by Democratic Republic of Congo and Morocco. — AFP



ANNAPOLIS: Wake Forest wide receiver Chuck Wade catches a pass as Temple cornerback Artrel Foster pursues during the first half of the Military Bowl NCAA college football game, Tuesday in Annapolis, Md. — AP



ANNAPOLIS: Wake Forest wide receivers Alex Bachman, left, and Tabari Hines celebrate a touchdown against Temple during the first half of the Military Bowl NCAA college football game, Tuesday in Annapolis, Md. — AP

WAKE FOREST SURVIVES TEMPLE RALLY TO WIN MILITARY BOWL

ANNAPOLIS: Wake Forest attached a positive ending to a season marred by scandal, using a strong performance by quarterback John Wolford to beat heavily favored Temple 34-26 on Tuesday in the Military Bowl.

After throwing an interception on the first series of the game - a turnover Temple used to take a 7-0 lead - Wolford helped the Demon Deacons rattle off 31 straight points before halftime. Wolford left with a neck strain in the third quarter with the score 31-17. Wake Forest (7-6) then withstood a comeback bid by Temple (10-4) to secure its first winning season since 2008.

The victory gave the Demon Deacons something to talk about this offseason

beside the troubling spy story dubbed "Wakey Leaks."

An investigation by Wake Forest revealed that broadcaster Tommy Elrod leaked or attempted to leak game plan information to at least three opponents. Though Elrod has not released a public statement on the scandal, the school has since fired him.

In spite of the distraction, the Demon Deacons snapped a three-game losing streak and won for only the second time since Oct. 8.

Wolford, a junior, completed 10 of 19 passes for 183 yards and two scores. His backup, redshirt freshman Kyle Kearns, went 4 for 10 for 60 yards and an interception.

Seeking the first 11-win season in school

history, Temple came in as an 11-point favorite. A 48-yard pass from Phillip Walker to Adonis Jennings on the Owls' first offensive play gave them their only lead.

Down 31-7 late in the first half, Temple used a 19-point run to close to 31-26 with 3:56 left. Wake Forest then used an 80-yard kickoff return by John Armstrong and the resulting field goal to make it an eight-point game with 1:59 left, and the Owls had no answer.

Temple came in with a seven-game winning streak after capturing the American Athletic Conference title with a 34-10 rout of Navy on this same field Dec. 3. Walker finished his career by going 28 for 49 for 396 yards and two touchdowns, both to

Jennings. He was sacked four times, including a pivotal 22-yarder on second down from the Wake Forest 6 preceding the Owls' final field goal.

Temple was led by interim coach Ed Foley, who took the reins after Matt Rhule was hired by Baylor on Dec. 6. The Owls subsequently signed Florida defensive coordinator Geoff Collins as their new head coach, and he got a first-hand look at his new team on Tuesday.

TAKEAWAY

Temple: The Owls showed their stuff in the second half, but this performance against a team that went 3-5 in the Atlantic Coast Conference was not the way they

want to remember this season.

Wake Forest: Impressive outing against a conference champion and first bowl win since 2008 was a perfect way to end an imperfect season.

Temple: The Owls' next game will be played under Collins. One of his top priorities will be finding a replacement for Walker, the school record-holder for career completions, touchdowns, yards and wins by a starting quarterback (29).

Wake Forest: The Demon Deacons hope to put the Wakey Leaks fiasco behind them during the offseason so they can start anew in 2017. Wake Forest won more games this season (7) than in coach Dave Clawson's first two years combined (6). — AP

RAIDERS PREP FOR PLAYOFFS WITHOUT INJURED QB CARR

LOS ANGELES: The Oakland Raiders will be counting on backup quarterback Matt McGloin in their first NFL playoff run since 2002 as Derek Carr recovers from a broken leg that required surgery on Tuesday.

"Surgery couldn't have gone better!" Carr tweeted on Tuesday afternoon. "Received great news! Already started the recovery process! Thank you for all of your prayers as I heal up!"

The Raiders had already secured a post-season berth when Carr broke his right fibula after he was sacked Saturday in a win over the Indianapolis Colts.

The team has offered only sketchy updates of Carr's condition. But the injury expected to sideline Carr throughout the playoffs is a blow.

"We'll rally around the next guy as best we can," Raiders coach Jack Del Rio said. "That's what you do. It will be incumbent upon the offensive line and backs to do more, the special teams to do more."

"As a team, pick it up and do more to fill in. Obviously, that's a big setback."

However, Del Rio told reporters on Monday that he didn't regret leaving Carr in the contest against the Colts, even with his team holding a commanding 33-14 lead.

"We felt we had to keep the pedal down on that opponent and that quarterback (Andrew Luck) in that game," Del Rio said. "You're talking about a team facing elimination. We knew they were going to give everything they had to close the game any way they could."

And even though they are playoff-bound, the Raiders have business to take care of as the regular season winds down.

They face the Denver Broncos on Sunday and, with a win, have a chance to capture the AFC West division title and a first-round bye. With a defeat, they could fall as low as the fifth seed.

"I'm ready to go," McGloin said of the challenge of stepping in for Carr. "I feel great. I know this team, these guys around me, this staff and this organization will do a great job of helping me out, embracing me and making sure we keep moving in the right direction." McGloin, who completed a 19-yard pass to Amari Cooper to seal Saturday's win, appeared in seven games and started six times as a rookie for the Raiders in 2013, and has since served as Carr's backup.



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh with Al-Rubaian and a PR representative.

KFH SUPPORTS KUWAITI RALLY CHAMPION 'AL-RUBAIAN'

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) sponsored the world Rally champion Ebrahim Al-Rubaian in a strategic partnership that reiterates the bank's interest in supporting the sport and the national talent, which reflects the commitment towards optimally assuming the corporate social responsibility.

Speaking at the conference held at Sirbb Circuit, Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media at KFH, Yousef Al-Ruwaieh said that KFH spares no efforts in putting Kuwaiti National champions and athletes at the forefront of its priorities and pledges to continue motivating them to achieve further titles for the coun-

try, expressing his pride to add Al-Rubaian to KFH's initiators team.

It is noteworthy that such initiatives confirm KFH's endeavors to achieve the social responsibility, while affirms its commitment to support and honor the national champions who hoist Kuwait flag in international forums in recognition of their

achievements.

Meanwhile, Al-Rubaian hailed KFH's support and sponsorship, which comprises an impetus for success and achievements in his upcoming participations. It is worth noting that Al-Rubaian will participate in the 2017 Dakar Rally that will be held in South America.

NBA Results/Standings

Houston 123, Dallas 107; Boston 113, Memphis 103; Oklahoma City 106, Miami 94.

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Toronto	22	8	.733	-
Boston	19	13	.594	4
NY Knicks	16	14	.533	6
Brooklyn	8	22	.267	14
Philadelphia	7	23	.233	15

Central Division

Cleveland	23	7	.767	-
Chicago	15	16	.484	8.5
Milwaukee	14	15	.483	8.5
Indiana	15	17	.469	9
Detroit	15	18	.455	9.5

Southeast Division

Charlotte	17	14	.548	-
Atlanta	15	16	.484	2
Washington	14	16	.467	2.5
Orlando	15	18	.455	3
Miami	10	22	.313	7.5

Western Conference

Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	20	12	.625	-
Utah	19	13	.594	1
Denver	13	18	.419	6.5
Portland	13	20	.394	7.5
Minnesota	10	21	.323	9.5

Pacific Division

Golden State	27	5	.844	-
LA Clippers	22	11	.667	5.5
Sacramento	14	17	.452	12.5
LA Lakers	12	23	.343	16.5
Phoenix	9	22	.290	17.5

Southwest Division

San Antonio	25	6	.806	-
Houston	24	9	.727	2
Memphis	20	14	.588	6.5
New Orleans	12	21	.364	14
Dallas	9	23	.281	16.5



MIAMI: Oklahoma City Thunder guard Russell Westbrook (0) shoots as Miami Heat forward Justise Winslow (20) defends during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, in Miami. Thunder won 106-94. — AP

WESTBROOK'S TRIPLE-DOUBLE LIFTS THUNDER OVER HEAT

LOS ANGELES: The seemingly unstoppable Russell Westbrook produced his 15th triple-double of the season Tuesday to propel the Oklahoma City Thunder to a 106-94 NBA victory over the Heat in Miami. Westbrook's 52nd career triple-double was his 30th of 2016 — a total spanning the latter part of last season. He joined Oscar Robertson as the only players to notch 30 triple-doubles in a calendar year—furthering his chances of matching Robertson's 1961-62 feat of averaging a triple-double over an entire season. "He's a unique player," Thunder coach Billy Donovan said of Westbrook, who reeled in a rebound to wrap up a triple-double with 6:40 remaining in the third quarter. He finished with 29 points, 17 rebounds and 11 assists. "When you see him going up above guys to get rebounds, it's really remarkable," added Donovan, who noted that Westbrook's rebounds, all of them on the defensive end, ignited the Thunder's offense. "That was 17 times where we could generate a fast break just through him," Donovan said. "(Westbrook) has it, the team sees it, and now we can get out and run." Oklahoma City had a 16-4 advantage in fast break points and

outscored Miami 58-32 in the paint. Westbrook connected on 11 of 22 shots from the floor and seven of 10 from the free throw line. But Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said the lasting impression left by Westbrook was the way he gave it all he had for all 37 minutes he spent on the floor. "From my perspective, some of the most impressive plays he made were diving in front of our bench, taking the charge at the end when they were up 12," Spoelstra said. "Every single possession is the most important possession to him. 'It's a great lesson to our young guys. What defines greatness is consistency.'"

CELTICS 113, GRIZZLIES 103

Gerald Green came off the bench to score a season-high 19 points in less than 19 minutes and the Boston Celtics won for the sixth time in seven games, beating the Memphis Grizzlies 113-103. Avery Bradley scored 23 points and added seven rebounds and four assists, while Isaiah Thomas had 21 points and seven assists as the Celtics (19-13) beat Memphis for the second time in eight days. Center Marc Gasol scored 26 points, 16 in the first half, and added nine assists for the

Grizzlies (20-14).

ROCKETS 123, MAVERICKS 107

A 16-0 run in the second quarter by the Houston Rockets set the stage for a 123-107 victory over the Dallas Mavericks. The Rockets (24-9) swept all four of their games against the Mavericks for the first time since the 1997-98 season, and have won 13 of their last 15. James Harden led the way with 34 points, 11 assists and five rebounds. The Mavs (9-23) now own the worst winning percentage in the Western Conference.

JAZZ 102, LAKERS 100

Gordon Hayward scored 31 points and grabbed nine rebounds, and the Utah Jazz snapped a three-game losing streak with a 102-100 victory road over the Los Angeles Lakers. Joe Ingles came off the bench to score 13 points, and Rudy Gobert collected 12 points and 11 rebounds for the Jazz (19-13). Utah improved to 3-0 this season against the Lakers. Los Angeles guard D'Angelo Russell fired an airball from behind the arc just before the final horn, allowing Utah to prevail. — Agencies



LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles Lakers forward Luol Deng, left, of South Sudan, shoots as Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert, of France, defends during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, in Los Angeles. The Jazz won 102-100. — AP

PERPETUAL LOYAL SMASHES SYDNEY-HOBART RECORD

SYDNEY: Australian supermaxi Perpetual Loyal smashed the Sydney to Hobart record by almost five hours to take line honours yesterday after "one hell of a race" that saw eight-time winner Wild Oats XI retire. Loyal, long-time rival of favourite Wild Oats, put to bed its failure to finish the past two races when the 100-footer arrived at Hobart's Constitution Dock in a record time of 1 day 13hr 31min 20sec. "This is one for the true believers," owner and skipper Anthony Bell told reporters at Hobart's Constitution Dock after powering to the finish line at 20 knots. "I don't think anyone expected us to

do well ... the bookies certainly didn't. "We raced one hell of a race," he told reporters. "It's an awesome thing to break the race record." Perpetual Loyal boat manager Brad Kellet told the organisers the supermaxi had pushed Wild Oats to its limits. "Someone had to crack," he said. "That's not our weather, it's Wild Oats' weather, but we put ourselves in a great position, so that when Oats retired, we had enough of a lead over the V70s and Scallywag to win." The new time for the 628-nautical-mile (1,163-kilometre) event was four hours and 51 minutes faster than the previous record of 1 day

18hr 23min 12sec set in 2012 by Wild Oats. New Zealand's Volvo 70 Giacomo, which hopes to be crowned overall winner in the handicap honours for the vessel that performs best according to size, came in second with a time of 1 day 15hr 27min 5sec.

OATS RETIRES

"It was a bit of a downwind race, so it suited us," said owner and winemaker Jim Deleat. "Still, we're pretty surprised, it's not often that a 70-footer can do this, get second over the line." Hong Kong businessman Seng Huang Lee's supermaxi Scallywag crossed the

finish line about two minutes later, also easily beating the old record. Loyal had benefited from favourable northeasterly winds that saw the fleet tear down Australia's east coast after departing Sydney Harbour on Monday. The yacht was first into the open ocean but Wild Oats soon edged into the lead and looked well set to break its own record for the race. But in a bitter blow, its hydraulic keel control mechanism failed in the middle of the Bass Strait. Skipper Mark Richards made the call to retire on safety grounds on Tuesday morning. It was the second year in succession that Wild Oats had to pull out from the bluewater classic, with a mainsail rip thwarting her ambitions in 2015.

CHALLENGING RACE

"It was sad to see them break," said Bell after his second win in the gruelling event, taking line honours in 2011 with Investec Loyal. "We were probably less than half a mile away from them when it happened. We saw the boat tilt right over and we saw them come to a sudden stop." After radioing Wild Oats, Bell said he offered assistance and to stop racing if needed. "Our first worry was that Oats might have lost a crew member overboard," he said. "The fortunate thing was no one got hurt." Bell signalled his intent to move on after the record win, saying he "won't be back next year". The rest of the 80-odd fleet were due in Hobart over the next day or two when handicap honours will be decided. Last year's overall winner Balance, a 52-footer owned by Australian Paul Clitheroe, was running Giacomo close for a second successive handicap crown but had yet to finish. Cruising Yacht Club of Australia commodore John Markos said this year's fast conditions "will make it a pretty hard record to break". Storms are usually a regular hazard in the Sydney to Hobart, one of the world's most challenging races. Six men died, five boats sank and 55 sailors were rescued in 1998 when a deep depression hit the Tasman Sea. — AFP



SYDNEY: This handout photograph from Rolex taken yesterday shows Australian supermaxi yacht Perpetual Loyal competing in the Sydney to Hobart race. Perpetual Loyal smashed the Sydney to Hobart record by almost five hours to take line honours yesterday after "one hell of a race" that saw eight-time winner Wild Oats XI retire. — AFP

DURANT SLAMS NBA FOR 'THROWING REFS UNDER THE BUS'

LOS ANGELES: Golden State Warriors forward Kevin Durant wants the National Basketball Association to become less transparent, at least when it comes to its review of referee decisions. Durant made his comments after the league concluded he was on the wrong end of a non-call during the Warriors' blockbuster Christmas Day showdown with the Cleveland Cavaliers. On the game's final play, with the Warriors down by one point, Durant stumbled when Cleveland's Richard Jefferson trod on his foot. The referees did not call a foul, and a stumbling Durant was unable to get a decent shot away before the buzzer, allowing the Cavs to escape with the win.

The NBA policy, known as the "Last Two Minute Report", is to publicly review every play in the final two minutes of close games. That is of scant consolation to the losing team, but it at least makes for transparency in an era where there are concerns over corruption. "The refs didn't lose us that game," Durant said in an interview on Tuesday after the NBA said he was fouled. "We lost that game. I think it's (bull) the NBA threw the refs under the bus like that. "To say I got fouled, just move on. Refs don't deserve that. They're trying their hardest to get the plays right. "After the game, like it matters. The game's over. We're moving on." Durant added that the next time the Warriors play the Cavaliers he does not want referees tensing up over concerns they will be exposed for their mistakes. He said the job was difficult enough at the best of times for referees, who do not have the luxury of slow-motion replays. The NBA report on Sunday's game also said that Cleveland's LeBron James should have been received a technical foul for hanging on the rim of the basket after a dunk. In 2008, referee Tim Donaghy was sentenced to 15 months in prison after admitting to betting on games he officiated and passing on inside information to bookies. — Reuters

BANGLADESH STUMPER RAHIM MISSES REMAINING ODIS IN NZ

WELLINGTON: Bangladesh wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim will miss the remaining two one-day internationals against New Zealand with a hamstring injury. The first-choice stumper, also a key middle order batsman, suffered the injury during his team's defeat by 77 runs in the Boxing Day match at Christchurch. "We are looking at two weeks, anything

before is a bonus," Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha told reporters on Wednesday. "He's been one of the form batters as well as wicketkeeper in all formats, but injuries are part and parcel of the game." Rahim's injury cleared the decks for reserve wicketkeeper Nurul Hasan's one-day debut in the second match at

Nelson on Thursday. Beginning on Jan 3, Bangladesh play three Twenty20 matches in New Zealand followed by tests at Wellington (Jan. 12-16) and Christchurch (Jan 20-24). * Meanwhile, former Hampshire captain and cricket commentator Mark Nicholas has been taken to hospital for a second time in three days after falling ill

during the second Test between Australia and Pakistan yesterday. The 59-year-old Englishman was taken to hospital on Monday after suffering abdominal pains but discharged after tests, with his employer Channel Nine reporting that he was in "good spirits". He returned to the Melbourne Cricket Ground commentary box on Wednesday

to commentate on day three of the test but was taken to hospital again after suffering the same symptoms, a Cricket Australia spokesman told reporters. Nicholas played 377 first class games and led English county side Hampshire for over 10 years before retiring in 1995 to carve out a career in journalism and broadcasting. — Reuters

COOK HITS CENTURY AS SOUTH AFRICA DOMINATE

PORT ELIZABETH: Stephen Cook hit a century as South Africa took control on the third day of the first Test against Sri Lanka at St George's Park yesterday. South Africa were 351 for five at the close, an overall lead of 432 on a ground where no team has successfully chased more than 271 in the fourth innings. In contrast to the first two days, when seam bowlers held sway, South Africa scored freely against a lacklustre bowling attack on a pitch which seemed to have flattened out. Cook made 117 to lead a powerful batting performance by the hosts. He shared century partnerships with Dean Elgar (52) and Hashim Amla (48). Cook and Elgar put on 116 for the first wicket, their second three-figure opening stand of the match. Then Cook and Amla added 105 for the second wicket off only 118 balls as the Sri Lankan bowlers and fielders wilted. After two interruptions for rain, the playing hours were changed and South Africa scored 182 runs off 40 overs in an extended post-lunch period. They added another 131 off 29 overs before the close. Cook, who made his third century in only seven Tests, survived a chance to gully off Suranga Lakmal when he was on 62, but played with more freedom than in previous appearances. He reached his fifty off 81 balls and his hundred off 152 deliveries. He was out soon after tea when he edged an attempted cut against Dushmantha Chameera to be caught

behind. His Test-best 117 was scored off 178 balls with 11 fours. With Sri Lanka setting defensive fields, the South African batsmen were able to score plenty of singles and keep the score moving. They lost two more wickets, both to off-spinner Dhananjaya de Silva, before captain Faf du Plessis and Quinton de Kock added an unbeaten 74 off 92 balls before the close. An indication of the lack of control exerted by the Sri Lankan bowlers was that they only bowled three maiden overs during the innings, two of them by Lakmal, who added the wicket of Elgar to the five he collected in the first innings. But Lakmal, who bowled 27 overs in the first innings, seldom threatened yesterday. Sri Lanka were bowled out early in the day for 205, with Vernon Philander finishing with five for 45, losing their remaining three wickets for 24 runs. Philander struck twice in the first over of the day after Sri Lanka resumed at 181 for seven. His first ball was a perfect outswinger which De Silva edged to wicket-keeper De Kock. De Silva had batted impressively to make 43 on Tuesday but Philander made the ball deviate just enough to catch the edge as De Silva played back defensively. Lakmal hit a boundary but then chipped the final ball of the over to Kyle Abbott at mid-on. Chameera and Nuwan Pradeep added 20 for the last wicket before Chameera edged Abbott to Amla at first slip after making a Test-best 19. Abbott finished with three for 63. — AFP



MELBOURNE: Australian batsman David Warner leaps in the air as he celebrates his century against Pakistan on the third day of the second cricket Test match in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

WARNER LEADS AUSTRALIA CHARGE AGAINST PAKISTAN

MELBOURNE: A rampaging David Warner smashed a run-a-ball century to fire Australia to 278 for two and wrest back the momentum from Pakistan after Azhar Ali's unbeaten double hundred buoyed the touring side on day three of the second Test on yesterday. Warner's exhilarating 144 anchored a 198-run partnership with Usman Khawaja at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, as Australia slashed the deficit to 165 runs after Pakistan's first innings declaration of 443-9 after lunch. Khawaja was unbeaten on 95 at stumps, with captain Steve Smith on 10 not out and Australia holding genuine hope of forcing a result despite the rain interruptions that blighted the opening two days. Warner's furious counter-attack sapped the morale from the tourists, who had also glimpsed a chance of a series-levelling victory following gritty opener Azhar's brilliant knock of 205. More galling for Pakistan was that Warner was reprieved on 81 when he was bowled by a no ball from Wahab Riaz. "We're in a good position now, our aim was to take the scoreboard out of the equation and just bat," said Warner after a hot and sunny afternoon of work. "We can't control the weather but we just want to bat as big as we can." Paceman Wahab had a dreadfully wayward day, sending down 10 no balls, including a hat-trick of overstepped marks in the over of Warner's non-dismissal. It was a golden day, however, for opposing openers Warner and Azhar and both raced by a number of milestones. Azhar's double hundred was the highest innings by a Pakistan player in Australia and only three runs shy of Viv Richards' 1984 record for touring batsmen at the MCG. He also became his nation's first to surpass 200 twice in a calendar year, having scored an unbeaten 302 against West Indies in Dubai in October.

RARE SLUMP

For Warner, his 17th century was his first at the MCG, completing a sweep of tons at Australia's six state venues while ending a rare slump in form with the red ball. The pugnacious left-hander also galloped past 5,000 test runs, joining the likes of Don Bradman, Ricky Ponting and the Chappell brothers. He reached his hundred with a streaky inside edge that raced to the fine leg boundary and did his customary leap and fist-pump in the air as the crowd of 25,393 roared. After hammering another six fours, Warner feathered an edge off Wahab, confirmed as caught behind by the third umpire after captain Misbah-ul-Haq asked for a review. It was a far better review than the first demanded by Mohammad Amir in the opening overs when Warner was on two. Warner played and missed an Amir delivery but the paceman cajoled his captain into seeking a caught behind decision and the TV footage showed plenty of daylight between bat and ball. Warner's eventual dismissal did little to halt Australia's charge, however, with Khawaja racing into the 90s and combining with captain Smith in an unbroken 34-run stand. Warner and Khawaja's assault threatened to overshadow Azhar's epic 364-ball knock, a triumph of patience and determination in the face of a string of rain delays and a quality bowling attack. Having spent more than nine-and-a-half hours at the crease, clattering 20 boundaries, Azhar tucked away two runs off paceman Mitchell Starc to bring up the 200 and gave a running jump for joy before ripping off his helmet. "It certainly is a big achievement," 31-year-old Azhar, who was given a standing ovation by the crowd, told reporters. "It's a big, big tour for our team. So I was very focused and really wanted to get there." — Reuters

SCOREBOARD	
MELBOURNE: Scoreboard at the close on the third day of the second Test between Australia and Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on yesterday.	
Pakistan first innings (310-6 overnight)	
S. Aslam c Smith b Lyon	9
A. Ali not out	205
B. Azam c Smith b Hazlewood	23
Y. Khan b Bird	21
Misbah-ul-Haq c Maddinson b Bird	11
A. Shafiq c Smith b Bird	50
S. Ahmed c Renshaw b Hazlewood	10
M. Amir c Wade b Starc	29
S. Khan run out (Maddinson)	65
W. Riaz c and b Hazlewood	1
Extras (b4, lb9, w5, nb1)	19
Total (9 wickets dec, 126.3 overs)	443
Fall of wickets: 1-18 (Aslam), 2-60 (Azam), 3-111 (Y. Khan), 4-125 (Misbah-ul-Haq), 5-240 (Shafiq), 6-268 (Ahmed), 7-317 (Amir), 8-435 (S. Khan), 9-443 (Riaz)	
Did not bat: Y. Shah.	
Bowling: Starc 31-6-125-1 (1w), Hazlewood 32.3-11-50-3, Bird 34.5-113-3 (1nb), Lyon 23-1-115-1, Smith 3-0-9-0, Maddinson 3-0-18-0.	
Australia first innings	
M. Renshaw b Y. Khan	10
D. Warner c Sarfraz b Riaz	144
U. Khawaja not out	95
S. Smith not out	10
Extras (b1, lb8, nb10)	19
Total (2 wickets, 58 overs)	278
Fall of wickets: 1-46 (Renshaw), 2-244 (Warner)	
To bat: P. Handscomb, N. Maddinson, M. Wade, M. Starc, J. Hazlewood, N. Lyon, J. Bird.	
Bowling: Amir 14-2-44-0, S. Khan 12-4-40-0, Y. Khan 16-0-97-1, Riaz 14-2-77-1 (10nb) Azhar 2-0-11-0.	



MELBOURNE: Pakistan batsman Azhar Ali celebrates scoring his double century against Australia on the third day of the second cricket Test match in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP



PORT ELIZABETH: South African batsman Stephen Cook (R) raises his bat as he celebrates after scoring a century (100 Runs) during the second day of the first cricket Test match between South Africa and Sri Lanka yesterday at the Port Elizabeth stadium, South Africa. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa: Scores at close of play on the third day of the first Test between South Africa and Sri Lanka at St George's Park yesterday.	
South Africa, first innings, 286	(1nb, 1w), Maharaj 10-3-30-1
Sri Lanka, first innings (overnight 181-7)	
D. Karunaratne b Abbott	5
K. Silva lbw b Philander	16
K. Perera c De Kock b Philander	7
K. Mendis c De Kock b Abbott	0
A. Mathews c Elgar b Rabada	39
D. Chandimal lbw b Philander	28
D. de Silva c De Kock b Philander	43
R. Herath lbw b Maharaj	24
D. Chameera c Amla b Abbott	19
S. Lakmal c Abbott b Philander	4
N. Pradeep not out	8
Extras (lb4, nb3, w5)	12
Total (64.5 overs)	205
Fall of wickets: 1-10 (Karunaratne), 2-19 (Perera), 3-22 (Mendis), 4-61 (Silva), 5-94 (Mathews), 6-121 (Chandimal), 7-157 (Herath), 8-181 (De Silva), 9-185 (Lakmal)	
Bowling: Philander 20-7-45-5 (2nb), Abbott 21.5-4-63-3, Rabada 13-3-63-1	
South Africa, second innings	
S. Cook c Chandimal b Chameera	117
D. Elgar c Mathews b Lakmal	52
H. Amla lbw b Pradeep	48
J. Duminy c Mathews b De Silva	25
F. du Plessis not out	41
T. Bavuma c Mendis b De Silva	8
Q. de Kock not out	42
Extras (b5, lb1, nb9, w3)	18
Total (5 wickets, 80 overs)	351
Fall of wickets: 1-116 (Elgar), 2-221 (Amla), 3-244 (Cook), 4-267 (Duminy), 5-277 (Bavuma)	
Bowling: Lakmal 15-2-57-1, Pradeep 14-0-65-1 (4nb, 1w), Mathews 4-0-10-0, Chameera 11-0-63-1 (1nb, 2w), Herath 23-1-76-0, De Silva 13-0-74-2	
Match situation: South Africa lead by 432 runs with five wickets remaining in the second innings.	



PORT ELIZABETH: Sri Lanka bowler Suranga Lakmal bowls on South African batsman Dean Elgar (not in picture) during the second day of the first Test between South Africa and Sri Lanka yesterday at the Port Elizabeth cricket ground in Port Elizabeth. — AFP

VICTORY LOOM AS TITLE RIVALS TO UNBEATEN SYDNEY FC

SYDNEY: Melbourne Victory emerged as a title rival to unbeaten A-League leaders Sydney FC with a 4-1 spanking of Central Coast Mariners in Melbourne yesterday. Victory moved to second spot on the standings and seven points behind Sydney FC with a game in hand after a dominant second-half performance against Paul Okon's Mariners. Kevin Muscat's side took a 1-0 lead

into half-time then pressed home their advantage with goals from James Donachie and Marco Rojas, who netted twice in two minutes. Substitute Trent Buhagiar scored a consolation goal for the Mariners in the final minutes. Sydney FC remained unbeaten after 12 games with a 4-0 hammering of defending champions Adelaide United. Goals from Slovak Filip Holosko, a brace

from Alex Brosque and another from Rhyen Grant sealed Sydney's win and left Adelaide at the bottom of the standings with a lone win. Brisbane Roar are third after extending their unbeaten run to 10 games following a 1-1 home draw with Western Sydney. Second-half goals from Corey Brown and Wanderers Spanish skipper Dimas Delgado cancelled each other out. Melbourne City lie fourth after

a thrilling 3-3 draw with Perth Glory. City's Uruguayan skipper Bruno Fornaroli missed a stoppage-time penalty after red cards to Glory's Dino Djulbic and City's Argentine attacker Fernando Brandan. City were awarded three penalties in the at-times spiteful encounter, with Fornaroli scoring one and having the other two saved by Liam Reddy. Fornaroli finished with two goals with

Glory's Spanish maestro Diego Castro also netting a brace. Newcastle moved into fifth spot after holding Wellington Phoenix to a 2-2 draw. The Jets twice had to come from behind at home with goals from Andrew Hoole and Andrew Nabbout cancelling out strikes from former Melbourne Victory duo Kosta Barbarouses and Brazilian Gui Finkler. —AFP

NHL results/standings

Calgary 6, Colorado 3; Dallas 3, Arizona 2; Winnipeg 3, Chicago 1; Minnesota 3, Nashville 2 (OT); Buffalo 4, Detroit 3; Pittsburgh 5, New Jersey 2; NY Islanders 4, Washington 3; NY Rangers 4, Ottawa 3; Columbus 4, Boston 3.

Western Conference

Central Division

	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Chicago	22	10	5	103	89	49
Minnesota	22	8	4	105	68	48
St. Louis	18	12	5	98	103	41
Dallas	15	14	7	92	108	37
Winnipeg	17	17	3	98	106	37
Nashville	15	13	6	96	97	36
Colorado	12	21	1	70	112	25

Pacific Division

San Jose	22	12	1	90	77	45
Edmonton	18	12	6	105	97	42
Anaheim	17	12	7	98	102	41
Calgary	19	16	2	100	106	40
Los Angeles	17	13	4	87	84	38
Vancouver	14	18	3	86	109	31
Arizona	11	19	5	77	111	27

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

Montreal	21	9	4	104	76	46
Ottawa	20	12	3	91	93	43
Boston	18	15	4	88	91	40
Tampa Bay	17	15	3	100	98	37
Florida	15	14	6	85	97	36
Toronto	14	12	7	97	95	35
Buffalo	13	13	8	75	94	34
Detroit	15	16	4	86	100	34

Metropolitan Division

Columbus	24	5	4	114	68	52
Pittsburgh	23	8	5	126	102	51
NY Rangers	24	12	1	123	92	49
Washington	20	9	4	90	73	44
Philadelphia	20	12	4	110	108	44
Carolina	15	11	7	88	90	37
NY Islanders	14	14	6	94	105	34
New Jersey	13	15	7	82	107	33

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)



NEW YORK: Kyle Turriss #7 of the Ottawa Senators takes a holding penalty during the first period against Marc Staal #18 of the New York Rangers at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday in New York City. —AFP

BLUE JACKETS BEAT BRUINS, STRETCH WIN STREAK TO 13 GAMES

COLUMBUS: Nick Foligno scored a power-play goal midway through the third period, Sergei Bobrovsky had 37 saves and the NHL-leading Columbus Blue Jackets beat the Boston Bruins 4-3 on Tuesday night to extend their winning streak to 13 games. Scott Hartnell, Seth Jones and Matt Calvert scored to put the burgeoning Blue Jackets up 3-0 in the first period, but they were outplayed from there by the more aggressive Bruins. Columbus stayed in the game thanks to the latest stellar performance by Bobrovsky, who got his first career victory in eight games against Boston. David Backes, Austin Czarnik and David Krejci scored for the Bruins, and Tuukka Rask had 18 saves. Columbus hasn't lost since Nov. 26 on this franchise-best winning streak. It leads the brutal Metropolitan Division a season after finishing in last place. Foligno scored the winner with a wraparound goal 10:46 into the third period off a pass from Alexander Wennberg. The Blue Jackets then killed a power play with less than four minutes left and held off a rush by the Bruins after they pulled their goalie with about 1 1/2 minutes remaining.

PENGUINS 5, DEVILS 2

Sidney Crosby scored a goal for the fourth straight game and added two assists in leading Pittsburgh over New Jersey for its 10th win in December. Evgeni Malkin added a goal and an assist in becoming the fourth Penguin to collect 800 points, and defenseman Justin Schultz scored the go-ahead goal with 5.4 seconds left in the second period after being set by Pittsburgh's two star forwards. Marc-Andre Fleury had 21 saves as the Penguins beat the Devils for the second time in five nights, and the third time in three games this season. Carl Hagelin and Bryan Rust added insurance goals in the third period for Pittsburgh, which is 10-1-2 this month. PA Parenteau and Adam Henrique scored for the slumping Devils, who are 1-8-1 in their last 10. Cory Schneider had 22 saves.

SHARKS 3, DUCKS 2, OT

Brent Burns scored 3:46 into overtime, Martin Jones stopped 34 shots and San Jose beat Anaheim. Melker Karlsson and Paul Martin also

scored for the Sharks, who won their third straight game and sixth of their last seven to maintain their lead atop the Pacific Division. Burns took a pass from Joe Pavelski and made two quick fakes before beating John Gibson for the game-winner. Jakob Silfverberg of the Ducks redirected a shot by Ryan Kesler between Jones' legs to tie the game 2-2 with 6:25 remaining in regulation. The Sharks improved to 6-1 in overtime or shootouts this season. Ondrej Kase scored and Gibson stopped 22 shots for the Ducks, who have dropped three straight.

RANGERS 4, SENATORS 3

Defenseman Nick Holden scored the go-ahead goal less than seven minutes into the third period, lifting New York to a comeback victory over Ottawa. Holden's second goal of the game and sixth of the season came at 6:31 as he wedged the puck past Senators goaltender Mike Condon just 4 seconds after a Rangers' power play had expired. Derek Stepan had two goals and defenseman Ryan McDonagh had three assists as the Rangers overcame a 3-1 deficit and snapped a two-game losing streak. Antti Raanta, who allowed goals on the first two shots he faced from the Senators, recovered to make 33 saves for the win, improving to 9-4-0 this season. Raanta started in place of Henrik Lundqvist, who didn't dress because of the flu.

WILD 3, PREDATORS 2, OT

Jared Spurgeon scored the winner at 2:46 of overtime to give Minnesota a victory over Nashville. Jordan Schroeder carried the puck up on the right side and slid a cross-ice pass to Spurgeon, and he beat Nashville goaltender Pekka Rinne with a one-timer. Zach Parise and Chris Stewart also scored for Minnesota, which extended its franchise-best winning streak to 11 games. Filip Forsberg and Reid Boucher scored for Nashville, which has lost two straight.

JETS 3, BLACKHAWKS 1

Blake Wheeler, Mark Scheifele and Drew Stafford scored and Connor Hellebuyck made 34 saves to help Winnipeg beat Chicago. Jacob Trouba added two assists, and Winnipeg won its

second straight and fourth in five games. The Jets beat Central Division-leading Chicago for the third time in three tries this season, outscoring the Blackhawks 9-2 over those games. Artem Anisimov scored his 15th goal in his return from missing three games with an upper-body injury, but Chicago lost its third straight for the first time since last March. Chicago's Corey Crawford blocked 31 shots in his second start since returning from an appendectomy that cost him 10 games.

FLAMES 6, AVALANCHE 3

Mikael Backlund scored two of Calgary's four goals in the second period and also had an assist. Johnny Gaudreau also had two goals and an assist for the Flames. All of Calgary's second-period goals deflected off Colorado players. Brian Elliott had 25 saves for the Flames, who have won nine of 12. Gabriel Landeskog had two goals and Jarome Iginla scored for Colorado, which has now lost nine straight at home for the first time since moving to Denver. The Avalanche are 0-8-1 at Pepsi Center since beating the Los Angeles Kings 4-1 on Nov. 15.

ISLANDERS 4, CAPITALS 3

Andrew Ladd and Anders Lee scored 43 seconds apart early in the third period to lift New York over Washington. Ladd had two goals and Cal Clutterbuck added another for New York, which improved to 14-14-6 overall and 11-7-4 at home. Jaroslav Halak stopped 31 of 34 shots for the Islanders. Despite getting goals from Justin Williams, Alex Ovechkin and Andre Burakovsky, Washington fell to 20-9-4 with its third loss in four games. Braden Holtby stopped 27 shots. New York never trailed in the third meeting this month between the longtime rivals.

STARS 3, COYOTES 2

Jason Spezza had a goal and an assist, Kari Lehtonen made 35 saves and Dallas beat Arizona in a testy contest. A brawl in the second period resulted in four players serving at least four penalty minutes each. It started when Dallas' Radek Faska popped Coyotes goalie Mike Smith in the side with his stick after a shot. Smith retaliated, and players from both sides intervened. Arizona's Lawson Crouse and Dallas' Curtis McKenzie were given five minutes each for fighting. Jamie Benn also scored for Dallas, and John Klingberg's empty-net goal with 1:08 left made it 3-1, but the Coyotes were awarded a penalty shot with 6.6 seconds left that Radim Vrbata converted. Anthony Duclair also had a goal for Arizona.

SABRES 4, RED WINGS 3

Evander Kane scored his second goal of the game in the third period to lift Buffalo over Detroit and get coach Dan Bylsma his 300th NHL victory. Kane got his fifth goal in seven games 8:29 into the third by taking a cross-ice pass from Brian Gionta and beating goalie Petr Mrazek with a high wrist shot to the glove side. The Wings rallied from 2-0 and 3-1 deficits and thought they had tied it late when Frans Nielsen appeared the score, but the whistle had already been blown because goalie Robin Lehner was hurt after being struck in the throat by teammate Zach Bogosian's stick. Lehner was able to continue after being attended to by the Buffalo training staff. — AP

RUSSIA BLASTS NYT DOPING 'CONSPIRACY' REPORT

MOSCOW: Russia yesterday blasted a report in The New York Times that officials have acknowledged a massive sports doping conspiracy, reiterating claims there was no government involvement. The New York Times reported Tuesday that the acting director general of Russia's scandal-mired national anti-doping agency had "for the first time" conceded officials conducted the programme to cheat. "It was an institutional conspiracy," Anna Antseliovich, was reported as telling the US newspaper in an article datelined from Moscow. Antseliovich and others interviewed continued to reject the characterization of the doping scheme as "state-sponsored," telling the Times that top government officials were not involved. But Moscow later slammed the article, with anti-doping agency RUSADA insisting that Antseliovich's words were "distorted and taken out of context."

The New York Times reporter "took these words out of context, creating the impression that RUSADA's leadership had admitted to an institutional system of a doping cover-up in Russia," the agency said in a statement. "We want to underline that RUSADA does not and cannot have the authority to admit or deny such facts," it said.

Investigator Richard McLaren said in a new report for the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) this month that more than 1,000 Russian athletes in some 30 sports took part in a plan for Moscow sports ministry officials to use banned drugs at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, the 2012 London Summer Games and other global events. Russia has admitted that it had a problem with doping but insists that there is no proof there was a state-orchestrated programme to cheat, a dogged denial that critics say means Moscow will never tackle the issue. The Kremlin repeated earlier rejections of allegations of state involvement in doping, while also casting doubt on the latest report in The New York Times. "From the very beginning we have denied any involvement by the state or state institutions or services or agencies in the possible use of doping by

sportsmen," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists.

'SHOCKED BY REVELATIONS'

The accusations by McLaren in his last report were another body blow to Russian sport, which was still trying to shrug off the damage from his initial findings and the exclusion of its track and field athletes from international competition.

The affair reverberated through the 2016 Rio Olympics and has continued to be felt as winter sports events such as next year's bobsleigh and skeleton world championships and biathlon and speed skating World Cup stops have been withdrawn from the country.

McLaren, a Canadian lawyer, issued his first report in July, detailing an elaborate scheme to manipulate drug tests at the 2014 Sochi Games and saying it involved the Russian sports ministry and FSB security service. "Ms. Antseliovich, who has not been directly implicated in the investigations, said she was shocked by the revelations," the Times wrote. "She and others emphasized that the government's top officials were not involved."

And Vitaly Smirnov, the 81-year-old veteran sports official drafted this year by Russian president Vladimir Putin to oversee reforms, was less than conciliatory in his comments to the newspaper. "From my point of view, as a former minister of sport, president of Olympic committee - we made a lot of mistakes," the Times quoted Smirnov as saying.

But he also referred to the revelations of therapeutic use exemptions (TUE) that allowed some high profile Western athletes in an array of sports to use banned drugs-which came out via documents hacked by the "Fancy Bear" group.

Smirnov indicated he believed the documents showed Western competitors received favorable treatment from global anti-doping authorities. "Russia never had the opportunities that were given to other countries," he told the newspaper. "The general feeling in Russia is that we didn't have a chance." — AFP



NEW YORK: Nick Holden #22 and Kyle Turriss #7 of the Ottawa Senators converge in the crease at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday in New York City. The Rangers defeated the Senators 4-3. —AFP

FIFA TO PUT PRESSURE ON QATAR OVER HUMAN RIGHTS

DUBAI: FIFA will continue to "put pressure" on Qatar about the treatment of migrant labourers building World Cup stadiums in the Gulf Arab country for the 2022 tournament, its President said yesterday.

The world football governing body in the past admitted it was slow to act over concerns about the abuse of labourers in Qatar. It has since said human rights would be factored in to future World Cup host bids and on April 22 announced plans for a special group to monitor working conditions. Positive progress had been made "in terms of the treatment of workers" but more needed to be done, Gianni Infantino told reporters at a

sports conference. "We will put pressure, we will continue to do that." Qatar is spending billions of dollars on infrastructure related to hosting the World Cup in 2022 and has imported hundreds of thousands of construction workers from countries such as India, Nepal and Bangladesh for building projects.

Qatar has announced some changes including replacing its controversial "kafala" or sponsorship system that forces foreign workers to seek their employer's consent to change jobs or leave the country.

Infantino said the 2022 tournament was an opportunity to highlight issues that might have been ignored. — Reuters

AMERICAN VALUES GOVERNING PREMIER LEAGUE SACKINGS

LONDON: For the second time in a week, American owners of a Premier League club have acted swiftly to protect their investment by sacking a manager. While some observers questioned the strategy of firing Bob Bradley, whom the club had hired just 85 days earlier, co-owner Jason Levien got on with the brutal business of directing the search for the club's third manager of a troubled season. Wales boss Chris Coleman, former Manchester United winger Ryan Giggs and ex-Birmingham City manager Gary Rowett, himself surprisingly sacked by the club's Chinese owners this month, are among the favourites.

Managerial departures ahead of January's transfer window have become familiar. Crystal Palace sit just two places

above Swansea in the table and acted decisively last week to bring in Sam Allardyce as their new manager, after British media said Swansea expressed interest in hiring the former England boss who has become a specialist in extracting clubs from relegation trouble.

Palace also have American co-owners in Josh Harris and David Blitzler, who helped provide the finance for a £50 million (\$61 million) injection into the club last December, after being linked with another corporate raid to secure Aston Villa, who were then owned by yet another American, Randy Lerner.

Harris and Blitzler know Swansea's Levien well, having all been part of the same investment group, along with the actor Will Smith, that paid \$280 million

for the Philadelphia 76ers in 2011.

Levien subsequently sold his stake in the basketball team, moving more heavily into football as managing general partner of Major League Soccer team DC United before forming part of the consortium that paid £110 million with partner Steve Kaplan for a 68 percent controlling interest in Swansea City last July.

WORLD RICHEST LEAGUE

Investment from across the Atlantic has flowed steadily into British football of late with six of the Premier League's 20 clubs now listed as having at least one American owner, with Manchester United (the Glazer family), Liverpool (John Henry), Arsenal (Stan Kroenke) and Sunderland (Ellis Short) forming an

elite sub-group inside the world's richest league. They are all chasing the huge rewards available to winners, with accountancy firm Deloitte forecasting that last season's surprise champions Leicester City, owned by Thai businessman Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha, will enjoy revenues of at least £155m in the 2016-17 financial year, regardless of this season's performances.

With such sums on offer, it is no surprise that English football has become such a managerial killing field. Its latest casualty, Bradley, took to the airwaves on Wednesday to vent his frustration at being sacked after just 11 games in charge. "I thought discussions were going in the right direction. I think that Jason and Steve understand the team

needs to be improved and that will include spending money in January to make it happen," he told TalkSport.

Former Palace manager Pardew had also expressed his satisfaction with the result of a "productive meeting" with his former owners, Harris and Blitzler, in New York last month before his own sacking.

Those talks had been triggered by a 5-4 defeat at Swansea, which had granted Bradley temporary relief at Pardew's expense. But little more than a month later, both managers are gone. As they search for a new miracle worker, Swansea's owners know they cannot afford to make another wrong decision because English football is now governed by the bottom line. Millions of dollars are riding on it. — Reuters

KLOPP EYES 'SPECIAL' CITY CLASH AFTER LIVERPOOL SINK STOKE

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp is looking forward to pitting his wits against Pep Guardiola again after seeing the Reds fight back to beat Stoke City 4-1 in the Premier League yesterday. The Reds moved back above Manchester City into second place in the table, and to within six points of leaders Chelsea, after claiming their third consecutive win and maintaining their unbeaten record at Anfield this season. The win, secured thanks to goals by Adam Lallana, Roberto Firmino, Daniel Sturridge and a Giannelli Imbula own goal, set Liverpool up nicely for their New Year's Eve home clash with City, whose manager was in the Anfield crowd doing a spot of scouting. "I'm not sure whether he watched a lot of games in the last few weeks in other stadiums. That is the first sign it is a special game and we are already looking forward to it," Klopp said.

The German-a direct rival of Guardiola's when the pair were in charge of Borussia Dortmund and Bayern Munich respectively-admitted that it can be difficult to go to see opposition teams in action these days because the Premier League's superstar managers risk spending more time signing autographs than actually watching games.

"I respect them a lot also but I have not been at their stadium this season. Maybe he just wants to watch good football," he joked. "It's a difficult game for both teams but exciting and the best thing is it's at Anfield. They are an outstanding side and we are not too bad." Liverpool have won eight and drawn two of 10 games at Anfield this season and have not been beaten in front of their own fans in 23 games going back to January.

City can therefore expect to face a daunting task but Stoke-the last visiting team to win at Anfield-looked like they could spring a surprise after Jonathan Walters put them in front in the 12th

minute. Lallana equalised and Firmino's fine strike just before half-time made it 2-1 before Liverpool ran away with the game in the second period. The Brazilian's goal, his sixth of the season, came three days after he was arrested and charged for drink driving in the centre of Liverpool, and Klopp said there had been no prospect of the player being dropped. "No because he was the best man in training so there was no chance to leave him out. No chance. He was outstanding," he said.

'WE CAN DO BETTER'

There were important contributions from Sadio Mane, who forced Imbula into turning the ball into his own net, and Sturridge, who came off the bench and seconds later had his first goal of the season.

Captain Jordan Henderson was also excellent, but Klopp said it was "not the moment" to shower praise on individuals. "I don't think they need it. In this moment they are all happy about the team performance, the result, about the goals we scored," he said. "If we speak about one player we speak always about the past but I already think about the next game and hopefully we can do better." Stoke boss Mark Hughes has still never won at Anfield as a manager and he was left to rue defensive errors that contributed to his team's downfall. "We deservedly took the lead. The disappointment is that we allowed them back into the game just before half-time. We went in 2-1 down feeling a little bit hard done by," said Hughes.

"We made a couple of individual errors again for the next two goals and it was very difficult to come back from that. Because of individual and collective errors we have been beaten by four goals which is a little bit unfair on us," added Hughes, whose side are without a win in four and go to Chelsea next. — AFP

BRADLEY FAILS TO REVIVE SWANSEA, A TEAM AND CLUB IN TURMOIL

SWANSEA: It is easy to look back on Bob Bradley's 85 days as the first American coach in the English Premier League and say he got things badly wrong at Swansea. Taking over a relegation-threatened team with obvious defensive frailties, Bradley never made Swansea hard to beat despite being renowned as a coach who valued organization and a strong work ethic above all else. He regularly changed his lineups and formations, rarely going back-to-back games with the same central defense or striker. And there were some odd team selections, too, notably going with two strikers - Borja Baston and Fernando Llorente - up front against Manchester United despite both players being rarely used prior to that game.

The stats make dire reading for Bradley in his short time at Liberty Stadium: In his 11 games in charge, Swansea collected just eight points and conceded 29 goals, 19 in its last six games. The team dropped two places in his stewardship, into the relegation zone.

Newly hired managers often get an immediate upturn in results, even if only briefly, but there was no so-called "honeymoon period" with Bradley. On the face of it, Swansea was heading only in one direction under the American.

Yet, it could be argued that Bradley was facing an uphill task from the moment he took over. The seeds of turmoil had already been planted at a club that has lost much of the charm that made it a riveting top-flight success story in recent years, following its arrival in the Premier League in 2011.

To start with, Bradley's appointment wasn't universally accepted. The supporters' trust, which has representation on the board, wasn't consulted by the club's new American owners over the decision so Bradley took control amid an atmosphere of disharmony. Some supporters may have felt Bradley only got the job because he has the same nationality as his paymasters.

Then there was the squad Bradley inherited. Swansea's transfer dealings in the off-season have turned out to be inadequate, selling Ashley Williams and Andre Ayew - its stalwart captain and top scorer from last season, respectively - and not replacing them with the same quality or experience.

Williams, in particular, has been a huge loss, depriving Swansea of the glue that held the defense together. Swansea had four other center backs in Jordi Amat, Mike

van der Hoorn, Alfie Mawson and Federico Fernandez, who have all been in and out of the team.

Baston, who joined for a club-record fee of 15.5 million pounds (\$20 million) in the off-season, has been a flop so far - scoring just one league goal - while Llorente has only made an impact in recent games, mostly off the bench.

Bradley had only one real gem in his squad: Iceland midfielder Gylfi Sigurdsson. The third major issue Bradley faced was restoring some kind of identity to the team, which he failed to do. The hallmark of Swansea sides over the past decade has been its free-flowing, possession-based approach preached by managers like Roberto Martinez, Brendan Rodgers and Michael Laudrup.

Some even dubbed them "Swanselona" over the years, a reference to Swansea's passable imitation of Barcelona's preferred style. Yet, that style has noticeably disappeared over the past two years, because of both its poor choice of signings and the constant swapping of managers. It is hard to detect what Swansea's style is these days as the team seeks its fourth full-time manager in little over a year.

Add up all these factors and Bradley had an extremely hard job on his hands. When reports of dressing-room unrest began to surface after the 4-1 home loss to West Ham on Monday, it started to look ominous for Bradley. He was fired the following day.

Throughout his tenure at Swansea, Bradley faced some jibes - mostly from social media users and some British pundits - about his occasional use of American soccer terms, like "PK" (for penalty kick) and "road games" (for away games). Privately, that might have frustrated him while it might also have seeped into the consciousness of some Swansea fans, despite being a trivial matter.

Ultimately, though, it was a run of heavy losses, and the lack of progress shown by the team, that cost Bradley his job.

He just hopes his tough experience in the English Premier League doesn't damage the prospects of other Americans looking to manage there.

Speaking to Britain's Press Association Sport before his firing, Bradley said: "It's possible that will happen, and if that's the case that would be disappointing." "We (American managers) have to continue to show people that we are good." — AP



DUBAI: FIFA President, Gianni Infantino (L), talks with Victor Montagliani, CONCACAF President, during the Dubai international Sports conference at Madinat Jumeirah in Dubai on Tuesday. — AFP

INFANTINO: 'NECESSARY ACTIONS, SANCTIONS' ON RUSSIAN DOPING

DUBAI: Russia will face any "necessary actions and sanctions" after investigators alleged that soccer players had suspicious drug-test samples covered up as part of a wider doping scandal in the 2018 World Cup host nation, FIFA President Gianni Infantino said yesterday.

Five suspicious samples in the Russian men's under-17 and under-21 national teams in 2013 and 2014 were exposed in emails released earlier this month by the World Anti-Doping Agency, accompanying investigator Richard McLaren's report into Russian doping. Then-sports minister Vitaly Mutko, who is also in charge of Russia's World Cup preparations, has been accused of covering up a doping case in the Russian league. FIFA's ethics committee has said it will examine McLaren's report and the role of Mutko, who sits on FIFA's ruling council.

Asked whether he still trusts Mutko, Infantino said: "He is a council member and of course we are working together." "If anything has happened with regards to doping cases in football which were covered up and which now are unveiled, then both FIFA as well as UEFA, depending on what the competence is for these particular cases, will be dealing with them and we will take the necessary actions and sanctions," Infantino told a sports conference in Dubai.

"I don't think we should mix up a doping issue, even if it is a big doping issue, with the organization for the World Cup which is a completely different thing where it comes to anti-doping in the World Cup. This is a FIFA

matter. It will be dealt with by FIFA officials in world accredited laboratories ... very probably in Switzerland."

Russia was accused by McLaren of subverting doping procedures at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, with intelligence officers involved in tampering with samples of Russian medal winners.

"We will guarantee that the World Cup in Russia will be completely safe when it comes to anti-doping matters or when it comes to doping cases," Infantino said. Infantino said FIFA has "quite a few more sponsors who want to come on board" for the 2018 edition.

"We have to get more creative to find ways to accommodate everyone but I think this is also proof that the image of FIFA is changing," added Infantino, who replaced Sepp Blatter as head of world soccer's governing body in February following a sprawling scandal.

FIFA's attention will shift to the 2026 World Cup next month when Infantino's council is due to take a decision on whether to expand the World Cup from 32 teams. Infantino said he has "overwhelming" backing from federations for a 48-team World Cup, starting with 16 groups of three teams.

"Financially, the 48-team format is the most appealing or successful simply because the sporting element is prevailing and every match is important," Infantino said. "The decision should not be financially driven, neither in terms of revenue or costs ... but the driver should really be the development of football and boosting football all over the world."

North America is considered the most likely host of the 2026 World Cup, having not staged the showpiece since 1994 in the United States. CONCACAF President Victor Montagliani said a joint bid between his native Canada, the United States and Mexico remains a possible contender in the 2020 vote. Montagliani does not believe Donald Trump's comments during the divisive U.S. presidential campaign about Mexicans will have any impact on the ability of the U.S. to work with Mexico on a bid.

"I think it's pretty obvious the president-elect is a supporter of sports, a supporter of the Olympic movement, he builds golf courses," Montagliani said. "As it relates to sport, on face value I don't see it (Trump) being a challenge. I think any administration ... will be supporter of the World Cup." — AP



Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

ENGLISH LEAGUE DIV

Aston Villa v Leeds United	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
beIN SPORTS	
Rotherham United v Albion	22:45
beIN SPORTS	



DUBAI: Portuguese soccer head coach Fernando Santos, left, poses after he received the Best Coach of the Year trophy during the Dubai Football Gala & Globe Soccer Awards Ceremony in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Tuesday. — AP

RONALDO, SANTOS HONOURED AT GLOBE SOCCER AWARDS

DUBAI: Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo and Portugal's Euro 2016-winning coach Fernando Santos scooped the top prizes at the seventh edition of the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai on Tuesday.

Ronaldo claimed the best player award after helping his country land their first major title at this year's European Championship and firing Real to a record 11th European Cup triumph. "Probably (this) was my best year so far," Ronaldo, who earlier this month won the Ballon d'Or for the fourth time in his career, said in a short video message.

"The people still doubt about me, about Real Madrid, about national team, and you have the proof. We win everything, so amazing year, I'm so happy."

The 62-year-old Santos was named best manager after masterminding Portugal's success in France, while Champions League winners Real Madrid took home the prize for club of the year. Paris Saint-Germain coach Unai Emery, under pressure at the Parc des Princes following a mediocre first half of the season, also received an award having led Sevilla to a third straight Europa League crown before leaving for France. Former Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o was lauded for his career achievements. — AFP

Sports

Wake Forest
survives
Temple rally to
win Military Bowl



Warner leads
Australia
charge against
Pakistan



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INFANTINO: 'NECESSARY ACTIONS, SANCTIONS' ON RUSSIAN DOPING Page 19



BESANCON: File photo taken on July 09, 2012 shows Stage winner, Overall leader's yellow jersey, British Bradley Wiggins, competing at the beginning of the 41.5 km individual time-trial and ninth stage of the 2012 Tour de France cycling race starting in Arc-et-Senans and finishing in Besancon, eastern France, on July 9, 2012. (Inset) Wiggins kissing his gold medal during a press conference after winning the London 2012 Olympic Games men's individual time trial road cycling event in London. —AFP

BRITAIN'S GREATEST CYCLIST WIGGINS RETIRES

LONDON: Bradley Wiggins announced his retirement from professional cycling yesterday, bringing the curtain down on a career that saw him become one of Britain's greatest sportsmen. The 36-year-old became Britain's first Tour de France winner in 2012 and bows out with eight Olympic medals, including five golds, and seven world titles, across track and road cycling, to his name. "I have been lucky enough to live a dream and fulfil my childhood aspiration of making a living and a career out of the sport I fell in love with at the age of 12," Wiggins said in a statement on the Facebook page of his Wiggins team.

"I've met my idols and ridden with and alongside the best for 20 years. I have worked with the world's best coaches and managers, who I will always be grateful to for their support."

Wiggins, nicknamed 'Wiggo', is Britain's most decorated Olympian and the only cyclist to have won world and Olympic gold medals on both track and road.

His other achievements include the world track hour record, set in June 2015, and wearing the leader's jersey in each of the three Grand Tour. He also jointly holds the world record in the team pursuit.

His finest hour came in 2012, when he followed up Tour de France success by winning time-trial gold at the 2012 Olympics in his home city of London.

"What will stick with me forever is the support and love from the public though thick and thin, all as a result of riding a pushbike for a living," Wiggins added.

"2012 blew my mind and was a gas. Cycling has given me everything and I couldn't have done it without the

support of my wonderful wife Cath and our amazing kids. "2016 is the end of the road for this chapter, onwards and upwards, feet on the ground, head in the clouds' kids from Kilburn don't win Olympic Golds and Tour de Frances! They do now."

IRREVERENT

Wiggins's statement was accompanied by a photograph of his medals and former team jerseys.

Born in Ghent, Belgium to an Australian cyclist father, Gary, and a British mother, Linda, Wiggins was raised in Kilburn, northwest London and would become an icon of British sport.

His 'mod' sideburns and irreverent public pronouncements made him a beloved figure and he was knighted

by Queen Elizabeth II-making him Sir Bradley-in 2013.

He bowed out at the Six Day of Ghent, city of his birth, last month, having taken his tally of Olympic gold medals to five with victory in the team pursuit at the Rio de Janeiro Games. But the final months of his career have been overshadowed by whispers about shady practices during his time with Team Sky, which coincided with the most successful period of his career.

It was revealed in September that he obtained therapeutic use exemptions for the banned substance triamcinolone shortly before the 2011 and 2012 Tours de France and the 2013 Giro d'Italia.

He has denied wrongdoing and there is no suggestion he has broken any rules, but UK Anti-Doping is investigating. — AFP

SHIFFRIN TAKES SECOND WCUP GS WIN IN TWO DAYS

SEMMERING: After waiting 26 months for her second career World Cup giant slalom win, Mikaela Shiffrin needed just one more day to add the third.

Yesterday, the American earned her second GS win in two days. Her only previous victory in the discipline was in October 2014 - at the season-opening race in another Austrian resort, Soelden.

The victory raised her total of World Cup wins to 25, with 22 coming in her favorite slalom discipline. Among active skiers, only American teammate Lindsey Vonn, who is currently recovering from a broken arm, has won more races - 76.

In dense snowfall, Shiffrin built on a narrow first-run lead to beat 2013 world champion Tessa Worley of France by 0.15 seconds, while 2010 Olympic champion Viktoria Rebensburg of Germany was 0.18 back in third for her first podium finish of the season.

"It was a really big fight," Shiffrin said. "It was tough because you could feel your skis like stopping and going, stopping and going. And I thought, 'This is slow, it has to be.'"

Shiffrin and Worley also finished 1-2 in Tuesday's GS on the same course. Worley won the previous two GS races in Killington, Vermont, and Sestriere, Italy, and now leads Shiffrin by 35 points in the discipline standings.

Shiffrin extended her lead in the overall World Cup standings to 115 points over defending champion Lara Gut of Switzerland, who finished sixth in yesterday's race.

The three-day event in Austria ends with a floodlit slalom race on Thursday, giving Shiffrin an opportunity to further strengthen her lead. The Olympic champion has won all 11 slaloms she competed in since February

2015, while Gut usually sits out slaloms.

The opening run in the morning hours was hampered by strong winds and snowfall, but conditions even got worse in the afternoon.

"It was so tough. I didn't think I was going to see the green light at the end," said Worley, who briefly led the competition before Shiffrin had her final run. "It was so bumpy and you couldn't see anything."

Worley's French teammate Taina Barizot had a nasty crash and appeared to have hurt her left lower leg, but Shiffrin said conditions were still suitable for a GS race.

"Outside the track it might have been pretty dangerous because there is so much snow but in the track it is OK," Shiffrin said. Rebensburg, who injured her knee in the off-season, dropped from second after the first run to third but said she was still satisfied with getting her first top-three finish since winning the season-ending GS in St. Moritz, Switzerland, in March. "Basically I am very happy to be on the podium but I am also a bit angry with myself as I didn't ski the final part too well," the German said. "It was brutally difficult and I held back a bit."

Just like at the race the day before, Shiffrin took a slim lead in the opening run. "It was fun again," said Shiffrin, who wore bib No. 6 after Tuesday's win had earned her a place among the seven highest-ranked GS skiers, who get the favorable start numbers one to seven.

"It was a good day to get into the top seven. I had a nice track so it wasn't too bad. Actually they did a really good job cleaning up the track," said Shiffrin, referring to a legion of course workers who moved fresh snow off the race line in the hours before the start, and again before the final run — AP



SEMMERING: United States's Mikaela Shiffrin, center, winner of an alpine ski, women's World Cup Giant Slalom, celebrates on the podium with second-placed France's Tessa Worley, left, and third-placed Germany's Viktoria Rebensburg, in Semmering, Austria, yesterday. — AP

Kuwait Times **BUSINESS**

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Growing number of Americans retiring

2017 Investment Forecasts: Maybe good, no longer great

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Vietnam sees 6% growth, aided by building boom

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BEIJING: A construction worker walks past government propaganda billboards promoting the "China Dream" outside an old residential building in Beijing, Tuesday, Dec 13, 2016. The Asian Development Bank says it has trimmed its economic growth forecast this year for developing Asia to 5.6 percent, down from its previous projection of 5.7 percent, due to a slight slowdown in India. The report says regional giant China is on course to grow 6.6 percent this year and 6.4 percent in 2017. — AP

EGYPT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WILL IMPROVE: SISI

FOREIGN EXCHANGE SHORTAGE, RISE IN CUSTOMS DUTIES BITE HARD

CAIRO: President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi said yesterday that tough economic conditions in Egypt would improve in six months and called on businessmen and investors to help the government curb price increases. Speaking at the opening of a fish farm project in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia, Sisi praised Egyptians for the way they had dealt with harsh economic reforms. "The efforts to alleviate those effects are massive," he said.

Egypt took markets by surprise on Nov 3 when it abandoned its pound currency's peg to the dollar in a move aimed at attracting capital inflows and weakening a currency black market that had all-but displaced the banks. Hours later, the government hiked fuel prices. The flotation helped the cash-strapped government clinch a \$12 billion IMF loan program it hopes will revive growth hampered by political uncertainty since the 2011 uprising that ended Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule.

Sisi came to power promising economic reform and stability but problems have piled up. With a budget deficit of 12 percent and a looming funding gap, he was forced to undertake harsh economic measures. Egyptians, many of whom are forced to scrape by from

day to day, feel hard-hit by tax rises, soaring food price inflation, and cuts in state subsidies. Prices in the most populous Arab country are likely to keep rising next year, economists say, driven by the reforms.

The main measure of inflation is at eight-year highs above 19 percent, as a foreign exchange shortage and a rise in customs duties bite hard in a country that imports everything from sugar to luxury cars. Egypt raised electricity prices by 25 to 40 percent and introduced a 13 percent value-added tax in August. In his speeches, Sisi has sought to persuade Egyptians that collective sacrifice is necessary to save the country from financial ruin.

Yesterday's speech he ordered the government to make greater efforts to curb price increases and asked businesses and investors to play their part. "I am not just telling the government, I am also telling citizens, businessmen, and investors: please stand beside your country Egypt for just six months and you will find things much better than they are now."

New oil and gas deals

In other news, Egyptian Oil Minister Tarek El Molla has signed three offshore oil and gas



CAIRO: A traffic police officer stands in front of an advertisement on Christmas day. — AP

exploration and production deals worth a total of at least \$220 million with France's Total, Britain's BP, and Italian oil major ENI's Egyptian subsidiary IEOC, the ministry said yesterday. The deals include drilling for six

wells and a signing bonus of \$9 million, the ministry said in a statement, and are the result of a tender called by Egyptian state gas board EGAS. They are all in exploration blocks in the Egyptian Mediterranean Sea.

The first deal, with a consortium of BP and IEOC, is worth \$75 million for an exploration block in the North Ras El Esh block; the second, with a consortium of all three companies, is in the North El Hamad block and is worth \$80 million, and the third, with BP alone, is in the North Tabia block and worth \$65 million. Egypt has gone from exporting energy to being a net importer as domestic output has failed to keep pace with rising demand. Saudi Arabia informed Egypt last month that shipments of oil products expected under a \$23 billion aid deal had been halted indefinitely. The government is seeking ways to help the country cope and Molla said last week that Egypt wanted to import crude oil directly from Iraq and he hoped to finalize the deal by the first quarter of 2017. The oil sector in Egypt has signed 73 oil and gas exploration deals with international oil companies in the past three years worth at least \$15 billion so far, Molla said in yesterday's statement, and signing bonuses of over \$1 billion for the drilling of 306 wells. Earlier yesterday, an EGAS official told Reuters the board had determined Egypt needed around 100 shipments of liquefied natural gas worth \$2.2 billion in 2017 and had already secured 60 shipments. — Reuters

ASIA IMPORTS OF IRAN OIL MORE THAN DOUBLE

TOKYO: Imports of crude oil by Iran's four major buyers in Asia in November more than doubled for a second straight month from a year ago, with purchases by India and South Korea more than four times higher. Iran's top four Asian buyers - China, India, South Korea and Japan - imported 1.94 million barrels per day (bpd) last month, up 117 percent on a year earlier, government and ship-tracking data showed.

That was just short of the 2016 peak of 1.99 million bpd hit in the previous month, which was the highest since at least 2010, according to data by International Energy Agency. The volumes were in line with the OPEC member's crude oil and condensate export plans. Iran was exempted from last month's OPEC deal to reduce output by 1.2 million bpd starting Jan. 1, a victory for Tehran which has argued it needs to regain the market share it lost under Western sanctions targeting its nuclear program. Industry sources have said Iran has been offering discounts to buyers in return for increasing their purchases. Iran's crude oil imports cost Japan an average \$45.46 a barrel for November, which was the third cheapest after Mexico and Oman, customs-cleared trade data by Japan's Ministry of Finance showed on Tuesday. Japan's trade ministry on Wednesday released official data showing its imports jumped 41.2 percent from a year earlier to 237,653 bpd last month.

India's imports grew more than four-fold from a year earlier to 620,000 bpd, topping China's imports for a third straight month. South Korean imports were nearly five times higher at 472,067 bpd. Looking ahead, Iran's crude oil exports in December are set to fall 8 percent from November to a five-month low, a source with knowledge of its preliminary tanker schedule said in mid-December, as lower shipments to China and others in Asia offset bumper exports to Europe. — Reuters

DENTSU CHIEF TO RESIGN OVER EMPLOYEE OVERWORK SUICIDE

TOKYO: The president of top Japanese advertising company Dentsu Inc. said yesterday he will resign to take responsibility for the suicide of a worker who had clocked massive overtime in her first months on the job. President Tadashi Ishii said at a Tokyo news conference he will tender his resignation at a board meeting in January although he will stay through March as a courtesy to shareholders.

Earlier Wednesday, government authorities filed papers demanding prosecutorial charges against the unidentified Dentsu employee suspected of driving Matsuri Takahashi to suicide from overwork.

Japanese society values conformity and tends to revere workaholic lifestyles. Death linked to exhaustion is so common it's expressed as a special term, "karoshi," which includes suicides from overwork. About 2,000 people a year kill themselves due to work-related stress, the government says.

Takahashi, 24, had just started working at Dentsu in April 2015. Her workload surged in October and she often returned home at five in the morning after working all day and night. Takahashi was clocking 100 hours of overtime a month before she jumped from her company dorm balcony in December 2015.

'Why do things have to be so hard?'

She left a farewell email begging her mother to not blame herself. "You're the best mom in the world," Takahashi had written. "But why do things have to be so hard?" The government in September ruled that overwork caused her death. Tokyo-based Dentsu, which was raided last month by labor regulators, has repeatedly promised to curtail overtime, suspected of being widespread at the company. It started turning off headquarters lights at 10 p.m. so workers would go home.

But Ishii acknowledged the problem has not been fixed.



TOKYO: President of the top Japanese advertising company Dentsu Inc Tadashi Ishii, center, bows with other senior executives during a press conference at the company's headquarters. — AP

The company said Wednesday that more than 100 workers were still doing more than 80 hours of overtime a month. "This is something that should never have been allowed to happen," Ishii told reporters of Takahashi's suicide. The company acknowledged Takahashi's treatment was like harassment because her records showed monthly overtime within company regulations of 70 hours, with num-

bers like 69.9 hours, when she had actually been working far more hours. The first person to be officially ruled a suicide from overwork was also a Dentsu employee. Ichiro Oshima, 24, didn't get a single day off for 17 months and had averaged less than two hours of sleep a night. Still, Dentsu had argued in the 1997 court case that personal troubles were behind his 1991 suicide. — AP

CUBA SEES ECONOMY SHRINK DESPITE DETENTE WITH US

BLAMES SLUMP ON VENEZUELA'S TROUBLES

HAVANA: Cuba announced Tuesday that its economy shrank this year for the first time in nearly a quarter century as a plunge in aid from Venezuela overwhelmed a surge in tourism set off by detente with the United States. Economy Minister Ricardo Cabrisas and President Raul Castro told Parliament that the island's gross domestic product fell nearly 1 percent after seeing average annual growth rate of nearly 3 percent in 2011-2015. Cabrisas blamed the slump on Venezuela's troubles and a decrease in revenue from Cuba's few exports, which include sugar, refined gasoline and nickel, whose price has dropped in recent years.

"In spite of the drop in GDP, the free social services that our population enjoys have been preserved, defying predictions that the Cuban economy would collapse and upsetting black-outs would return," Castro said. The two men spoke to Cuba's rubber-stamp National Assembly, which also passed a law announced by Castro last month banning public memorials to his brother Fidel, the revolutionary leader who died on Nov. 25 at age 90.

The last time official figures showed a fall in Cuba's gross domestic product was in 1993 after the Soviet Union collapsed, abruptly stripping away much of the island's aid and trade. A global

drop in petroleum prices has slammed Venezuela's oil-dependent economy, forcing it to reduce shipments of heavily subsidized crude oil to Cuba, with exports dropping from 115,000 barrels daily in 2008 to 90,000 in recent years to 40,000 in the past few months.

Dwindling services

In addition, the number of contracts for Cuban professional services with Venezuela has dwindled and some payments have not been made, Cabrisas said. A large number of Cuban doctors have long traveled to Venezuela, with their salaries going directly to Cuba's government. "This confirms what we had said about Venezuela's situation leading to a recession," Cuban economist Pavel Vidal, a professor at a university in Colombia, told The Associated Press.

Cabrisas, whose speech was partially transmitted on public TV, also blamed the economic slump on US sanctions on Cuba, with officials previously saying that the 55-year-old embargo has cost the island \$125.9 billion, including \$4.6 billion last year. Tourism, however, has been thriving since U.S. President Barack Obama ordered the restoration of diplomatic relations between Washington and Havana two years ago. Overall visitor numbers rose more than 15 percent in 2015 and again this year.

Cabrisas said he expects the island's gross domestic product to grow 2 percent next year if the government cuts costs, increases exports and finds alternatives for certain imports. Vidal said he was surprised by the prediction. "They're thinking things are going to improve in Venezuela," he said. "And they're relying on fiscal spending without backing from revenue."

Other economic experts told The Associated Press that possible solutions could include boosting the private sector and deregulating portions of the public sector, excluding areas such as health or education. — AP



HAVANA: Cuba's President Raul Castro addresses the National Assembly. — AP



MASDAR: SAUDI YOUTH SUPPORT MAJOR INVESTMENT IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

ABU DHABI: Ambitious plans set out by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the deployment of renewable energy are strongly aligned with the hopes and ambitions of the country's young people, according to global research commissioned by Masdar, Abu Dhabi's renewable energy company.

The Masdar Gen Z Global Sustainability Survey*, which spoke to around 5,000 young aged 18-25 in 20 countries, found that 70 per cent of young Saudi men and women want to see government spending on renewable energy increase to make it more widely available and effective. An additional 71 per cent of those questioned believe that the public and private sectors share equal responsibility for accelerating the adoption of clean technologies. Fittingly, Masdar's survey correlates with the announcement in 2016 of plans by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for an initial instalment of 9.5 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy under its Vision 2030 roadmap, and a near-term goal of 3.45GW outlined in the National Transformation Program 2020 (NTP).

The NTP also set out steps to encourage close collaboration between the public and private sectors in order to enable renewable energy to actively contribute to the national energy mix. Saudi Arabia is sending a major delegation to the World Future Energy Summit, the anchor event of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2017, providing an opportunity for widespread industry engagement about its plans. On January 17, an afternoon conference session at the event is devoted to the issues, challenges and opportunities surrounding Saudi Arabia's transition to adopt more clean energy.

Clean energy ambitions

In focus will be Saudi Arabia's specific

policy and planning priorities for renewable energy articulated in the NTP, as well as the financing strategies and technologies needed to fulfill Saudi Arabia's clean energy ambitions. Saudi Arabia is expected to tender around 100 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy projects in the first quarter of 2017 alone, building on the Kingdom's existing installed capacity of around 25MW.

Besides utility-scale solar power projects, off-grid installations in the industrial and commercial sectors are expected to unlock substantial amounts of renewable energy. "Saudi Arabia is a very attractive market for renewable energy developers and the wider supply chain, so there will be strong interest in their activities at ADSW," said Bader Al Lamki, Executive Director for Clean Energy at Masdar. "The fact that young people in Saudi Arabia are aligned with the Kingdom's plans is significant because they represent Saudi Arabia's future leaders, technical experts and consumers, so they need to be engaged in delivering a sustainable future."

According to the Masdar Gen Z Global Sustainability Survey, young Saudis outperform their global peers in how they rate their own "green behaviours"; 55 per cent describe themselves as environmentally active or very active. Sustainability issues also influence the spending habits of young Saudis. Over one-third of respondents said they had avoided companies that do not act sustainably in their view.

The survey found that 41 per cent of Saudi youth identify solar power as the most important future energy source for their country, higher than any other energy source. The findings of the Masdar Gen Z Survey will be presented at The Student Exclusive forum, also taking place on January 17 during ADSW.

US HOME PRICES RISE IN OCTOBER

WASHINGTON: US home prices rose again in October as buyers bidding for scarce properties drove prices higher. The Standard & Poor's CoreLogic Case-Shiller 20-city home price index, released Tuesday, rose 5.1 percent in October from a year earlier after climbing 5 percent in September. Prices for the 20 cities are still 7.1 percent below their July 2006 peak.

The broader Case-Shiller national home price index was up 5.6 percent in October and has fully recovered from the financial crisis. Prices rose 10.7 percent annually in Seattle, 10.3 percent in

Portland and 8.3 percent in Denver. New York registered the smallest year-over-year gain: 1.7 percent. Home sales and prices have been helped by healthy demand, tight supplies and low mortgage rates.

The National Association of Realtors said last week that fewer than 1.9 million homes were on the market in November, down 9 percent from a year earlier. The tight supply pushed the median price of existing homes to \$234,900 last month, up 6.8 percent from a year ago. But the cheap loans may be vanishing. The rate on the

benchmark 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage last week reached 4.30 percent, the highest since April 2014.

Rates have surged since the Nov 8 election of Donald Trump. Investors have bid rates higher because they believe the president-elect's plans for tax cuts and higher infrastructure spending will drive up economic growth and inflation. And the Federal Reserve, citing improvement in the US economy, this month raised short-term US interest rates for only the second time in a decade. — AP



MIAMI: This Wednesday, Dec 7, 2016, photo, shows a house for sale. — AP

4 SENIOR STAFF DEPART NBAD

DUBAI: Four top managers at National Bank of Abu Dhabi (NBAD) are leaving the bank ahead of a merger with First Gulf Bank (FGB) to create one of the Middle East and Africa's biggest banks, according to sources. Abdulla Mohammed Saleh Abdul Raheem, deputy group chief executive and Qamher Al-Mulla, senior managing director and chief executive of Gulf and international, are both departing, the sources said.

Also leaving are Saif Al-Shehhi, senior managing director UAE government group and VVIP clients, and Abdulla Bin Khalaf Al-Otaiba, senior managing director and group head of global retail & commercial. NBAD was not immediately available to comment. NBAD and FGB won shareholder approval earlier this month for a merger to create a banking heavyweight with \$175 billion in assets.

The tie-up, expected to be completed during the first quarter, is part of a move

by Abu Dhabi to revamp its economy after more than two years of lower oil prices weighing on state revenues. The merger is expected to lead to some reduction in staffing across the two banks, but it was unclear whether the departure of the four senior management was linked to any redundancies.

The two banks said in October that they had finished picking the senior management team to run the combined bank. FGB board member and managing director Abdulhamid M Saeed had already been tapped to lead the new bank, with NBAD chief financial officer James Burdett assuming the same role at the merged entity. The remaining appointments will be announced ahead of the completion of the merger, a statement from FGB at the time said. NBAD's chief executive at the time of the merger deal, Alex Thurstby, left his role in August, with Abhijit Choudhury becoming acting chief executive. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.621
Indian Rupees	4.534
Pakistani Rupees	2.929
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.050
Nepali Rupees	2.836
Singapore Dollar	219.800
Hongkong Dollar	39.554
Bangladesh Taka	3.879
Philippine Peso	6.168
Thai Baht	8.555

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.895
Qatari Riyal	84.348
ani Riyal	797.557
Bahraini Dinar	815.460
UAE Dirham	83.601

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.650
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.125
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.235
Tunisian Dinar	133.030
Jordanian Dinar	432.470
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.046
Syrian Lira	2.188
Morocco Dirham	305.370

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	306.900
Euro	322.710
Sterling Pound	378.710
Canadian dollar	227.840
Turkish lira	88.060

Swiss Franc	300.730
Australian Dollar	222.200
US Dollar Buying	305.700

GOLD

20 Gram	233.55
10 Gram	119.70
5 Gram	60.69

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	306.550
Canadian Dolla	230.500
Sterling Pound	384.385
Euro	322.080
Swiss Franc	300.105
Bahrain Dinar	812.640
UAE Dirhams	83.855
Qatari Riyals	85.080
Saudi Riyals	82.675
Jordanian Dinar	433.540
Egyptian Pound	16.830
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.060
Indian Rupees	4.530
Pakistani Rupees	2.924
Bangladesh Taka	3.887
Philippines Peso	6.143
Cyprus pound	168.345
Japanese Yen	3.600
Syrian Pound	2.435
Nepalese Rupees	3.825
Malaysian Ringgit	69.340
Chinese Yuan	31.240
Thai Bhat	9.535
Turkish Lira	87.725

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.370351	0.380351
Czech Korune	0.003885	0.015885
Danish Krone	0.039159	0.044159
Euro	0.315696	0.324696
Norwegian Krone	0.031253	0.036453
Romanian Leu	0.085083	0.085083
Slovakia	0.009220	0.019220
Swedish Krona	0.029263	0.034263
Swiss Franc	0.292073	0.303073
Turkish Lira	0.083761	0.094061
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.212659	0.224659
New Zealand Dollar	0.205990	0.215490
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.220552	0.229652
Georgina Lari	0.138660	0.138660
US Dollars	0.302900	0.307300
US Dollars Mint	0.303400	0.307300
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003528	0.004112
Chinese Yuan	0.042699	0.046199
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037497	0.040247
Indian Rupee	0.002786	0.005520
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024

Japanese Yen	0.002530	0.002710
Kenyan Shilling	0.003158	0.003158
Korean Won	0.000244	0.000259
Malaysian Ringgit	0.064677	0.070677
Nepalese Rupee	0.002942	0.003112
Pakistan Rupee	0.002619	0.002909
Philippine Peso	0.006071	0.006371
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.206635	0.216635
South African Rand	0.016362	0.024862
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001649	0.002229
Taiwan	0.009517	0.009697
Thai Baht	0.008207	0.008757
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.807751	0.816251
Egyptian Pound	0.013265	0.022518
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000181	0.000241
Jordanian Dinar	0.427955	0.436955
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000149	0.000249
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020242	0.044242
Nigerian Naira	0.001275	0.001910
Omani Riyal	0.790981	0.796661
Qatar Riyal	0.083514	0.084964
Saudi Riyal	0.080780	0.082080
Syrian Pound	0.001302	0.001522
Tunisian Dinar	0.128755	0.136755
Turkish Lira	0.083761	0.094061
UAE Dirhams	0.082160	0.083860
Yemeni Riyal	0.000998	0.001078

BEIJING PREPARES TO DISSOLVE ANCIENT GRIP ON SALT MARKET

BEIJING: From Sunday, China's long campaign to make sprawling state-owned industries more efficient will stretch beyond commodities like coal and steel into one of the most ancient markets of all - the salt trade. As of Jan 1, almost 80 salt producers and traders from across China will be able to sell their wares in Beijing for the first time ever. The capital is implementing plans drawn up earlier this year by central government to dissolve a monopoly that goes back centuries.

As part of its liberalization commit-

ment, the government has said it will encourage consolidation among sales wholesalers and producers - there are more than 2,000 salt makers in China, according to the China Salt Association - as well as the injection of private cash into state-controlled firms. "The salt industry will be consolidated in the coming years," an industry regulator told Reuters, requesting anonymity. The regulator declined to say how many salt makers might be merged or shut down.

Under new rules published by Beijing's

Municipal Commission of Commerce this week, some 79 registered traders from other provinces who will be allowed to enter the city's market alongside 16 Beijing-based wholesalers.

The capital is one of 13 cities and provinces stretching from Tianjin to Inner Mongolia that have received approval from central government to open up their edible salt markets to other regional producers and wholesalers who were previously restricted to operating in their local areas. Other regions of China are awaiting

the green light to do the same. The changes are designed to dismantle price controls and distribution channels in a business dominated by the state-owned China National Salt Industry Corp, which had revenue of 21.25 billion yuan (\$3.1 billion) in 2015, down from 32.43 billion yuan a year earlier, according to an online company statement. One of its subsidiaries - Beijing Salt Industry Corp - currently controls the capital's salt market.

Until now, salt producers have sold their wares to state-owned distribution

companies. China produced 88 million tons of salt last year, 10 percent of which was edible salt, according to the China Salt Association, the rest being snow-melting industrial salt. The government has said it will monitor the market and intervene to stabilize prices if anomalies occur. The authorities will also ensure stocks are available to support demand for at least one month. No new licenses for producers or wholesalers will be granted to edible salt market until the end of 2018, the central government has said. — Reuters

GROWING NUMBER OF AMERICANS RETIRING OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY

THE COST OF LIVING ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS

WASHINGTON: Newly widowed, Kay McCowen quit her job, sold her house, applied for Social Security and retired to Mexico. It was a move she and her husband, Mel, had discussed before he passed away in 2012. "I wanted to find a place where I could afford to live off my Social Security," she said. "The weather here is so perfect, and it's a beautiful place."

She is among a growing number of Americans who are retiring outside the United States. The number grew 17 percent between 2010 and 2015 and is expected to increase over the next 10 years as more baby boomers retire. Just under 400,000 American retirees are now living abroad, according to the Social Security Administration. The countries they have chosen most often: Canada, Japan, Mexico, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Stretching their dollars

Retirees most often cite the cost of living as the reason for moving elsewhere, said Olivia S Mitchell, director of the Pension Research Council at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. "I think that many people retire when they are in good health and they are interested in stretching their dollars and seeing the world," Mitchell said.

McCowen's rent in Ajijic, a community outside Guadalajara near Mexico's Lake Chapala, is half of what she was paying in Texas. And since the weather is moderate, utility bills are inexpensive. In some countries, Mitchell said, retirees also may find it less expensive to hire someone to do their laundry, clean, cook and even provide long-term care than in the United States.

McCowen has a community of other American retirees nearby and has adjusted well. But for others there are hurdles to overcome to adjust to life in a different country. Viviana Rojas, an associate professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio, says the biggest obstacle is not speaking the language or knowing the culture.

"Many of the people we interviewed said they spoke Spanish, but they actually spoke very little Spanish," said Rojas, who is writing a book about retirees in Mexico. "They didn't have the capacity of speaking enough Spanish to meet their basic needs like going to the doctor or to the store." Access to health care also can be a challenge. While retirees still can receive Social Security benefits, Medicare is not available to those living abroad, Mitchell said.

Joseph Roginski, 71, says that while the cost of living is higher in Japan, access to health care is not. "Things are very expensive here. It is impossible to live off Social Security alone," said



MISAWA: In this photo provided by Joseph Roginski, taken May 13, 2011, Joseph Roginski, right, holds a package in a storeroom of the Misawa City Hall in Japan, where donations of clothing and supplies were being kept for earthquake relief efforts. He says that while the cost of living is higher in Japan, access to health care is not. "Things are very expensive here. It is impossible to live off Social Security alone," said Roginski, who was stationed in Japan in 1968. — AP

Roginski, who was stationed in Japan in 1968. "But health insurance is a major factor in staying here." The former military language and intelligence specialist said he pays \$350 annually to be part of Japan's national health insurance. His policy covers 70 percent of his costs. The rest is covered by a secondary insurance program for retired military personnel. Japan experienced the biggest growth of American retirees - at 42 percent - and more than any other country between 2010 and 2014, according to data from the Social Security Administration. The large US military presence in the country may be a factor.

'Strong sense of security'

There are more than 50,000 US military servicemen and -women stationed in Japan. The presence is so large that in the island of Okinawa, the US military occupies about 19 percent of the area, according to Ellis S Krauss, professor emeritus of Japanese politics and policymaking at the University of California, San Diego.

Roginski, who volunteers for the Misawa Air Base Retiree Activities Office, said he helps connect more than 450 retirees and their families living in Northern Japan with resources. He said

he would never move back to the United States. "We have a real strong sense of security here," he said. "I can leave my door unlocked and no one will take anything. When I go to another country I feel nervous, but when I come back I feel like I'm home."

Mexico has become home for retired firefighter, Dan Williams, 72, and his wife, Donna, 68. The couple has been living near the same retirement community in Lake Chapala for 14 years. "The climate and the medical services are very good," Williams said. Williams teaches painting to adults and children and puts together a monthly magazine for the local American Legion. He is also a member of the Lake Chapala Society, which offers daily activities for American retirees.

It was those same services that attracted McCowen to the region. "Before moving, I found out how many widowed and divorced women lived here," she said. "There is comfort in numbers." She says she loves being in a lively community. "I see older people walking year round. I see them all over the place, even in their wheelchairs. If they were in the US, they would probably be in a nursing home," she said. "I don't think I could move back." — AP



KASSEL: Picture taken on June 15, 1998 in Kassel, western Germany, shows then president of the German central bank Bundesbank Hans Tietmeyer next to a giant poster of the Deutsche Mark currency. — AFP

EURO FOREFATHER TIETMEYER DIES

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Former Bundesbank president Hans Tietmeyer, a key architect of the euro who oversaw its introduction in Germany, has died at the age of 85, the central bank announced yesterday. Tietmeyer ran the mighty Bundesbank from 1993 to 1999, a period that straddled the aftermath of German reunification as well as the launch of the single European currency and the creation of the European Central Bank. "Hans Tietmeyer was an outstanding president, who always acted with the goal of monetary stability in mind," current Bundesbank chief Jens Weidmann said in a statement. "Our thoughts and sympathies go out to his family." Tietmeyer died on Tuesday, the statement added, without giving further details.

A fierce defender of the independence of central banks, Tietmeyer was credited with ensuring that the same principle was enshrined in the statutes of the ECB, which was modeled in large part on the Bundesbank and is likewise based in

Frankfurt. Before joining the Bundesbank, Tietmeyer was a junior finance minister and served as an advisor to former chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Seen as one of the architects of the European monetary union, the influential Tietmeyer was known for speaking his mind and cautioned early on of the pitfalls of the single currency. He notably warned that some member states had to show greater budgetary discipline if trouble was to be avoided down the road - comments that would prove prescient during the eurozone debt crisis. But Tietmeyer later also credited the euro with shielding member states from foreign exchange turmoil at the height of the global financial crisis. "We would probably have had a series of currency crises" that could have hammered some countries had they kept their national monies, Tietmeyer told AFP in late 2008. "As a result, the single currency has without doubt benefited the people and the economy of Europe," he said. — AFP

PANAMA BARS ODEBRECHT AFTER BRIBE ALLEGATIONS

PANAMA CITY: Panama's government on Tuesday said it was barring the Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht from future public tenders after the US Justice Department accused the company of bribes to secure business in Latin America. In a statement read by the minister of the presidency, Alvaro Aleman, the government said it has decided to "take the steps necessary to prohibit the Odebrecht Group being awarded... any future contract from public bidding processes." The contract ban will last until Odebrecht demonstrates full cooperation with an investigation by prosecutors, and pays Panama for damages, he added.

Aleman also warned that Panama will take measures to ensure Odebrecht leaves bidding processes for which it had already been cleared. They include a new line of the Panama City metro and a fourth bridge over the Panama Canal. Panama also will scrap "at no cost to the state" a hydroelectric dam project that would have had the company and government work together, he added.

The announcement came the same day Panamanian prosecutors flew to the United States seeking information about alleged Odebrecht bribes to officials of the Central American country. The US Justice Department recently reported that Odebrecht had paid bribes worth

hundreds of millions of dollars to obtain contracts in nine Latin American countries. It said the construction company paid more than \$59 million in bribes to Panama between 2010 and 2014 to obtain contracts valued at \$175 million.

Panama's auditing office said it is investigating Carlos Ho Gonzalez, a former public works official. And people still on the job who have seen potentially suspicious income surges may also be investigated, according to the government. Two sons of former president Ricardo Martinelli have denied Brazilian newspaper reports that they had received \$6 million intended as a bribe from Odebrecht for their father.

Martinelli lives in voluntary exile in Miami. The Panamanian government has requested his extradition on allegations of espionage and corruption. In Brazil, Odebrecht - a home-grown giant turned massive multinational - has figured prominently in the graft allegations and investigations that helped bring down the last president, Dilma Rousseff, and plague the current government. Dozens of Brazilian politicians have been accused of taking bribes from Odebrecht and other construction companies to line their own pockets and boost party campaign funds in exchange for facilitating inflated contracts for the companies with Petrobras. — AFP

ARREST IN US INSIDER TRADING CASE FROM LAW FIRM HACKS

NEW YORK: US prosecutors announced criminal charges Tuesday against three hackers who allegedly made \$4 million in illicit profits from insider trading of information pilfered from law firms advising on corporate mergers.

The three defendants, two from Macau and one from China, successfully breached the computer networks of international law firms with New York offices by unlawfully obtaining a firm employee's credentials and installing malware on his company's server, the US Attorney's office in New York said.

The malware permitted the hackers to monitor law firm communications about more than a dozen transactions in 2014 and 2015 that were discussed or contemplated, including some deals that were never consummated. The hackers then

bought shares of companies that would later be acquired, winning big profits. The hackers allegedly made \$380,000 on trades of Intermune, a drug maker bought by Germany's Roche in 2014; \$1.4 million in trades on Altera, bought by Intel in 2015; and \$841,000 on Borderfree, acquired by Pitney Bowes in 2015.

"This case of cyber-meets-securities fraud should serve as a wake-up call for law firms around the world: you are and will be targets of cyber hacking because you have information valuable to would-be criminals," US Attorney Preet Bharara said. The authorities arrested Lat Hong of Macau in Hong Kong, who is now pending extradition proceedings. The other two defendants, Chin Hung of Macau and Bo Zheng of China, are at large, a spokesman for the US Attorney's office said. — AFP

SMALL BUSINESSES ARE POSITIVE ABOUT 2017

NEW YORK: Donald Trump's election as president has made many small business owners more upbeat about 2017. Dean Bingham says he's cautiously optimistic because business picked up at his auto repair shop after the election - people who had put off fixing their cars have decided it's time to get them serviced.

"Over the last month, customers have been coming in with optimism that they didn't have the last few years," says Bingham, owner of a Mr Transmission/Millex franchise in Greenville, South Carolina. The shop has been so busy Bingham's looking to hire a seventh employee to help out in the front while he works on cars.

While many business owners are more confident because their revenue looks to increase in 2017 due to the overall improving economy, they're also optimistic because they expect Trump to deliver on promises to lower taxes and roll back regulations including parts of the health care law. But owners may not be expecting overnight relief - many recognize it will take time to see what the administration's plans are, and what it will accomplish.

Encouraging consumers

Business owners were considerably more optimistic about 2017 in a survey taken shortly after the election. Forty-six percent of the 600 questioned in the Wells Fargo survey said the operating environment for their companies would improve next year; that compares to 30 percent two years ago, after the last congressional elections. Just over half the owners said actions that Trump and Congress will take next year will make their companies better off. Twenty-six percent said the government's actions would have no effect, and 17 percent said their businesses would be worse off.

Nick Braun expects his pet insurance business to benefit because he thinks consumers will feel more comfortable about buying nonessentials like health coverage for their pets. "I truly believe that 2017 will not only be a great year for our business, but the US economy in general," says Braun, whose company, PetInsuranceQuotes.com, is based in Columbus, Ohio.

Braun thinks promised changes to the health care law will be one factor encouraging consumers to spend on things that aren't their top priorities. He's also hoping that changes to the law will make it easier for him to buy insurance for his six staffers, which



BEDMINSTER: In this Nov 19, 2016 file photo, President-elect Donald Trump walks with Bedminster Restaurants CEO Andy Puzder from Trump National Golf Club Bedminster clubhouse. Trump has tapped Puzder as his pick to head the Labor Department. Trump's election as president has made many small business owners more upbeat about 2017. — AP

he provides even though the law doesn't require him to. He says he's had to change carriers several times because many insurance companies haven't wanted to write policies for small businesses.

Some companies that cater to other small businesses see the hopefulness in their customers, and it's infectious. "The election does give me more optimism than I would have had otherwise," says Kurt Steckel, CEO of Bison Analytics, which does software consulting. Bison's inquiries from prospective clients, small companies that are looking to expand, have nearly doubled since the election.

Steckel is also upbeat about an overhaul of the health care law. He says the cost of his small group insurance rose sharply when the law went into effect, and he had to stop offering coverage to his 10 staffers. He says if insurance were to become more affordable, he'd restore coverage.

Opposing regulations

Among the other laws and regulations that small business advocacy groups want to see eliminated or changed are the Department of Labor's overtime rules that were scheduled to go into effect Dec 1, but were put on hold by a federal court in Texas. Trump's nominee for labor secretary, fast-food company CEO Andy Puzder, opposes the regulations. "The decision to appoint Puzder as labor secretary is a big indication that there's going to be a significant rollback of Obama administration initiatives," says James Hammerschmidt, a labor and business lawyer with the firm Paley Rothman in Bethesda, Maryland. Federal laws and regulations are only part of the requirements that small businesses must comply with - state and local governments in some parts of the country have more stringent laws and rules. — AP

DOLLAR STIRS AS YIELD GAP YAWNS

LONDON: The dollar, oil and world stocks all rose yesterday following upbeat US data that saw the gap between Treasuries and other benchmark global government bonds hit new highs. Europe's main stock market, London's FTSE, reopened with a gain of 0.25 percent as it played catch-up after similar run-ups in Germany and France the previous day and by Wall Street and Asia overnight.

The dollar also edged higher after US consumer confidence shot to its highest in more than 15 years in December on hopes that

President-elect Donald Trump will nurture further improvements in the world's biggest economy. Having already jumped 16 percent against the Japanese currency since the US election, the greenback gained a further 0.15 percent to 117.61 yen. It was up a similar amount against the euro and sterling too at \$1.04 per euro and at \$1.2235 to the pound.

Year-end caution

"Everything is broadly dollar supportive," said Societe Generale's head of currency strategy Kit Jukes. "We have come back

from Christmas with some good US data, (US) bond yields are at the top end of their recent range, oil is edging higher and the Dow is flirting with 20,000 points." Euro zone bond yields fell across the board as concerns about the strength of a rescue plan for Italian banks and normal year-end caution pushed investors to the safety of government debt.

Germany's 10-year yields hit their lowest in seven weeks at 0.18 percent. That in turn widened the yield gap to US Treasuries, which act as the world's benchmark borrowing rate, to a record high of 237 basis points.

Oil prices - the other major market driver in recent weeks - climbed back towards a 1-1/2 year high as promised output cuts loomed.

It has surged over 50 percent this year despite plunging to a 12-year low in January. Brent was at \$56.50 a barrel and US crude at \$54.25 after an overnight surge of 1.7 percent. In a sign that the world's oil major producers may abide by their output agreement, OPEC member Venezuela said it will cut 95,000 bpd of oil production in the New Year. Gazprom Neft said it planned to boost oil output by less than it had intended before Russia, one of the non-OPEC member countries, joined the deal to cut supply.

With the dollar and bond yields on the rise again and China's yuan on the slide, investors though are wondering whether the rally could falter. Data from Morgan Stanley showed EM equity funds suffered weekly outflows of \$3.35 billion, the second largest of the year, while EM bond funds saw outflows of \$800 million which made it seven straight weeks of outflows running.

It said the cumulative drop over the last eight weeks totaled \$11.1 billion. Firmer oil prices and the upbeat US data continued to support the wider commodity market. Copper on the London Metal Exchange was up 1 percent at \$5,513 per ton as trading resumed after the Christmas holidays.

Iron ore on the Dalian Commodity Exchange extended gains after breaking a nine-day slump the previous day. It was up 3.5 percent at 569.0 yuan (\$81.82) per ton and has now risen about 170 percent this year, boosted by expectations of Chinese stimulus and hopes that the incoming Trump Administration will increase US infrastructure spending. "There is strong positive sentiment on the outlook for these industrial metals going into 2017," said a Perth-based commodities trader. "Let's see if this carries in to the main LME session later on."

Emerging jitters

Helped by the broadly robust tone to stock and commodity markets, the Australian and New Zealand dollars both firmed. Australian stocks rode the rise to gain 1 percent. Indonesian shares added 1.9 percent, while Japan's Nikkei rose 0.1 percent. Shanghai dipped 0.3 percent to continue a dire 2016. It has slumped the best part of 18 percent this year having been a star performer in 2015, dampening an otherwise strong rebound in emerging markets after three years of straight losses.

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report						
Wednesday 28 December 2016						
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low	
Price Index	▲ 8.32	5,753.36	5,745.04	5,774.97	5,744.23	
Weighted Index	▼ -1.43	379.33	380.76	382.91	379.22	
KSX 15	▼ -7.34	886.27	893.61	899.25	886.27	

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	63	—	0.0
IKARUS	40.0	39.5	151,400	5,980	6	39.5	▲ 0.5
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	— 0.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	820	— 0.0
ENERGYH	44.5	41.0	14,400	602	9	41.5	▼ -2.0
GPI	44.5	42.0	27,758,327	1,219,961	359	43.5	▲ 1.5
ABAR	99	99	20,000	1,980	1	99	▼ -3.0
Oil & Gas			27,944,127	1,228,523	375	779.02	▲ 0.98
KFOUC	182	182	5,000	910	1	182	— 0.0
BPCC	520	500	445,108	224,196	19	500	— 0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	660	— 0.0
ALQURAIN	232	230	84,117	19,348	15	230	▼ -2.0
Basic Materials			534,225	244,454	35	1007.20	▼ -2.1
KCEM	395	395	22,833	9,019	3	395	— 0.0
REFRI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	315	— 0.0
CABLE	380	380	242,800	92,264	14	380	— 0.0
SHIP	172	170	292,800	49,782	8	170	▼ -2.0
PCEM	900	900	81,966	73,769	7	900	▼ -10.0
PAPER	295	270	35,000	9,950	3	295	▲ 20.0
MRC	65	65	5,000	325	1	65	— 0.0
ACICO	275	270	19,000	5,205	4	275	▲ 5.0
GMCM	300	300	401,750	120,525	1	300	▼ -5.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	118	— 0.0
KBMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190	— 0.0
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	— 0.0
EQUIPMENT	58	55	4,109,205	232,165	141	55	▼ -4.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	— 0.0
GYPESUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0
SALBOOKH	68	64	171,100	11,439	14	68	▲ 1.0
AGLTY	640	620	1,169,273	735,487	50	620	▼ -10.0
EDU	204	204	2,000	408	1	204	— 0.0
CLEANING	46.5	45.0	1,152,199	52,774	36	46.0	▲ 1.0
KGL	69	63	2,170,060	140,051	127	63	▼ -5.0
KCPC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	172	— 0.0
HUMANSOFT	2,600	2,580	130,513	339,234	15	2,600	▲ 100.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	206	— 0.0
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0
GFC	30.0	30.0	5,000	150	1	30.0	— 0.0
MAYADEEN	27.5	27.0	584,178	15,789	19	27.5	▲ 0.5
CGC	580	560	10,150	5,800	7	560	▼ -20.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0
UPAC	660	660	500	330	1	660	▼ -10.0
ALAFCC	244	238	978,975	235,111	44	240	▼ -2.0
MUBARRAD	59	57	750,100	43,530	21	59	— 0.0
LOGISTICS	74	73	355,620	25,960	12	74	▲ 1.0
SCEM	81	81	294,000	23,814	5	81	— 0.0
GCEM	74	74	240,000	17,760	6	74	— 0.0
QIC	72	72	20,000	1,440	1	72	▲ 2.0
KCEM	76	76	357,300	27,155	12	76	— 0.0
RKWC	90	89	210,000	18,800	5	90	— 0.0
SPEC	80	80	1,500	120	2	80	— 0.0
Industrials			13,812,822	2,288,155	561	1343.36	▲ 11.13
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
CATT	236	224	61,681	14,377	12	224	▼ -2.0
DANAH	87	87	30,000	2,610	3	87	— 0.0
POULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	— 0.0
FOOD	2,600	2,600	795,984	2,069,558	10	2,600	— 0.0
Consumer Goods			887,665	2,086,545	25	1136.45	▼ -1.48
MHC	240	240	10,000	2,400	1	240	— 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0.0
YIACO	360	360	500	180	1	360	▼ -15
Health Care			10,500	2,580	2	1229.04	▼ -10.78
KCIN	1,160	1,140	12,550	14,548	6	1,160	— 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	265	— 0.0
SULTAN	59	59	212,365	12,530	8	59	— 0.0
CABLETV	55	48.0	420	20	3	55	▼ -6
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0
OUFAHR	172	164	283,899	47,773	24	172	▲ 10
OLULAFEL	118	116	44,108	5,189	17	118	▼ -2
MUNTAZAHAT	83	78	3,952,671	319,800	97	79	▼ -3
JAZERA	770	750	2,000	1,520	3	770	— 0.0
SOOR	116	114	11,850	1,357	11	116	▲ 2
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	106	— 0.0
ALRAI	142	140	72,177	10,149	12	142	▲ 2
ZMAH	43.5	42.5	3,967,211	170,048	99	43.0	▲ 1
Mezzan	930	930	208,791	194,176	24	930	— 0.0
Consumer Services			8,768,042	777,108	304	925.61	▼ -7.48
ZAIN	415	410	802,993	332,891	26	410	— 0.0
QOREDOO	1,160	1,140	5,355	6,210	5	1,160	▲ 4.0
HITSTELEC	42.0	41.0	1,486,776	60,740	27	41.0	▼ -1
VIVA	940	920	31,028	28,941	25	930	— 0.0
Telecommunications			2,306,152	428,782	83	631.32	▲ 2.47
NBK	660	650	738,488	480,117	16	650	▼ -10
GBK	240	240	305,246	73,259	10	240	— 0.0
CBK	415	410	786,949	326,573	2	415	▲ 5
ABK	300	295	13,742	4,059	5	295	▼ -5
ALMUTAHED	410	405	439,930	178,179	13	405	— 0.0
KIB	210	208	1,250,429	260,211	22	208	▼ -2
BURG	310	305	2,774,461	851,437	43	305	▼ -5
KFIN	560	540	3,092,813	1,698,630	81	540	▼ -10
BOUBYAN	400	395	283,100	112,063	28	395	— 0.0
AUB	194	194	1,821,100	353,293	35	194	— 0.0
ITHMR	40.0	38.5	9,879,841	386,844	123	39.0	— 0.0
WARBABANK	226	224	2,881,728	647,895	88	224	▼ -2
Banks			24,267,827	5,372,361	466	839.49	▼ -5.51
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	255	— 0.0
GINS	620	620	53,959	33,455	2	620	— 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	455	— 0.0
WINS	102	99	2,305	234	2	102	▲ 3.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	— 0.0
FTI	49.0	49.0	2,000	98	2	49.0	▼ -0.5
WETHAQ	30.5	29.0	385,560	11,754	18	30.0	— 0.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0
Insurance			443,824	45,541	24	961.63	▲ 2.41

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	37.0	36.0	1897817	68,992	27	36.5	— 0.0
KRE	62	61	1,511,658	92,769	21	62	— 0.0
URC	96	96	387	37	1	96	▲ 2.0
NRE	108	104	3,596,447	380,621	91	104	▼ -2.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	360	— 0.0
TAM	485	450	52,100	24,949	5	450	▼ -25.0
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190	— 0.0
MASALEH	40.0	40.0	10,500	420	2	40.0	— 0.0
ARABREC	31.5	30.5	3,181,732	98,568	53	31.5	▲ 1.5
ERESCO	39.5	37.5	8,489,718	326,782	139	38.0	▲ 0.5
MABANEE	850	850	131,500	111,775	4	850	▲ 10.0
INJAZZAT	74	74	400,000	29,600	10	74	▼ -1.0
INVESTORS	24.0	22.5	11,020,825	253,002	106	23.0	▼ -0.5
IRC	27.5	27.0	341,000	9,248	5	27.5	— 0.0
ALTUJARIA	82	80	62,717	5,066	9	82	

EU STOCKS PAUSE WHILE LONDON COASTS HIGH ON 'SANTA RALLY'

LONDON: European stocks turned flat yesterday but London coasted higher on the back of a Santa Rally in subdued trade after a long Christmas holiday. The British capital's benchmark FTSE 100 index of top blue-chip firms won 0.4 percent from last Friday's close, as traders returned from a four-day holiday weekend.

Frankfurt and Paris, which had reopened Tuesday, were both barely changed yesterday. Thin trading volumes are expected to continue during what is

the last trading week of 2016. "The FTSE 100 is higher ... as the so-called Santa Claus Rally appears to have begun," noted analyst David Cheatham at brokerage XTB. "Observers of the markets have for many years noticed a strong propensity for stocks to rise in the period between Christmas and the New Year and this phenomenon appears to be playing out once more."

Accendo Markets analyst Mike van Dulken noted that London was being propped up by the commodities sector on

the back of rising oil prices. The main corporate deal of the day was British energy giant BP, which announced it has bought a network of Australian petrol stations from supermarket chain Woolworths for US\$1.3 billion (1.2 billion euros).

BP said in a statement that it will establish a strategic partnership with Woolworths in a deal for the purchase, rebranding and operation of Woolworths' existing 527 fuel and convenience stores, plus 16 sites under construction, for the

equivalent of AU\$1.8 billion. The company's share price bumped 0.7 percent higher to stand at 506.50 pence in London.

In Asia, Hong Kong stocks rose yesterday to rebound from recent lows. Tokyo shares ended flat despite Toshiba's second straight double-digit plunge. Stock in the troubled Japanese conglomerate Toshiba plummeted more than 20 percent as the company said it may book a one-time loss of several billion dollars over its US nuclear business. Hong Kong finished up 0.8 per-

cent on the market's first working day since Christmas, while Shanghai slid 0.4 percent by the close. Oil prices pushed higher ahead of US energy inventory data due Thursday, but analysts said trading volumes were around half typical levels. "On such low volumes it's difficult to read much into the moves and focus will turn to OPEC in the new year," said CMC Markets sales trader Alex Furber, referring to planned output curbs by the oil cartel to bolster prices. — AFP

BATTLING ENERGY CRISIS, PAKISTAN TURNS ON FOURTH NUCLEAR PLANT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's fourth nuclear power plant went online yesterday, a joint collaboration with China that adds 340 megawatts to the national grid as part of the government's efforts to end a growth-sapping energy deficit. Pakistan is one of the few developing countries pursuing atomic energy in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan in 2011, as it seeks to close an electricity shortfall that can stretch up to 7,000 MW in peak summer months, or around 32 percent of total demand.

The Chashma-III reactor, located some 250 kilometers southwest of capital Islamabad, is the third built as part of a collaboration between the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC). The country's first nuclear plant was supplied by Canada in 1972, with an installed capacity of 137 MW.

"Today we have crossed an important milestone in the journey to free the nation from scheduled power cuts. I am thankful to Allah and congratulate the entire nation," Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told an inaugural ceremony attended by Chinese and Pakistani officials. He added a fourth Chashma plant was expected to be com-

missioned by April 2017. Two more reactors would follow at an unspecified date in central Pakistan, as well as two giant 2,200 MW power stations in southern Karachi.

Islamabad is aiming to produce 8,800 MW from atomic energy by 2030. Pakistan has been struggling to provide enough power to its nearly 200 million citizens for years, and Sharif has vowed to solve the crisis by 2018. The energy sector has traditionally struggled to cover the cost of producing electricity, leading the government to divert \$2 billion annually as a subsidy, according to a recent report commissioned by the British government.

China meanwhile is ramping up investment in its South Asian neighbor as part of a \$46 billion project unveiled last year that will link its far-western Xinjiang region to Pakistan's Gwadar port with a series of infrastructure, power and transport upgrades. Last week Pakistan's main bourse announced that a Chinese consortium was set to acquire a 40 percent stake in the stock exchange in a deal estimated at \$84 million. Shanghai Electric announced in August it would buy a majority stake in the utility that supplies energy to Karachi for \$1.7 billion, in the country's biggest ever private-sector acquisition. — AFP



HANOI: A shoeshine man walks past a Prada fashion store in downtown Hanoi. — AP

VIETNAM SEES 6% GROWTH, AIDED BY BUILDING BOOM

HANOI: Vietnam's economy is forecast to grow 6.2 percent in 2016, helped by a manufacturing and building boom.

The General Statistics Office said yesterday that this year's growth rate is below 2015's rate of 6.7 percent but is still considered a success given unfavorable global trends and a spate of natural and environmental disasters.

The southern Mekong Delta, the country's main rice growing region, earlier this year suffered the worst drought and in turn salt water intrusions in nearly a century. Toxic chemicals dumped into the sea in April by a steel complex in central Ha Tinh province, owned by a unit of Taiwan's Formosa Plastics Group, devastated the region's fishing and tourism industries.

Natural disasters caused 18.3 trillion dong (\$813 million) worth of damage, the statistics office said. Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc listed a trend toward protectionism and the unpredictable situation in the South China Sea, where China and other nations hold conflicting

territorial claims, as challenges in a meeting with other government officials.

"This year, there was a big slowdown in mining and agriculture. The impact of natural disasters on farming caused GDP to fall by 1 percentage point," the online state-run newspaper Dan Tri quoted Phuc as saying. He said the Formosa Plastics disaster alone caused damage equal to 0.3 percentage point of GDP.

Sizzling rise

Vietnam's government routinely issues an estimate for GDP growth before the end of the year. A notice on the statistics office's website said industrial output and construction grew at a sizzling 7.6 percent pace while services expanded at a 7 percent pace, accounting for a slightly larger share of the growth. Exports rose 8.6 percent from the year before to \$175.9 billion, while imports totaled \$173.3 billion, it said.

The World Bank in a report earlier this month said Vietnam's economy remains resilient, thanks

to robust domestic demand and export-oriented manufacturing. It said Vietnam's medium-term outlook remains favorable, with GDP expected to expand by 6 percent this year. But the country of 93 million has a ways to go in developing strong monetary and financial policies, leaving it vulnerable to global downturns.

Vietnam's manufacturing sector has gained in recent years from the country's participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade pact led by the US. President-elect Donald Trump's opposition to the plan poses a risk to the foreign investment that had been flooding into Vietnam in hopes of gaining preferential access for exports to the US and other TPP markets such as Japan.

"Vietnam still has work to do to ensure macroeconomic health to weather potential shocks," Beatrice Tanjangco of Oxford Economics said in a recent report.

"International trade has led Vietnam to prosper over the past few years, but it also made it more vulnerable to global risks." — AP



CHASHMA: In this handout photograph released by Pakistan Prime Minister's Office yesterday, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (C) along with Defence Minister Khawaja Asif (center R) and Sartaj Aziz (center L) advisor to Prime Minister on Foreign policy and officials pose for photographs after the inaugural ceremony of the Chashma-III reactor. — AFP

GOLD EDGES LOWER AS EQUITIES STRENGTHEN

LONDON: Gold edged lower yesterday, retreating from a near two-week high hit in the previous session, weighed down by a stronger dollar and European equities. Spot gold was down 0.2 percent at \$1,137.06 an ounce by 1117 GMT, after hitting its strongest since Dec. 14 at \$1,148.98 on Tuesday. US gold futures fell \$1.50 to \$1,138.20 an ounce. "In the short term, we are focused towards support at \$1,100 and a break of this will be very bearish for the metal. As for the upside, we really need to break the level of \$1,170 and \$1,200," said Naeem Aslam, chief market analyst at ThinkMarkets.

The metal fell more than 8 percent in November, as US Treasury yields rose after Donald Trump's election led to speculation his commitment to infrastructure spending would spur growth. It then hit a 10-month low on Dec 15 as solid US economic data gave confidence to the Federal Reserve to raise US interest rates for the first time in a year. The central bank signaled three more increases next year from the previous projection of two.

"Currently there are very strong expectations of more rate hikes next year," said Jiang Shu, chief analyst, Shandong Gold Group, adding that declining gold prices have had a negative impact on the bullish sentiment in physical gold prices. US consumer confidence shot to its highest in

more than 15 years in December as Americans saw more strength ahead in business conditions, stock prices and the job market following Trump's election as president in November.

The upbeat data helped underscore expectations the US central bank would raise interest rates at a faster pace next year, which lowers demand for non-yielding assets such as bullion, while boosting the dollar, in which it is priced. The dollar index, was up 0.2 percent against a basket of six main currencies, as investors await the release of US home pending sales for November at 1500 GMT. Reflecting bearish investor sentiment, assets in the SPDR Gold Trust, the world's largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, fell 0.14 percent to 823.36 tons on Tuesday. Holdings are down about 13 percent since the US presidential elections.

In other news, Shanghai Gold Exchange, the world's biggest physical bullion exchange, said yesterday it would curb the amount of gold investors can trade at one time, a move analysts said would limit institutional investors' influence on prices. Silver was down 0.6 percent at \$15.83 an ounce. The metal rose nearly 1.5 percent on Tuesday. Platinum was up 0.2 percent at \$901.40 and palladium fell 0.4 percent at \$668.73, after rising over 2 percent in the previous session. — Reuters



TOKYO: A man uses a mobile phone in front of an electronic stock indicator of a securities firm. — AP

TOSHIBA SHARES FALL 20% AS ONE-OFF LOSS FLAGGED

TOKYO: Toshiba shares dived more than 20 percent yesterday in their second straight double-digit plunge, as the company said it may book a one-time loss of several billion dollars over its US nuclear business. The stock price dropped by 20.42 percent to 311.60 yen, the largest fall allowed for a single day, about 30 minutes after the opening bell, as the company failed to ease investor worries over the potential risk. It finished the session at that level.

The Tokyo-based conglomerate said Tuesday in a statement that costs linked to the acquisition last year by its US subsidiary of a nuclear service company would possibly amount to "several billion US dollars, resulting in a negative impact on Toshiba's financial results". The exact figure of the potential write-down is still being worked out, Toshiba president Satoshi Tsunakawa told reporters after the announcement, apologizing for "causing concern".

The company statement suggested the figure would be released soon, citing an end-of-year deadline for settling the valuation of the nuclear deal. The announcement came after Toshiba shares closed nearly 12 percent lower on Tuesday on media reports about the potential loss.

After the market closed yesterday, Standard & Poor's cut two of Toshiba's credit and debt ratings by one notch each in response to the company's announcement. S&P also placed the ratings on watch, suggesting they could be downgraded further. Analysts said uncertainty was fuelling investor anxiety.

"Concerns have yet to be cleared away as they said they didn't know the figure," Yukihiro Shimada, senior analyst at SMBC Nikko Securities, told AFP. SMBC Nikko credit analysts Yutaka Ban and Kentaro Harada said in a report that investors "can't be optimistic about the situation" even though the total write-down may not end up as big as the 500 billion yen (\$4.3 billion) reported by local media. Nomura Securities analyst Masaya Yamasaki said in a report issued late Tuesday that the expected loss "is negative for the company as its financial standing is fragile".

'Seek support'

Tsunakawa at the press conference answered in the affirmative when asked if Toshiba is considering boosting capital. Chief financial officer Masayoshi Hirata said that after the figure is confirmed the company will "explain and seek sup-

port" from financial institutions. Toshiba said the possible loss was related to the valuation of the purchase by subsidiary Westinghouse Electric of the nuclear construction and services business of Chicago Bridge & Iron.

Westinghouse and Chicago Bridge & Iron have turned to an independent accountant to resolve a dispute over differences in asset valuations, Toshiba said earlier this year. Toshiba said Tuesday the potential write-down would "far exceed" the \$87 million first expected, resulting in a "far lower asset value than originally determined". Toshiba's latest full-year forecast is for annual net profit of 145 billion yen (\$1.24 billion), up 45 percent from an earlier estimate, on sales of 5.4 trillion yen. But Tuesday it said it would release a revised earnings forecast as soon as possible to reflect the coming write-down. Toshiba's nuclear woes are the latest blow to the once-proud pillar of corporate Japan. It has been besieged by problems, most notably a profit-padding scandal in which bosses for years systematically pushed subordinates to cover up weak financial results.

In an intensive overhaul, the company has been shedding businesses and announced the sale of its medical devices unit to camera and office equipment maker Canon. Investors had welcomed the makeover, with Toshiba shares having climbed 77.3 percent this year through Monday. But after this week's declines they are only up 24.7 percent. — AFP



TOKYO: In this photo taken on December 27, 2016, a pedestrian walks past as the Toshiba Corporation logo is seen at the company's headquarters. — AFP

S KOREAN ANTITRUST REGULATOR FINES QUALCOMM \$865 MILLION

SEOUL: South Korea's antitrust regulator slapped a 1.03 trillion won (\$865 million) fine on Qualcomm Inc. yesterday for allegedly violating competition laws.

The Fair Trade Commission said that the San Diego, California-based company had engaged in unfair business practices in patent licensing and chip sales, including refusing to let rival chipmakers license patents essential for chip making.

The FTC said Qualcomm allegedly used its dominant position in the modem chip market to force handset makers to pay license fees for a broad set of patents under terms it set unilat-

erally and to coerce handset makers into signing licensing contracts.

The fine, the biggest ever levied by the antitrust regulator, "will restore fair competition in the mobile communications industry," Shin Young-sun, secretary general at the Fair Trade Commission, told reporters at a briefing. Qualcomm rejected the ruling, saying it plans to appeal it in court. Qualcomm made \$25.1 billion in 2015 from collecting patent royalties and selling modem chips. South Korea, home to the world's largest smartphone maker Samsung Electronics, accounts for about 20 percent of its global revenue. — AP

1ST COMMERCIAL FLAMMABILITY TEST LAB LAUNCHED IN THE MIDDLE EAST

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways Engineering and Lantal Textiles AG have launched the first Flammability Test Laboratory in the Middle East, for regional customers within the aviation industry, including VIP operators, MRO organizations, design and production organizations as well as cabin interior suppliers.

Located inside the Etihad Airways Engineering facility adjacent to Abu Dhabi International Airport, the new Lantal laboratory will provide test services that include flammability tests, seat cushion tests, heat release and smoke tests. The laboratory will conform to ISO 17025 quality management standards, and all testing will be conducted in accordance with the Airworthiness Regulations FAR / CS 25.853.



Jeff Wilkinson, Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Airways Engineering, said: "We offer industry leading aircraft maintenance and engineering solutions to customers from all over the world for all major commercial aircraft types. Through our partnership with Lantal, it is now easier and faster for aviation customers in the region to access world-class flammability testing at our facility in Abu Dhabi."

Dr Urs Rickenbacher, Chief Executive Officer of Lantal said: "The Lantal flammability test lab in Switzerland is well-known for its high quality standards and short lead times. We have a significant market share in Europe and our new lab in Abu Dhabi, in partnership with Etihad Airways Engineering, will now bring our service closer to customers in the Middle East."



ABK WISHES EVERYONE IN KUWAIT A HAPPY NEW YEAR

KUWAIT: ABK announced that during the New Year holiday, its branches and the head Office will be closed on Sunday 1st January 2017, in line with the timing set by the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA). The Bank will resume its regular working hours on Monday 2nd January 2017. ABK's online services and Call Center will be available 24 hours a day during the holiday and can be reached by

contacting a customer service agent via 'Ahlam Ahli' at 1899899. On the occasion of the New Year, ABK's Board Members, management & staff, would like to extend its warmest wishes to the Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the Kuwaiti government and its people.

2017 INVESTMENT FORECASTS: MAYBE GOOD, NO LONGER GREAT

NEW YORK: Get ready for investments to be merely good again. They've already been great for years, as both stocks and bonds have delivered fat returns since the worst of the financial crisis passed in 2009. But after such a strong and long gallop upward, markets have many reasons to slow down, analysts and fund managers say.

So instead of getting 10 percent or more from stocks, which index funds are on pace to deliver for the sixth time in eight years, a better expectation may be for something in the low to mid-single digits, many of the predictions say. Few are expecting losses for stocks. But for bonds, which have been stellar for decades, even a flat year could be considered a victory.

"We're in a different investing environment," says Heather Kennedy Miner, global head of strategic advisory solutions at Goldman Sachs Asset Management. "It requires a little bit of a psychological shift in mindset, that investors are going to get paid less for each unit of risk in the next few years."

Of course, analyst forecasts have a long history of being wrong. Many market watchers were forecasting only modest gains for this year, for example. And even though big, unexpected events repeatedly shook markets, from the U.K. decision to quit the European Union to Donald Trump's victory last month, stocks still managed to turn in a better-than-expected year.

Many things could trip up forecasts for 2017, such as an unexpected rip higher in inflation. More potentially market-shaking elections are also looming, including ones in the largest European economies. Plus, the ultimate wild card still hangs over the market: Trump. Investors are notoriously bad at dealing with uncertainty, and they're gearing for a world where big shifts in U.S. policy may arrive via a late-night tweet.

Nevertheless, the crux of forecasts for more subdued returns in 2017 rests on simple math. Stocks are no longer cheap, at least relative to how much profit companies are producing. And interest rates for bonds are low and expected to be on the way up, which would mean their prices are set to drop. Here's a look at what market watchers are thinking:

STOCKS

A simple way to measure whether a stock is cheap or expensive is to compare its price against the profit the company is making. In recent years, stock prices have risen far more quickly than earnings, and that has many investors expecting slower gains ahead. "We are not doubling down with our clients' money," says Rich Weiss, senior portfolio manager at American Century Investments. He's been ratcheting back stock investments in the mutual funds that he runs. "It's going to be wait-and-see for us."

When the financial crisis was still burning in early 2009, the S&P 500 index was trading at the cheap level of eight times its earnings per share from the prior 12 months. Now, it's trading at 19 times, according to FactSet. At such levels, companies will need to produce bigger profits to warrant further gains in stock prices, analysts say. And while a proposed corporate tax cut by Trump would provide an immediate boost to earnings, strong economic growth has so far remained elusive.

Strategists along Wall Street, from Deutsche Bank to Goldman Sachs, are predicting the S&P 500 will climb to 2,300 or 2,350 in 2017. That's less than 4 percent higher from where it was on Tuesday. Barclays is a bit more optimistic, targeting the S&P 500 at 2,400 by the end of next year, but that would still be less than the 7 percent rise in earnings that it's forecasting.

Where many analysts are more optimistic is in corners of the stock market that would benefit most from Trump's proposals for lower taxes, less regulation and a stronger dollar. Chiefly, that's smaller companies, which tend to do more of their business within the United States. Wall Street also expects the milder returns to last past this upcoming year. Strategists at BlackRock see roughly 4 percent annual returns for big U.S. stocks over the next five years, for example. Still, that's better than Treasuries, which they forecast will return closer to zero.

BONDS

Bonds have been terrific investments for decades, delivering not only strong but also mostly stable returns. That flipped on Nov 9. Following Trump's victory, interest rates began jumping on expectations for faster economic growth and inflation, and the yield on the 10-year Treasury note topped 2.60 percent this month, up from 1.86 percent on election day. Rising rates mean newly issued bonds pay more in interest, but they also push down prices of bonds already in mutual funds and investors' portfolios. The largest bond mutual fund by assets had its worst month in nearly 13



NEW JERSEY: In this Wednesday, Oct 26, 2016, file photo, a shopper, left, walks with a store associate in the toy section at Wal-Mart in Teterboro. — AP photos



NEW YORK: In this Oct 8, 2014, file photo, people walk to work on Wall Street beneath a statue of George Washington.

years during November, losing 2.6 percent.

"Bottom line, in a rising-rate environment, things will be very choppy," says Bernie Williams, chief investment officer for USAA's Wealth Management Investment Solutions. "But I don't think we will have severe inflation, which is the reason to bail on bonds." Analysts are predicting a further, and mostly gradual, rise for rates in 2017.

That has them forecasting slight losses to modest gains for the types of bond funds that traditionally sit at the core of a portfolio. They won't approach the 5 percent-plus returns they've often turned in during the past decade. "That said, a core bond portfolio does still play a role," says Brad Camden, director of fixed-income

strategy at Northern Trust Asset Management.

"There's a lot of optimism priced into the markets, but there's also a wide range of uncertainty," Camden actually sees it as an encouraging sign that bonds have struggled since the election: It shows that stocks and bonds don't always move in the same direction, proving once again the value of having a diversified portfolio. When stocks hit their next downturn, bonds will hopefully once again hold steady.

"It's there for humility," says Brian Jacobsen, chief portfolio strategist at Wells Fargo Funds Management. "We could be totally wrong about the outlook for the equity markets, and that's when core bonds are going to really come in handy." — AP

BURGAN BANK TO NAME WINNER OF AL THURAYA SALARY ACCOUNT DRAW



KUWAIT: Burgan Bank will soon be announcing the lucky winner of its newly re-launched Al Thuraya Salary Account. The winner will be granted a Nissan Patrol SUV. The new draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan bank a chance to win a Nissan Patrol SUV every month. The new draw is part of Burgan Bank's approach of rewarding loyal customers with higher chances of winning while encouraging new customers to benefit from the bank's unique offerings. With the introduction of this new monthly draw, every K.D 10 available in the account provides the cus-

tomers a chance to win. The Al Thuraya Account's features range from the option to hold money in Kuwaiti dinar and any other major currencies, access to account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards and much more. The account has been further developed in response to offering more benefits and increasing chances to win. Customers' wishing to open an Al Thuraya account can do so by simply visiting the nearest Burgan Bank branch and obtain all the necessary details, or simply call the bank's call center on 1804080.

BECOME A MILLIONAIRE WITH GULF BANK!



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank proudly announces that its biggest and most coveted event in Kuwait, Al Danah Yearly Millionaire Draw, is planned to attract unparalleled attention, kicking off the new year with optimism and mega prizes! Gulf Bank invites customers and participants to engage in this big event that is due to take place on Thursday 5 January 2017, at The Avenues Mall starting at 7:00 pm. Gulf Bank is the only bank in Kuwait to provide you with a chance to win biggest single prize of One Million Kuwaiti Dinars!

To participate in the upcoming Al Danah Millionaire Draw, customers must already have an Al Danah account containing a minimum of KD 200. Chances of winning can be increased by adding to the amount deposited in Al Danah account.

This will also maximize your chances of winning up to KD 500,000 quarterly, and one of the two KD 1,000 cash prizes which

are drawn each working day. In addition to Al Danah Yearly Millionaire Draw, Cash prizes up to KD 1,000 each with Gulf Bank's Salary and red accounts will be won on the spot. New red Account or Salary Account customers who have opened an account and transferred their student allowance or salary are also eligible to enter these cash draws. This year's Al Danah Millionaire event will comprise of unprecedented prizes and activities amongst which is the chance to win a brand new Cadillac Escalade! Gulf Bank will unveil more of the event's updates at a later stage. Stay Tuned! For further information about the Al Danah, Salary, red accounts, and the cash prizes, visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, or call Gulf Bank's Customer Contact Center on 1805805. General information about Gulf Bank's products and services can also be found at the Bank's website at www.e-gulfbank.com.

BURGAN BANK'S AIRPORT BRANCH READY FOR THE NEW YEAR RUSH



KUWAIT: With the upcoming new year holiday expected to be a particularly busy period, Burgan Bank yesterday announced that it is ready to serve its customers in its airport branch, which will be open as usual from 8:00 am to 10:30 pm on Sunday, in an effort to accommodate banking

requirements for both travelers and regular customers over the season holiday. For more information on any products or services, customers are required to contact Burgan Bank's call center on 1804080. We take this opportunity to send our best wishes and greetings to the public.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTION TO GET RID OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Nearly 78% say they want to quit social media but fear of losing friends. New Year brings new resolutions. One of the most commonly observed resolutions is people determining to get rid of their social media accounts in an effort to utilize their time more fruitfully. But how easy is it to achieve? Research conducted by cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Lab shows that a vast majority of people want to leave social networks, because it is considered a waste of time. According to the survey, people only stay on social media such as Facebook, Instagram etc. because they fear losing digital memories and contact with their friends.

Keeping in touch with friends may be a difficult problem to solve, but Kaspersky Lab is working on a solution to help people save their digital memories. An app called FFForget, will allow people to back up all of their memories from the social networks they use and keep them in a safe, encrypted memory container. The app is expected to give people the freedom to leave any network whenever they want, without losing out. Previous research has highlighted a strong tendency for people to use digital devices as an external part of their memory. Studies have also demonstrated that people cannot resist checking their social media conversations and status updates on their phones.

However, this latest survey indicates that users are actually self-critical and aware of their fixation -



39% of respondents said they believe they are wasting time on social networks. 78% stated that they have already considered leaving social networks behind them. Despite an inclination to leave their social networks, people are compelled to stay. A

vast majority (62%) believe they would lose contact with their friends if they left social networks. 21 percent of respondents were less worried about their friends, but were afraid they would not be able to recover their digital memories - such as photos -

once they had left a social network.

"Social networks can be a benefit or a hazard. If they are a benefit, it's not our problem. We believe that every person has a right to freely decide which platforms to use or to leave at all times. True digital freedom is not a matter of having to make sacrifices. We want people to get back in the driving seat by being able to own an encrypted copy of all their digital memories at all times," says Evgeny Chereshev, Head of Social Media at Kaspersky Lab. "With FFForget we want to create a solution which keeps people from being afraid of losing their memories to account damage or hacking attacks. And most importantly - people using the app would win back their right to quit any social network at any time without losing what belongs to them - their digital lives."

FFForget is planned for 2017. Interested users can register at ffforget.kaspersky.com to give feedback and influence the scope of the app. They will also get updates, insights and early access to the public beta when it will be available. Kaspersky Lab conducted an online survey amongst 4831 respondents. The survey, containing eight questions, was translated into nine languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, German, Russian, Japanese and Turkish, and programmed using Poll Daddy. The link to survey was disseminated using paid Facebook and Twitter promotions.

ICE RINKS ACROSS THE US FIGHT ENEMY NO. 1: ENERGY BILLS

WOODSTOCK: A small community skating rink that was once in danger of folding is working on a long-term plan to eliminate its biggest single expense — its energy bill — by becoming what its leaders believe would be the country's first with no costs for electricity or heating fuel. The plan includes upgrading the existing equipment at Woodstock's Union Arena for efficiency, finding ways to reuse some of the heat generated by the power-sucking compressors used to make ice and, finally, buying solar panels that will be erected elsewhere.

While the long-term plan to eliminate the power bill, making the rink "net zero," is in its early phases, the rink's electricity consumption from early November to early December was down 12.5 percent from the same period a year ago, said Harold Mayhew, the president of the Union Arena Board of directors and an architect who specializes in skating rinks. "If you can make a hockey rink a net zero building, you can make anything net zero," said Mayhew, who designed the rink at Maine's Bowdoin College, which opened in 2009 and became the nation's first hockey rink to be certified by The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, or LEED, that rates buildings for their energy efficiency.

Energy costs are typically the largest bills for skating rinks, which use huge amounts of electricity to run the equipment that makes and maintains the ice used by hockey players, figure skaters and others, such as curlers. "Utilities is what kills the rinks," said Paul Moore, the chairman of the Board of Governors for Falmouth Youth Hockey in Massachusetts and the coach of the Falmouth High School hockey team. He has worked to reduce his facility's electric bill by installing 4,400 solar panels on the roof and in a nearby parking lot that produces just short of 1 megawatt of electricity, enough for about 164 homes.

Through a deal with a utility, the Falmouth facility is guaranteed for 10 years an \$85,000 a year savings on its electric bill, but it's not down to zero. "This has been huge for us," Moore said. "We're a nonprofit. The youth hockey organization owns the rink, so this allows us to continue our mission statement of keeping tuition low and keeping ice rates low." Across the country, rinks large and small are always looking for ways to save energy and therefore money, said Kevin McLaughlin, the senior director of hockey development at USA Hockey, the organization that oversees most youth hockey programs in the country. —AP



LITHUANIA: In this photo, Ricardas Savukynas, the 43-year-old business consultant and blogger works on his computer in Vilnius, Lithuania. — AP Photos

LITHUANIAN 'ELVES' COMBAT RUSSIAN INFLUENCE ONLINE 'INCITEMENT TO WAR, DISCORD AND HATRED'

VILNIUS, Lithuania: Elves against trolls - it sounds like something out of "The Lord of the Rings." But to Ricardas Savukynas, the battle he's fighting is no fantasy. The 43-year-old business consultant and blogger is part of an informal internet army of Lithuanians trying to counter what they describe as hate speech and pro-Russia propaganda. "I am just a regular guy from Lithuania, a citizen, who once noticed that Russian propaganda is being spread in this country by huge numbers of groups on Facebook," he said over tea at a restaurant in Vilnius' old town. "Seeing this I thought that it cannot be a natural thing."

Savukynas' fellow volunteers - who've dubbed themselves "elves" - patrol social media, coordinating their actions through Facebook or Skype to expose fake accounts. On a busy day, Savukynas said that fellow elves report as many as 10 or 20 to get them removed. He himself focuses on writing, maintaining a personal blog devoted to, among other things, deconstructing Soviet nostalgia or pulling apart conspiracy theories. The elves do a decent job of "pinpointing some manipulation and some social networking sites," said Nerijus Maliukevicius, a researcher at Vilnius University's Institute of International Relations, who studies the role of media during times of conflict.

But in a telephone interview, Maliukevicius said that Lithuania needs a complex counter-strategy to beat what he describes as Kremlin propaganda. "Elves are just one bit of this," he said. Talk of Russian interference is bubbling on both sides of the Atlantic in the wake of the recent US election, which propelled Russia-friendly candidate Donald Trump to power amid allegations of Kremlin interference. Earlier this month, Germany's intelligence agency accused Moscow of trying to destabilize the country with propaganda and cyber attacks before its general election planned for next year.

It's a weapon

Lithuania, which like other Baltic nations was long subject to Moscow's rule, feels those concerns more keenly than most - all the more so after Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine in 2014. And the elf versus troll war on Facebook is just one battlefield. News websites and broadcasters have also been drawn into the mix. "We recognized, especially recently, that we have a pretty huge and long lasting disinformation campaign against our society," said Tomas Ceponis, an analyst for the Lithuanian military.



LITHUANIA: In this photo, Lithuanian citizen Laurynas Ragelskas searches on his computer, in Vilnius, Lithuania.

He said the power of propaganda was harder to quantify than tanks or planes, but it was clearly aimed at "really a very huge variety of targets." Delfi, one of the main news sites in Lithuania, was one of them. It found its comment sections filling up with pro-Russia posts in the lead up to the Ukrainian confrontation, said Monika Garbaciauskaite, the editor-in-chief, and now has full-time staff deleting the most extreme messages.

The hostile propaganda has led to more

aggressive action from both sides. Lithuania's leading commercial news channel TV3 has been repeatedly targeted by hackers who compromised the group's networks three times, according to Sigita Babilius, TV3's head of news. Last month, Lithuania banned Russia's RTR Planeta channel until February after a Russian politician made anti-US comments deemed as "incitement to war, discord and hatred." Similar three month bans on Russian state-owned channels have been ordered in previous years. — AP

TESLA, PANASONIC TO MAKE SOLAR CELLS IN BUFFALO, NEW YORK

BUFFALO, New York: Japanese electronics company Panasonic and US electric car maker Tesla said Tuesday they plan to begin production of solar cells at a factory in Buffalo, New York. The two companies said they finalized an agreement calling for Tokyo-based Panasonic to pay capital costs for the manufacturing. Palo Alto, California-based Tesla made a "long-term purchase commitment" to Panasonic. Their statement gave no financial figures. The factory in Buffalo is under development by SolarCity Corp, a San Mateo, California-based solar panel company owned by Tesla.

The photovoltaic cells and modules will be used in solar panels for non-solar roof products and solar glass tile roofs that Tesla plans to begin making, the announcement said. Production is due to begin in mid-2017. Tesla said it will create 1,400 jobs in Buffalo, 500 in manufacturing and plans further expansion in

Buffalo. Panasonic also is to work with Tesla on next-generation technology, the companies said. New York state has committed \$750 million to build and outfit the plant at Buffalo's RiverBend site, the centerpiece of Democratic Gov.

Andrew Cuomo's "Buffalo Billion" program to revitalize the upstate region's largest city. SolarCity has committed to investing \$5 billion over 10 years in New York state, hiring almost 1,500 workers at the Buffalo plant for five years and employing at least 2,000 more people across New York in exchange for use of the state-owned plant. In October, when word emerged about the possible manufacturing collaboration, the head of New York state's economic development agency said SolarCity will be held to job creation promises made when the state committed funding to build and outfit the plant, which is expected to begin production next summer. —AP



FACEBOOK SAFETY CHECK TRIGGERS FALSE BANGKOK BOMB SCARE

BANGKOK: Facebook sparked fear and anger among Thailand's social media users after its Safety Check feature triggered a false bomb alert in Bangkok. The check-in feature allows users to signal to friends that they are safe after an event in their area such as a terror attack or natural disaster. But it appeared to misfire late Tuesday, creating an alert called "The Explosion in Bangkok" that said a blast in the capital had been confirmed by "multiple sources." The page gave no other details about the incident but linked to articles about a bombing in Bangkok in August 2015 which killed 20 people.

After numerous city residents marked themselves as safe, the alert was deactivated around an hour later at 10pm, leaving netizens relieved but also frustrated over the false alarm. "Facebook issued false news that

has destroyed Thailand's image," wrote Thai user Prasit Silhanisong. "It's close to the New Year and now tourists might not come," he added, calling on the social media giant to apologize. Facebook swiftly defended the algorithm, saying the alert was activated by reports of small explosives that a protester had thrown near Government House earlier on Tuesday. The incident, which caused no injuries or damage, was covered in the local press. "Safety Check was activated yesterday in Thailand following an explosion," a Facebook spokesperson said in a statement to AFP, adding that a "trusted third party" had confirmed the incident. It is not the first time the check-in feature has caused controversy. In March the company apologized after a bug sent a Safety Check notification to users around the world following a deadly suicide bombing in Pakistan. —AFP

OSCE VICTIM OF CYBER ATTACK

VIENNA: The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has been the target of a cyber attack, a spokeswoman said yesterday. The French newspaper Le Monde said a Russian hacker group was behind the attack, but the OSCE, a security and human rights watchdog, said it did not have the capability to investigate the report. "There was an attack. We found out about it at the beginning of November," a spokeswoman for the Vienna-based OSCE said, confirming a story published in Le Monde. "The systems are safe now. We were given entirely new security systems and passwords," she added.

An unnamed Western intelligence source quoted by Le Monde attributed the hacking to the Russian cyber espionage group known as APT28. That same source told Le Monde that

the group was also behind attacks on the US Democratic party leadership during the US presidential campaign. The spokeswoman said the OSCE was aware of "speculation" that APT28 may be behind the attack. "But we don't have the capacity to conduct such an investigation and we don't want to speculate," she said.

US intelligence agencies have concluded that Russia tried to influence the Nov 8 election by hacking individuals and institutions, including Democratic Party bodies. The 57-member OSCE is best known for observing elections and for its role in Ukraine, where it monitors a ceasefire agreement to end fighting between Ukrainian troops and Russian-backed separatists in the east. Its members include both the United States and Russia and also Ukraine. — Reuters



CHINA: This picture shows a waitress preparing a plate of rabbit's head for customers at a restaurant in Chengdu, in southwestern China's Sichuan province. — AFP photos



CHINA: This picture shows prepared rabbit heads at a restaurant in Chengdu, in southwestern China's Sichuan province.

SICHUAN CANNOT GET ENOUGH SPICY MARINATED RABBIT HEADS

'THE RABBIT HEADS DO LOOK QUITE TERRIFYING'

CHENGDU, China: Chinese diners greedily crack open delicate rabbit skulls and slurp down their contents, tucking into a delicacy so popular in one province that it has to import supplies from France. Sichuan is renowned for its spicy, peppery local dishes: one of its favorites are bunny brains, often eaten as a late night treat on the streets of its capital, Chengdu. At the "Shuangliu Laoma Tutou", a well-known restaurant in the heart of the city, dozens of customers use their gloved hands to open the skulls covered in sauce, suck out the brain and nibble on the cheeks amid cries of satisfaction.

"If Sichuanese people don't eat spicy dishes every day, they're unhappy," said one 20-something woman surnamed Ma, as she dined with friends. "I eat them at least once a week," she added. Westerners often avoid ani-

mal parts—duck beaks, chicken feet, heads and tripe—that Chinese gourmets treat as delicacies. But even in China there is little appetite for rabbits' meat, much less their heads, which are overwhelmingly eaten in Sichuan, a remote province long isolated by mountain ranges.

The dish is a speciality of the region—rarely found outside of a few popular restaurants in Beijing and other major cities. "Two out of three rabbit heads consumed in China, are eaten in Sichuan," said Wang Min, the manager of the Chengdu restaurant, adding that locals were proud of the snack. "My parents and grandparents ate them. I've been enjoying them since my childhood," she said, adding the tradition goes back several centuries. "My friends in Guangxi (a southern province) and elsewhere don't understand why we eat them,"

she said, adding "they can't stand the heat".

'Grapple factor'

In Wang's restaurant, head chef Yin Dingjun said the rabbit head recipe seemed simple but required a well-established technique. "You have to drain the rabbits of their blood, then remove the guts" before "marinating the head in a broth for several hours," he said. "Diners then use their teeth to gnaw at the flesh." Rabbits feature in Chinese mythology (a "jade rabbit" lives on the moon) and are regarded as cute by many young people rather than thought of as a delicacy, although in Sichuanese dialect eating rabbit head is slang for French kissing.

Although sucking on a rabbit head might seem odd to some diners even in China, it is par for the course in Sichuanese cuisine,

Fuchsia Dunlop, a London-based expert in Chinese gastronomy said. "There are lots of spicy dishes, such as spicy duck heads, covered in chili and pepper," she said. For people in Sichuan, playing with your food is part of the fun, she said, adding they like "the grapple factor." "Using your fingers and teeth to get a little bit of meat, it's part of the pleasure."

'Quite terrifying'

According to China's rabbit industry association, the country consumes around half a billion rabbit heads a year. As night falls in Chengdu, innumerable stalls sell rabbit heads to locals who wash the treat down with beer. "Night markets are part of our culture in Sichuan," said Rong Lipeng, assistant to the chairman of Hage, China's leading supplier of rabbit meat and products. He sells more than

eight million rabbit heads each year. But faced with a colossal local demand Chinese farms are struggling to supply enough. As a result, nearly 20 per cent of rabbit heads marketed by the company are sourced from Europe, mainly from Italy and France—in the same way that US chicken producers export the birds' feet, unappreciated in their home market, to China.

France exported 166 tons of meat and edible offal from rabbits to China in 2014, according to French government figures. Rong, who says the heads are healthy since they contain little flesh, hopes that the taste for the treat will one day expand beyond Sichuan, but, he admits, the barrier is high. "A lot of people outside our province do not dare taste them, because the rabbit heads do look quite terrifying." — AFP

CHINA IN BIGGEST-EVER PANGOLIN SCALE SEIZURE

SHANGHAI: Chinese customs seized over three tons of pangolin scales, state media said, in the country's biggest-ever smuggling case involving the animal parts. Shanghai Customs found around 3.1 tons of pangolin scales mixed in with a container of wood products imported from Nigeria, reported Tuesday. It estimated up to 7,500 of the creatures could have been killed. The elusive pangolin has become the most trafficked mammal on Earth due to soaring demand in Asia for their scales for traditional medicine and their flesh, considered a delicacy.

State media have previously said the scales fetch around 5,000 Yuan (\$700) per kilogram (\$700) on the black market—which would make

the seizure worth more than \$2 million. Although the international pangolin trade is illegal in China and they are listed as one of the most-protected wild animals, law enforcement remains weak. Pangolins are also farmed in the country and an online site selling traditional Chinese medicine offers them at 7,000 Yuan per kilogram.

The scales are nothing more than keratin, the same substance that makes up fingernails. Yet it has been falsely touted as a cure for multiple ailments, including cancer, among some practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine. Shanghai Customs arrested three suspects who were suspected of smuggling the scales from Africa since 2015, the report said. — AFP



UGANDA: This file photo shows fields converted to oil palm crop in Kango, 60km from Libreville.

AFTER ASIA, PALM OIL FACES BACKLASH IN AFRICA

LIBREVILLE: Its lower cost has made it popular in commercial food production, but after being blamed for deforestation in Asia, palm oil plantations are now getting a similar rap in Africa. The sheer scale of land required is having an impact in Gabon, Cameroon and the Congo Basin, environmentalists say. With financing coming from American, European and Asian agri-businesses, palm bunches are cultivated then cut from trees and sent to factories where oil is extracted by hot pressing.

But the production process accelerates deforestation, contributes to climate change and threatens fauna and flora in vulnerable areas, opponents argue. However the companies say that palm oil is not only less expensive than soya or sunflower oil but requires much less land to produce and provides much-needed jobs. Gabon—where forest covers 80 per cent of the territory—is feeling the brunt. Brainforest and Mighty, two environmental groups, investigated the activities of Olam, an agri-business from Singapore, which said it has planted 58,000 hectares of palm trees in Gabon.

"It is estimated that Olam has deforested 20,000 hectares in its Gabonese concessions of Awala et Mouila since 2012," the groups said in a report released in mid-December. "Investigators on the scene witnessed and filmed bulldozers knocking down huge trees en masse." Olam said palm trees had been planted on 25,000 hectares of land which had previously been forested, but that this had been "highly logged and degraded secondary forest" and represented just 0.1 per cent of Gabon's forests. In response to the report Olam published advertisements touting the almost 11,000 jobs it has created, the 1,100 hectares of food crops planted and 251 kilometers of roads built.

A wider impact

But the impact appears wider. In their report, the environmental groups expressed fears that the Congo Basin, considered the lung of Africa, could go the same way as forests in Sumatra, Indonesia and on Borneo. "A few decades ago,

these places were almost entirely covered with forests, a paradise for orangutans, rhinos, elephants and exotic birds. Today, only 20-30 per cent of the forest cover exists." The report was released in Libreville when an environmental film festival honoured the French documentary "Et Maintenant Nos Terres" (And Now Our Land). Its directors, Julien Le Net and Benjamin Polle, chronicled how villages in Cameroon and Senegal were being affected by what they called "land grabs" by multinational companies.

In southwest Cameroon 244 farmers have filed a trespassing complaint against a company that intends to plant 20,000 hectares of palm trees. Hearings in the case against Sustainable Oils Cameroon, formerly a subsidiary of American company Herakles Farms, were postponed after reports of unrest in the area in November. Greenpeace has asked Cameroon not to renew the company's concession which expired at the end of November,

and it cited "six years of illegal foresting, trampling of locals' rights, unfulfilled investments and destruction of forest".

A petition signed by 180,000 people against renewal of the contract was sent last week to Cameroon President Paul Biya, Greenpeace said. The government has not yet made a decision but Greenpeace said it hoped it would hear the voices of "thousands of Cameroonians." Meanwhile the plantations of Socapalm, a subsidiary of the Luxembourg company Socfin in which the family firm of French businessman Vincent Bolloré owns a large minority stake, were targeted by protests in November.

"No to pollution and massive environmental destruction" read one banner, while another urged the company to open a dialogue with residents. "More than 5,000 hectares has been used," a resident called Ebeneser Ekango said at the time, complaining there wasn't enough land to plant the staple crop cassava. — AFP



INDIA: A pair of elephants play as they gather with others in a paddy field in the village of Bahampur in Nagaon district. — AFP

ELEPHANTS ATTACK NEPAL VILLAGE; 1 DEAD, 2 INJURED

KATHMANDU, Nepal: A herd of elephants attacked a village in southwest Nepal yesterday, killing one person and wounding two others, officials said. Government official Dilli Ram Acharya said the elephants attacked Prasenji village at dawn, when there was not much light and poor visibility due to winter fog. Acharya said the villagers did not see the elephants coming and did not have a chance to run.

Security forces were sent to the area to chase the elephants back to the forest. The injured people were taken to a nearby town for treatment. Acharya says the village is close to Bardia National Park, home to many elephants, but it was rare for people to be killed by the animals. The park is protected by government soldiers and is home to endangered tigers, one-horned rhinos and many other animals. — AP



UGANDA: This file photo shows a man and his child walking through a palm tree plantation in Bumanji, in the district of Kalangala, Uganda. — AFP Photos



HONG KONG: In this photo, a cat stretches on a counter top in a Chinese and western medicine shop in Hong Kong. — AFP photos



HONG KONG: In this photo, a cat sits on the counter at a Chinese medicine shop in Hong Kong.

HONG KONG'S FELINE FRIENDS OFFER INSIGHT INTO CITY'S PAST

'IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT CATS, IT'S ABOUT THE STORES'



HONG KONG: In this photo, male British Shorthair cat 'Tsim Tung Cream Brother', or 'Cream Brother' for short, is fed at his owner's flat in Hong Kong.



HONG KONG: In this photo, a poster (L) of male British Shorthair cat 'Tsim Tung Cream Brother', or 'Cream Brother' for short, is seen at his owner's flat as another cat (back C) sleeps in a basket in Hong Kong.



HONG KONG: In this photo, Ko Chee-shing feeds his male British Shorthair cat 'Tsim Tung Cream Brother' or 'Cream Brother' for short, at his flat in Hong Kong.

HONG KONG: Busy traffic, loud noise and constant passers-by? Not a problem for these cats. Four-legged "assistants" can be found perched in certain shops across Hong Kong, keeping a nonchalant eye on business while the city does its non-stop bustle past their storefronts. Their presence has inspired Dutch photographer Marcel Heijnen to make them the subject of a book and recent exhibition — capturing their unique characters in some of the city's most traditional neighborhoods.

The pictures show cats of all shapes and colors: masters of their domains whether on sacks of goods, atop countertops, or almost blended into displays. "Well, they're very chilled, they're very zen. They see people coming in and out every day, they have trucks unloading, people walk around with boxes, they're very unfazed, they sit on top of everything," said Heijnen. None are as famous as Hong Kong's celebrity shop cat-Cream Brother. The British Shorthair has nearly 200,000 followers on Facebook and draws masses of fans, including when his shop closed in 2016. He is also behind several books, has starred in advertising campaigns and has his own



HONG KONG: In this photo, magazine and books based on male British Shorthair cat 'Tsim Tung Cream Brother' (L), or 'Cream Brother' for short, are seen at the flat of his owner Ko Chee-shing in Hong Kong.

"Cream Bro" foundation that helps less fortunate felines.

Now somewhat semi-retired, he still has regular visitors. "I think he is a very special cat, very handsome, very cute," says Solid Ng, a bank teller who visits him twice a week at home. Such fame was unexpected, says his owner Ko Chee-shing, but it's a life that came naturally to the former convenience store cat. "His character is really like a star. He would sit down and let you photograph him. Everyday there were hundreds of people coming to our store to take photos of him, he would stand up and pull a cute face, or just sleep and let people take pictures of him."

For Heijnen, the photographs also point to a nostalgic pause in a constantly changing city. "I think the uniqueness in the photographs is that it captures the background," he said, while a favorite subject sat on boxes piled on goods in the background. "So it's not just about cats, it's about the stores and in many of my photos you see that... 90% of it is the store and the cat is very small. And these are very traditional stores, they're very timeless. These photos could have been taken in the 60s."—AFP

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'SHOP BAHRAIN' FESTIVAL RETURNS WITH A BRILLIANT THIRD-EDITION

The third-edition of the Bahrain Shopping Festival - 'Shop Bahrain' - is set to be the biggest nationwide Festival with a unique line-up of events and entertainment, a fantastic shopping experience and numerous prizes. The 30-day event, aimed at celebrating the Kingdom's hospitality and tourism offering, will kick off on Jan 19 2017 and will run until the Feb 18 2017. The Festival, co-organized by the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) and Tamkeen, is held in cooperation with the partners from the public and private sector such as Gulf Air, Batelco and YK Al Moayyed and Sons.

Last year, over 20 shopping malls took part in the Festival resulting in BD11 million worth of shopping along with a growth in the number of tourists from the GCC. The second edition also witnessed an increase in the daily sales revenues by 30% when compared to the results posted by the first edition. The Festival also offered employment opportunities by directly and indirectly hiring 175 Bahrainis. "The third-edition of the Festival aims to further drive the growth of the tourism and retail sectors through a close cooperation with the hospitality sector and shopping malls.

This will contribute to the development of the national economy whilst attracting tourists from the Gulf region," the Shop Bahrain Project Manager, Nawaf Alkoheji, told reporters in a press conference held at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel



and Spa, Kuwait. "The first two editions of the Festival were a huge success and the third-edition is the continuation of this achievement," he said adding that, "the organizing committee of Shop Bahrain has been working hand-in-hand with its partners from the public and private sector in order to ensure the success of the upcoming Festival in line with BTEA's Tourism Strategy and in accordance with Bahrain's Vision 2030."

"The Festival will also be held during the school holiday which will directly result in an influx of tourists from the region. This will positively impact the retail sector, drive the occupancy of the hotels and support the airline industry along with other service-led industries. The activities

and entertainment held during Shop Bahrain will further position the Kingdom as an ideal tourist destination. This year the line-up will be bigger and better," he said. "During the festival, tourists and guests can avail from loyalty points when using the services at any of the 17 participating hotels that includes a number of five and four star hotel," said Alkoheji.

The Kingdom's tourism strategy aims to increase the average tourist expenditure in Bahrain to reach BHD136 per day by the year 2018. Shop Bahrain will be a main driver as it will offer tourists a 30-day celebration catered to the entire family. The calendar of events includes a 'Festival City' located at the Bahrain Bay which will host a variety of activities for all



age groups. Other highlights include the return of the 'Taste Tour' which aims to showcase more than 25 mouth-watering restaurants in addition to raffle draws offering visitors and residents the opportunity to win big and amazing prizes. Shop Bahrain will mirror the Kingdom's position as an accessible family destination, renowned for its close

proximity to the Gulf countries with easy access through the King Fahad Causeway and the Bahrain International Airport. The Festival will offer an incredibly diverse range of retail experiences. Shoppers will be enrolled in the Festival's loyalty system when purchasing directly from any participating outlet and partner allowing them to win a wide range

of prizes. Shoppers and visitors can learn more about "Shop Bahrain" through the website: www.shopbahrain.com or through the account @shopbahrain on the social networking channels Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. The Festival organizers have also launched a dedicated whatsapp channel on +973 38999111.



CANADIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL HOLDS ITS MGM AT MEFAZEC



Canadian Business Council - CBC held its Monthly General Meeting at Mefazec office at Al Hamra Tower. Ishtiaq Malik, President of the CBC, welcomed the gathering and thanked Mefazec for hosting this event. He also thanked the Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait, Her Excellency Martine Moreau for the support and cooperation extended by the Canadian Embassy to CBC. Essa Al-Essa, founder Mefazec welcomed all attendees and briefed on the topic for the discussion helping start-ups to develop and expand in a nurturing environment & redefining the SME landscape in Kuwait.

Amira Al Zayed who handles Business Development at Mefazec presented to the council, explaining how Mefazec is the one stop shop for startups. Mefazec has a comprehensive range of services that lead to the ultimate pillars of support; to mentor, to finance, and to network. Their vision is to provide solutions for entrepreneurs and SME's under one roof, while helping corporations connect with them. At the end of the presentation, the Ambassador of Canada, Her Excellency Martine Moreau thanked Mefazec and presented plaques of appreciations to Essa Al-Essa and Amira Al Zayed. She also thanked Mefazec and all the participants. The attendees enjoyed the evening and discussed mutual business matters.





DAI, SHELL KUWAIT HOST DINNER FOR IASTE 15TH CONFERENCE



On December 18, 2016, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah (DAI), in partnership with Shell Kuwait, hosted a dinner for more than 200 delegates to the Fifteenth Conference of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE) "Legitimizing Tradition" being held in Kuwait 17 - 20 December organized by Kuwait University and Berkeley University. The dinner coincided with the opening of the American Cultural Centre's new Rewaq Gallery, sponsored by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), where DAI's Modern Architecture Kuwait (MAK) exhibition sponsored by Kuwait Foundation for the Development of Science (KFAS) is exhibited.



AMP CONDUCTS AN SDL



AMP Kuwait conducted a SDL on Financial Planning and Investment on Dec 9, at Better Book Store, Salmiya. The lecture was delivered by Salim Desai, CFO at Al-Razzi Holding and mentor to other organizations.

He is a respected and senior finance professional, active in social sphere determined to mentor students in selecting the right career to excel in the professional world. The lecture was finely crafted & aimed to build the importance

and understanding of financial planning in one's life. Investing options in Equity, Real Estate, Mutual Funds, etc. were discussed taking into consideration Investment type, investment period and the risk factors. Investments

based on Islamic Sharia were also presented to the audience & queries related to it were answered. The lecture and interactive session were well appreciated by the audience and requested AMP committee for more such lectures.

AL KOUT MALL WELCOMES 2017 WITH A WORLD OF WONDERS

With the year-end approaching, Al Kout Mall is set to host four days of breath-taking circus shows from Dec 29 2016 till Jan 1 2017. The New Year's festivities, which are to take place around Al Kout's landmark musical fountains, will feature international performers showcasing their unique talents in acrobatic and aerial acts, as well as juggling, cycling, and extreme balancing. The celebrations will be

capped off with a beautifully festive fireworks display above Al Kout at midnight on Dec 31 to ring in the New Year.

In addition to the circus shows, a range of kid's activities and games will be held throughout the four days, as well as a live Art Display by Austrian abstract artist Chris Brus, who will be working on several art installations simultaneously. Nermeen Bishady, Marketing

Manager, Al Kout, said, "Our ultimate goal at Al Kout is to spread joy and happiness amongst our visitors, especially at such a festive time. We see these New Year's celebrations as a culmination of our constant efforts throughout the year to entertain and bring happiness to our customers, and are both confident and hopeful that everyone will be blown away by the exciting show we have in store for them!"



WHAT'S ON - SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All photos submitted for What's On should be minimum 200dpi. Articles must be in plain text and should include name and phone numbers. Articles and photos that fail to meet these requirements will not be published.

Please send them to news@kuwaittimes.net

OSN MOVIES

ACTION

- 01:00 One In The Chamber
02:45 Deep Rising
04:45 Apocalypse Pompeii
06:15 Faster
08:15 Robot Overlords
10:00 I Am Number Four
12:00 Mutant World
14:00 Faster
15:45 Robot Overlords
17:30 I Am Number Four
19:30 Divergent
22:00 Deja Vu

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
01:45 Bondi Vet
02:10 Bondi Vet
02:40 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
03:35 Tanked
04:25 Wildlife SOS
05:15 Gator Boys
06:02 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
06:49 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
07:36 Swamp Brothers
08:00 Swamp Brothers
08:25 Groomer Has It
09:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
10:10 Into The Pride
11:05 Tanked
12:00 Groomer Has It
12:55 Bondi Vet
13:20 Bondi Vet
13:50 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
14:45 Gator Boys
15:40 Into The Pride
16:35 Tanked
17:30 Wildlife SOS
18:25 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
19:20 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
20:15 Tanked
21:10 My Wild Affair: The Ape Who Went To College
22:05 Into The Pride
23:00 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
23:55 Gator Boys

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 Who Was I? My Past Lives
01:00 Psychic Kids

- 21:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
21:30 Chappelle's Show
21:54 Ugly Americans
22:18 Inside Amy Schumer
22:42 Arlie Lange: Stench Of Failure
23:30 The Daily Show - Global Edition

Discovery Family

- 00:30 Storm Chasers
01:20 Dogs: The Untold Story
02:10 Finding Bigfoot
03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
03:25 Destroyed In Seconds
03:50 Beyond Survival With Les Stroud
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Storm Chasers
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 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 Ultimate Survival
12:00 Ultimate Survival
12:50 Ultimate Survival
13:40 Ultimate Survival
14:30 Ultimate Survival
15:20 Ultimate Survival
16:10 Kenny The Shark
16:35 Awesome Adventures
17:00 Secret Space Escapes
17:50 How The Universe Works
18:40 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
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 Destroyed In Seconds
23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
23:40 Beyond Survival With Les Stroud

ID

- 00:40 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen
01:30 A Crime To Remember
02:20 Suspicion
03:10 Murder Among Friends
04:00 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen
04:48 I Was Murdered
05:13 I Was Murdered
05:36 I Was Murdered
06:01 I Was Murdered

- 13:00 Dog With A Blog
13:25 Austin & Ally
13:50 Sonny With A Chance
14:15 Girl Meets World
14:40 Gravity Falls
15:05 Jessie
15:30 Backstage
15:55 Dog With A Blog
16:20 Girl Meets World
16:45 Girl Meets World
17:10 Elena Of Avalor
17:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
18:00 The Next Step
18:25 Descendants Wicked World
18:30 Liv And Maddie
18:55 Star Darlings
19:00 Sonny With A Chance
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
05:50 Zou
06:00 Loopedidoo
06:15 Art Attack

- 18:30 How Do They Do It?
18:55 How Do They Do It?
19:20 The Weapon Hunter
20:10 Storage Hunters UK
20:35 The Liquidator
21:00 Salvage Hunters
21:50 Marooned With Ed Stafford
22:40 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
23:30 Street Outlaws: New Orleans

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
08:35 Danger Mouse
09:00 K.C. Undercover
09:25 K.C. Undercover
09:50 Kirby Buckets
10:20 Kirby Buckets
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: Bionic Island
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
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 K.C. Undercover: Runaway Robot
18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:10 Becoming
18:35 Supa Strikas
19:00 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
19:55 K.C. Undercover
20:20 Counterfeit Cat
20:45 Mighty Med
21:10 Pickle And Peanut
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
22:35 Boyster
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

food network

- 00:00 Chopped South Africa
01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:00 Man Fire Food
02:30 Man Fire Food
03:00 Chopped
04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
05:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
05:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
06:00 Chopped
07:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
07:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
08:00 The Kitchen
09:00 Anna Olson: Bake
09:30 Anna Olson: Bake
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

itv HD CHOICE

- 00:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Cash Trapped
03:25 Jericho
04:20 Royal Stories
04:50 Royal Stories
05:15 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
06:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
07:05 Cash Trapped
08:00 Jericho

- 09:00 Royal Stories
09:30 Royal Stories
10:00 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
11:00 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
11:50 Cash Trapped
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
15:10 Cash Trapped
16:00 Big Star's Little Star
16:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
17:50 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Cash Trapped
21:00 Big Star's Little Star
21:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street

H2 HD

- 00:00 In Search Of Aliens
01:00 Ancient Aliens
02:00 America's Book Of Secrets
03:00 Ancient Discoveries
03:50 Warriors
04:40 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
05:30 In Search Of Aliens
06:20 America's Book Of Secrets
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Ancient Aliens
09:00 America's Book Of Secrets
10:00 Ancient Discoveries
11:00 How The States Got Their Shape
12:00 Heroes Of War
13:00 In Search Of Aliens
14:00 Ancient Aliens
15:00 America's Book Of Secrets
16:00 Ancient Discoveries
17:00 How The States Got Their Shape
18:00 Heroes Of War
19:00 Ancient Aliens
20:00 America's Book Of Secrets
21:00 Ancient Discoveries
22:00 Warriors
23:00 Engineering Disasters

HISTORY

- 00:25 Barbarians Rising
01:20 Criss Angel: Mindfreak
01:45 Criss Angel: Mindfreak
02:10 Storage Wars Texas
02:35 Storage Wars Texas
03:00 Car Hunters
03:25 Car Hunters
03:50 Car Hunters
04:15 Car Hunters
04:40 Pawn Stars
05:10 Time Team
06:00 Swamp People
06:50 Ax Men
07:40 Ice Road Truckers
08:30 Storage Wars Texas
08:55 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
09:20 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
09:45 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
10:10 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
10:35 Counting Cars: Best Of
11:00 Ax Men
11:50 Ax Men
12:40 Ax Men
13:30 Ax Men
14:20 Ax Men
15:10 Ax Men
16:00 Ax Men
16:50 Ax Men
17:40 Swamp People
18:30 Time Team
19:20 American Pickers
20:10 Pawn Stars
20:35 Pawn Stars
21:00 The Rise And Fall Of El Chapo
22:40 Time Team
23:30 Forged In Fire

nick jr.

- 00:15 Louie
00:22 Louie
00:30 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
00:53 Olive The Ostrich
01:03 Max & Ruby
01:26 Wanda And The Alien
01:37 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
02:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:22 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:45 Zack & Quack
03:05 Team Umizoomi
03:28 Louie
03:35 Louie
03:40 Olive The Ostrich
03:44 Olive The Ostrich
03:49 Paw Patrol
04:01 Paw Patrol
04:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom

HOW DO YOU KNOW



HOW DO YOU KNOW ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

- 04:35 Dora The Explorer
04:59 Max & Ruby
05:07 Bubble Guppies
05:29 Little Charmers
05:41 Shimmer And Shine
06:05 Dora And Friends
06:27 Zack & Quack
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:00 Paw Patrol
07:13 Paw Patrol
07:36 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Wanda And The Alien
08:11 Zack & Quack
08:22 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
08:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:10 Paw Patrol
09:35 Shimmer And Shine
09:58 Dora The Explorer
10:21 Paw Patrol
10:45 Little Charmers
10:57 Bubble Guppies
11:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
11:40 Zack & Quack
11:52 Team Umizoomi
12:15 Louie
12:22 Louie
12:30 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
12:53 Olive The Ostrich
12:58 Olive The Ostrich
13:03 Max & Ruby
13:26 Wanda And The Alien
13:37 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:48 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
14:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:22 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:45 Zack & Quack
15:05 Team Umizoomi
15:28 Louie
15:35 Louie
15:40 Olive The Ostrich
15:44 Olive The Ostrich
15:49 Paw Patrol
16:01 Paw Patrol
16:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
16:35 Dora The Explorer
16:59 Max & Ruby
17:07 Bubble Guppies
17:29 Little Charmers
17:41 Shimmer And Shine
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19:00 Paw Patrol
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20:22 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
20:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
21:10 Paw Patrol
21:35 Shimmer And Shine
21:58 Dora The Explorer
22:21 Paw Patrol
22:45 Little Charmers
22:57 Bubble Guppies
23:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
23:40 Zack & Quack
23:52 Team Umizoomi

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 The Americans
01:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
02:00 Scream Queens
03:00 The Strain
04:00 Good Morning America
06:00 Prison Break
07:00 The Amazing Race
08:00 The Night Shift
09:00 C.S.I. Cyber
10:00 Prison Break
11:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
12:00 Shark Tank
13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
14:00 The Amazing Race
15:00 Live Good Morning America
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
18:00 The Night Shift
19:00 Chicago Med
20:00 Blindspot
21:00 Lethal Weapon
22:00 Empire
23:00 American Crime

OSN MOVIES HD

FAMILY

- 01:00 Clockstoppers
03:00 Batman Unlimited: Animal Instincts
05:00 Minions
07:00 Big Baby
09:00 One Christmas Eve
11:00 Minions
13:00 Hey Arnold! The Movie
15:00 The Good Dinosaur
17:00 Cinderella
19:00 Mostly Ghostly: Have You Met My Ghoulfriend?
21:00 Dunston Checks In
23:00 The Good Dinosaur

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:30 Hacing Hearts
03:15 Spotlight
05:30 The End Of The Tour
07:15 Miss You Already
09:00 Spotlight
11:15 Paper Towns
13:00 The Longest Ride
15:15 The Best Of Me
17:15 The Benefactor
18:45 Terminator Genisys
21:00 Victor Frankenstein
23:00 Focus

OSN MOVIES HD

COMEDY

- 00:00 I Am An Eric's Billion Dollar Movie
02:00 The Invention Of Lying
04:00 Passed Away
06:00 Accidental Love
08:00 How Do You Know
10:15 Passed Away
12:00 The Invention Of Lying
14:00 A Madea Christmas
15:45 How Do You Know
18:00 Norbit
19:45 It's Complicated
22:00 The Ladies Man

OSN MOVIES

FESTIVAL

- 00:30 El Nino
02:45 Interstellar
05:30 Mystic River
07:45 Listen To Me Marlon
09:30 Breathe In
11:15 Interstellar
14:00 Late Bloomers
15:30 A Perfect Day
17:15 Breathe In
19:00 Testament Of Youth
21:30 The Judge

OSN MOVIES HD

KIDS

- 01:15 Blue Elephant 2
03:00 Daddy I'm A Zombie
04:00 Pixies
06:00 Evolution Man
07:45 Columbus In The Last Journey
09:15 Space Warriors
11:00 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure
12:45 Daddy I'm A Zombie
14:30 Bamse And The City Of Thieves



DIVERGENT ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 02:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
03:00 My Crazy Ex
04:00 Who Was I? My Past Lives
05:00 Psychic Kids
06:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
07:00 The First 48
08:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
09:00 Homicide Hunter
10:00 It Takes A Killer
10:30 It Takes A Killer
11:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
12:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
13:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
14:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
15:00 The First 48
16:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
18:00 I Love You But I Lied
19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 It Takes A Killer
21:30 It Takes A Killer
22:00 The First 48
23:00 Homicide Hunter

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:00 Chappelle's Show
00:25 Inside Amy Schumer
00:50 Tosh.0
01:15 Tosh.0
01:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
02:05 Whitney Cummings: I Love You
03:00 Workaholics
03:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
04:15 Key And Peele
04:40 Impractical Jokers
05:05 Ridiculousness
05:30 Lip Sync Battle
06:20 Frankenfood
06:50 Frankenfood
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
11:50 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
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
19:50 I Live With Models
20:13 Impractical Jokers
20:37 Ridiculousness

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
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06:45 The Hive
06:50 Mouk
07:00 Dog With A Blog
07:25 Dog With A Blog
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
08:20 Elena Of Avalor
08:45 Star Darlings
08:50 Liv And Maddie
09:15 Jessie
09:40 How To Build A Better Boy
10:30 Good Luck Charlie
12:35 Best Friends Whenever

Discovery Channel HD

- 00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:10 Blue Collar Backers
02:00 Bear's Wild Weekend With Stephen Fry
02:50 Sydney Harbour
03:40 Cuban Chrome
04:30 The Liquidator
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Deadliest Catch
06:50 Wheeler Dealers
07:40 Cuban Chrome
08:30 Deadliest Job Interview
09:20 The Liquidator
09:45 How Do They Do It?
10:10 How Do They Do It?
10:35 Blue Collar Backers
11:25 Bear's Wild Weekend With Stephen Fry
12:15 Sydney Harbour
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 Storage Hunters UK
13:55 The Liquidator
14:20 Railroad Alaska
15:10 The Weapon Hunter
16:00 Deadliest Catch
16:50 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
17:40 Wheeler Dealers



SPOTLIGHT ON OSN MOVIES HD

CLASSIFIEDS



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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (29/12/2016 TO 04/01/2017)

Channel	Time	Programme	Channel	Time	Programme
SHARQIA-1	12:15 PM	LA LA LAND	FANAR-2	12:00 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED
SHARQIA-1	2:45 PM	SING	FANAR-2	2:30 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED
SHARQIA-1	5:00 PM	LA LA LAND	FANAR-2	4:45 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED
SHARQIA-1	7:30 PM	MOANA	FANAR-2	7:15 PM	AVENUES-1
SHARQIA-1	10:00 PM	ESHTEBAK	FANAR-2	9:45 PM	THE MONSTER
SHARQIA-1	12:05 AM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	FANAR-2	11:45 PM	THE MONSTER
SHARQIA-2	12:30 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	FANAR-3	12:45 PM	THE MONSTER
SHARQIA-2	3:00 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	FANAR-3	3:30 PM	THE MONSTER
SHARQIA-2	5:30 PM	MOANA	FANAR-3	5:30 PM	THE MONSTER
SHARQIA-2	8:00 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	FANAR-3	8:00 PM	AVENUES-2
SHARQIA-2	10:30 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	FANAR-3	10:00 PM	MOANA -3D-4DX
SHARQIA-2	1:00 AM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	FANAR-3	12:05 AM	ASSASSIN'S CREED -3D-4DX
SHARQIA-3	12:45 PM	DANGAL -Hindi	FANAR-4	12:15 PM	MOANA -3D-4DX
SHARQIA-3	4:00 PM	MOANA	FANAR-4	2:45 PM	MOANA -3D-4DX
SHARQIA-3	6:15 PM	DANGAL -Hindi	FANAR-4	5:15 PM	MOANA -3D-4DX
SHARQIA-3	9:30 PM	THE MONSTER	FANAR-4	7:45 PM	PASSENGERS -3D-4DX
SHARQIA-3	11:30 PM	THE MONSTER	FANAR-4	10:15 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED -3D-4DX
MUHALAB-1	12:15 PM	DANGAL -Hindi	FANAR-5	11:30 AM	AVENUES-3
MUHALAB-1	3:30 PM	MOANA	FANAR-5	2:00 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
MUHALAB-1	6:00 PM	DANGAL -Hindi	FANAR-5	5:15 PM	ROGUE ONE A STAR WARS STORY
MUHALAB-1	9:15 PM	ESHTEBAK	FANAR-5	8:30 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
MUHALAB-1	11:15 PM	ESHTEBAK	FANAR-5	11:45 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
MUHALAB-2	11:30 AM	MOANA	MARINA-1	12:45 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED
MUHALAB-2	1:45 PM	MOANA	MARINA-1	3:15 PM	MOANA
MUHALAB-2	4:00 PM	SING	MARINA-1	5:45 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
MUHALAB-2	6:15 PM	MOANA	MARINA-1	8:00 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
MUHALAB-2	8:30 PM	THE MONSTER	MARINA-1	10:30 PM	ESHTEBAK
MUHALAB-2	10:30 PM	THE MONSTER	MARINA-1	1:00 AM	WITHIN
MUHALAB-2	12:30 AM	THE MONSTER	MARINA-1	3:00 PM	MOANA
MUHALAB-3	11:30 AM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	MARINA-2	12:00 PM	SING
MUHALAB-3	2:00 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	MARINA-2	2:15 PM	THE MONSTER
MUHALAB-3	4:30 PM	PASSENGERS	MARINA-2	4:15 PM	SING
MUHALAB-3	7:00 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	MARINA-2	6:30 PM	ESHTEBAK
MUHALAB-3	9:30 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	MARINA-2	8:30 PM	THE MONSTER
MUHALAB-3	12:05 AM	ASSASSIN'S CREED	MARINA-2	10:30 AM	THE MONSTER
FANAR-1	12:15 PM	WITHIN	MARINA-3	11:30 AM	THE MONSTER
FANAR-1	2:15 PM	THE MONSTER	MARINA-3	2:00 PM	THE MONSTER
FANAR-1	4:15 PM	MOANA	MARINA-3	3:15 PM	THE MONSTER
FANAR-1	6:30 PM	THE MONSTER	MARINA-3	5:15 PM	13 DAYS
FANAR-1	8:45 PM	WITHIN	MARINA-3	7:15 PM	THE MONSTER
FANAR-1	10:45 PM	THE MONSTER	MARINA-3	9:15 PM	THE MONSTER
FANAR-1	12:45 AM	WITHIN	MARINA-3	11:15 PM	THE MONSTER

FOR SALE

PRADO 4 cylinder, Model GX-L 2005, Golden color (wheel Rim-CD-Rear A/C) good condition, no damage, 174000 km, Cash KD 3000. Call: 97800987. (C 5251)
28-12-2016

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 22-12-2016**

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHEEMA ALTAF SAIN W/o ALTAF ABDUL WAHAB SAIN, holder of Indian Passport No. J3509095 and Civil ID No. 282102803398 want to change my name to SHEEMA BASHARAT FAZILLI. Hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of SHEEMA BASHARAT FAZILLI. (C 5250) 25-12-2016

ACCOMMODATION

For Filipino Bachelor ONLY near Big Jamiya Farwaniya. Available on December 25, Contact 66826412 or 97512782
22-12-2016

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr: 05:17
Shorook 06:41
Duhr: 11:50
Asr: 14:40
Maghrib: 16:58
Isha: 18:21

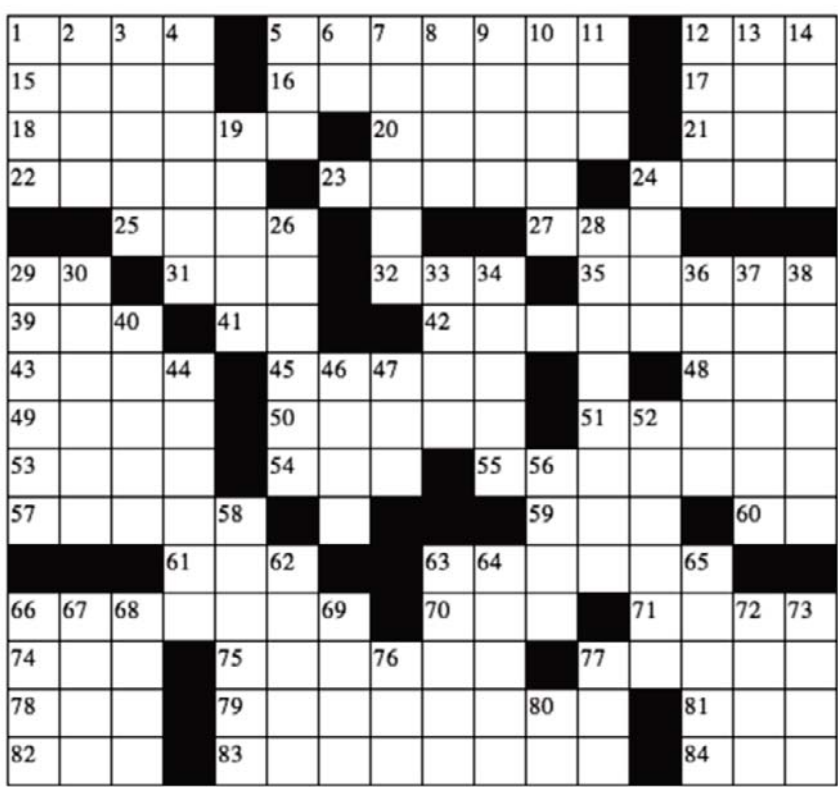
Flight Schedule

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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 29/12/2016				Departure Flights on Thursday 29/12/2016			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	FDB	076	Dubai	14:05
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
KAC	102	London	00:55	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	561	Amman	14:20
MSC	411	Asyut	01:00	KNE	382	Al Najaf	14:45
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	BON	102	Taif	14:50
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	FEG	932	Sarajevo	14:55
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	673	Alexandria	14:55
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	FDB	060	Dubai	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	785	Dubai	15:10
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	PAL	669	Jeddah	15:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	GFA	222	Manila	15:20
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	QTR	1079	Bahrain	15:25
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	JZR	188	Doha	15:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	SVA	501	Dubai	15:40
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:45
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	KAC	283	Dhaka	16:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:30
KAC	546	Cairo	03:55	OMA	646	Muscat	16:30
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	SAW	706	Damascus	16:55
MSC	501	Alexandria	04:05	KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
ETD	9891	BRU	04:30	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:55	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
FEG	933	Sohag	05:00	FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
JZR	503	Luxor	05:10	KAC	615	Bahrain	17:35
JZR	529	Asyut	05:15	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	KAC	343	Chennai	17:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	UAE	858	Cairo	17:45
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	KAC	353	BLR	18:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
BAW	157	London	06:40	JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	NIA	252	Alexandria	18:55
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	FDB	064	Dubai	19:05
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:15
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
QTR	8511	Doha	08:00	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	QTR	1081	Doha	19:50
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	383	Delhi	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	361	Colombo	20:35
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	KAC	775	Riyadh	20:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	MSR	619	Alexandria	21:05
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	OMA	648	Muscat	21:10
AVV	653	Sohag	10:10	KAC	619	Doha	21:20
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:35
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	DLH	634	Doha	21:35
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15	FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:00
FDK	801	Damascus	11:45	KAC	351	Kochi	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:10
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
FEG	953	Asyut	12:35	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
JZR	239	Amman	12:45	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:45
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:45
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	381	Delhi	22:45
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
BON	101	Sarajevo	13:30	KLM	417	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
KAC	564	Amman	13:40	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				NIA	152	Cairo	23:10
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

CROSSWORD 1475



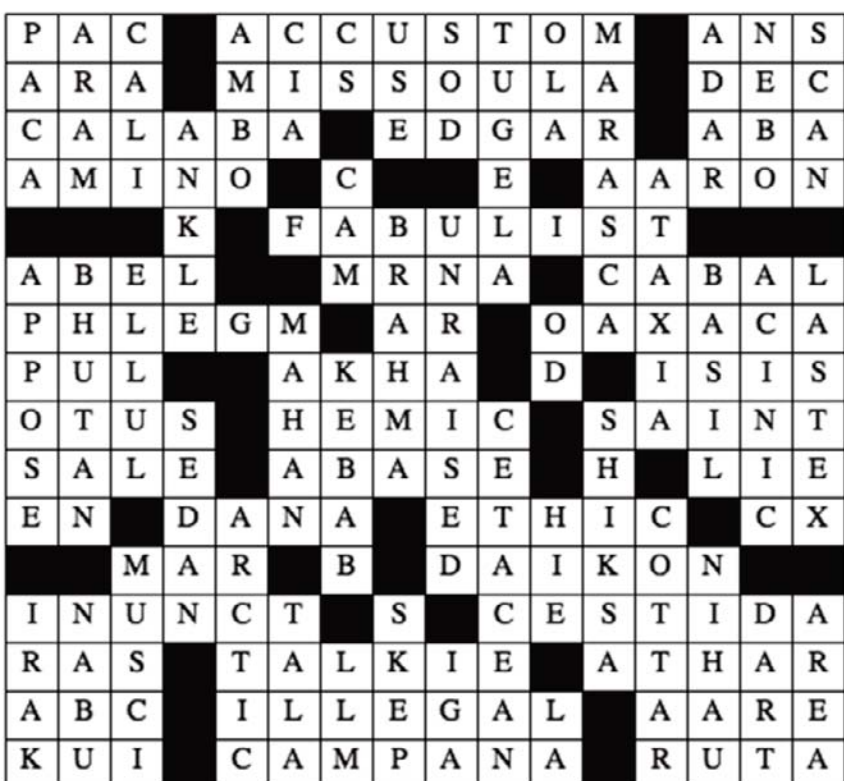
ACROSS

1. Winning all or all but one of the tricks in bridge.
5. Be behind.
12. Inquire about.
15. A genus of Mustelidae.
16. Distilled rather than fermented.
17. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
18. A state of extreme confusion and disorder.
20. Tall perennial herb of tropical Asia with dark green leaves.
21. Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
22. The Uralic language spoken by the Yeniseian people.
23. Give qualities or abilities to.
25. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
27. Hawaiian dish of taro root pounded to a paste and often allowed to ferment.
29. Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
31. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
32. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
35. Coffee with the caffeine removed.
39. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
41. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
42. Act of turning to for assistance.
43. The time period between dawn and noon.
45. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
48. An extension at the end and at right angles to the main building.
49. Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
50. Jordan's port.
51. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
53. A male sovereign.
54. The federal department responsible for safeguarding national security.
55. Type genus of the Lycaenidae.
57. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
59. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
60. The fifth day of the week.
61. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
66. A republic in northeastern South America on the Atlantic.
70. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
71. An anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as guilt about surviving or reliving the trauma in dreams or numbness and lack of involvement with reality or recurrent thoughts and images.
74. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
75. (Sumerian) Consort of Dumuzi (Tammuz).
78. An advanced law degree.
79. A category in some early taxonomies.
81. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
82. Perennial herb of East India to Polynesia and Australia cultivated for its large edible root yielding Otaheite arrowroot starch.
83. Sticking fast n.
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. The compass point that is one point east of southeast.
2. The right to take another's property if an obligation is not discharged.
3. Type genus of the Ardeidae.
4. A thick black tar intermediate between petroleum and asphalt.
5. Electronic warfare undertaken under direct control of an operational commander to locate sources of radiated electromagnetic energy for the purpose of immediate threat recognition.
6. A radioactive transuranic metallic element.
7. A full skirt with a gathered waistband.
8. Toward the mouth or oral region.
9. Tall New Zealand timber tree.
10. Having a sharp inclination.
11. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
12. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
13. A fraudulent business scheme.
14. God of love and erotic desire.
19. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
24. The function or position properly or customarily occupied or served by another.
26. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
28. Germanic barbarian leader who ended the western Roman Empire in 476 and became the first barbarian ruler of Italy (434-493).
30. (medicine) Of or relating to abnormal neuromuscular activity characterized by rapidly alternating muscle contraction and relaxation.
33. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
34. Of or like a cecum.
36. Paper with a crinkled texture.
37. Having an oblique or slanted direction.
38. An agricultural laborer in Arab countries.
40. An unbroken or imperfectly broken Mustang.
44. Shrub bearing oval-fruited kumquats.
46. A visual representation of an object or scene or person produced on a surface.
47. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
52. A flourish added after or under your signature (originally to protect against forgery).
56. The capital and largest city of Japan.
58. A strong paper or thin cardboard with a smooth light brown finish made from e.g. Manila hemp.
62. Any of various fissiped mammals with non-retractile claws and typically long muzzles.
63. The mansion of the lord of the manor.
64. Lower in esteem.
65. An ancient upright stone slab bearing markings.
67. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
68. Avatar of Vishnu.
69. The eleventh month of the Hindu calendar.
72. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
73. A Chadik language spoken south of Lake Chad.
76. The compass point that is midway between north and northeast.
77. Vietnamese New Year.
80. An associate degree in nursing.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Being able to understand those around you almost assures you of a special time with those who know you. Good feelings and a sense of harmony make this a pleasant time. Your almost charismatic behavior and eloquence in communication should find your co-workers following your lead, wherever you go. Someone older may come to you with a plan for a particular project this afternoon. This person is familiar with your organizational style. You might have the first annual neighborhood garage sale or plant sale. You contribute much aid to the project. You try to serve others in many different ways that can be quite creative. Your charity is commendable and contagious. This year you may prepare for next year by gathering new contributors.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may take pleasure from a good movie or book or feel like escaping from day-to-day realities for a bit. You comprehend an imaginative approach and may value collective or unconventional ideas. In a religious setting, there may be a need for your help with young people. This could be a choir or youth group. Those around you may appreciate your ability to take charge and organize. You may find your volunteer choices put real magic in your life-this may even be something that you will want to do permanently. Sorting things out and getting them organized keep you busy. You are deeply aware of interconnections between the present and other lives-perhaps history and future brush up against each other as one works with children.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Children, close family and many friends are dear to your heart. Knowing that you are appreciated and esteemed for your gifts and talents is a powerful need. Assuming risks can bring you trouble or big rewards. You may find that someone older has his or her own opinion about one or two of your ideas. With patience you will be able to make your point. You may think on any great development of the past and realize that adjustments are not always easy or quick to happen. Conditions may cause you to rethink a few things but with a few tweaks and a little time, you will succeed. You are the first to help a neighbor but you are quick to the rescue.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You could be looking for some answers to transportation questions that need to be expedited before the weekend parties. At this time of year there may be some slowdowns. You need to invite someone in your business to help as you visit a warehouse or some other storage type of facility in order to hold a place for your order to be delivered. Using the past as a guide, you are becoming more pleased with the progress of finding the solutions that are needed. Your inner resources and emotions are accented. This could potentially be a time to make some changes in your environment. There is a learning curve and you are there. You also apply spiritual teaching to your life. You have an inner glow that others can see.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

In the workplace today there are contemplations of future adventures and past adventures which may give you ideas of where you or you and your family could plan a travel adventure for next vacation time. Many of your friends know how to get the best buy and you double check the safest route to place your money. Business is rushed this afternoon and everyone stays fairly busy the rest of today. It may have come to your attention that you could write an adventure book without going on an adventure... You have maps and pictures. You must believe and dare to make things happen! This means expanding your mind, your belief system and your whole base of knowledge and experience. You may get some ideas from studying weather forecasts.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Striving to be the best that you can be will be uppermost in your life at this time. You enjoy where you are in your life and you enjoy thinking about how to move forward with new ideas. You may become interested in political issues as well as become involved in a bit of remodeling to your home or perhaps there is a decision to purchase a new home. You also enjoy reading and may find yourself at a book sale or library sometime after work this afternoon. A good book or movie relaxes and refreshes your creative energies. You will feel a great deal of pride for your accomplishments. You learn a great deal from the leisure time pursuits that you undertake at this time. A fireplace, bright lights and warm drinks chase away any gloom or chill this evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

An irresistible force meets an immovable object today and this could mean an unhappy client. Don't try to make it right, just ask what you can do to please this customer and then be sympathetic. Stop and realize that life still moves forward and now the option is how you get through a situation and help the client to move forward. There is an opportunity to dive into some disciplined work, but if you push too hard, you may break something. When you are home this afternoon you may crave appreciation. Instead of reaping the rewards for some good deed or action, give away the compliments to a member of the family who may want the same. An important bond, possibly with a young person, unknowingly brings you a new understanding.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Enlarging your intellectual horizon takes on a high priority this morning. It may be your turn to speak in a meeting this morning and you find yourself looking for ways to expand your vocabulary. You are intent on helping others to see the big picture and make your presentation to speak for your company as well as possible. The response to your speech is positive and you will have more opportunities to excel and speak about your company and the advances your company is making. The time you spend throughout this day is beneficial to your future and to the future of a few very kind and interested bystanders. Celebrate your successes this evening; you are enthusiastic in the possibilities of tomorrow. Surprise the family with a fun dessert this evening.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Changes in social attitude seem to be happening faster these days. There may be some interesting results from these changes. This all may include how people treat each other in all types of scenarios, all over the world, and you may be watching, learning and teaching. This may include gifts, sharing time, seating, caring for others, etc. If you are in the medical or travel business you may remain puzzled over the attitude of others from all variety of family units. You demonstrate the ability to understand and be sensitive to other people's needs. You may become an excellent counselor for families, groups, nations or little children on a baseball team. You are a very kind-hearted and generous person and you like to be recognized for your many contributions.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You discover a good sale when you go to one of the stores to purchase a gift today. Try not to stay too long-you could find too many ways to spend your money. You attract social contacts, through the work that you do and those contacts tend to multiply. This may be one of those times that you find yourself extremely busy. You have a flair for showmanship, music and physical dexterity. It may not be possible for you to incorporate all your talents into one career. You will find yourself calling through some of the collections you have enjoyed over time. There is a party to celebrate this day as well as the stability of a romantic relationship. You are just where you need to be and this evening you will enjoy the attention from friends.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

On a personal point, a song, story, poem or simply a project may be going on in your head and you seek to carry through and complete your thought process. In the workplace an outline may be the process of developing that will help guide you to accomplish whatever you set out to do. With the year winding down there are still a lot of errands left for you to tend to this afternoon. Introduction to new communication tools helps you get your ideas over to more people than you can imagine. What you have to say may be of interest to a movie studio so you might want to understand the art of copyrighting in order to secure your art. When getting gifts, you might check out the garden shops as they would have those organic gifts for your friends.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

In the workplace this morning, you have an opportunity to catch up on a few phone calls before it gets busy. It may be quite crowded in your place of business today, in fact, all-day-long. The attitude this day is certainly not defeatist-you seem happy to enjoy having the opportunity to turn a negative into a positive. The positives can become financially rewarding. The sales are quick and often and you may be concerned that the people that receive the gifts may want to return them for something else. Always include a sales receipt to help expedite any return transaction. You will be able to meet your goals for the day and this evening you visit with people that you love and do not see often. Abandoned animals have your attention tonight and you can help.

WORD SEARCH

Birds

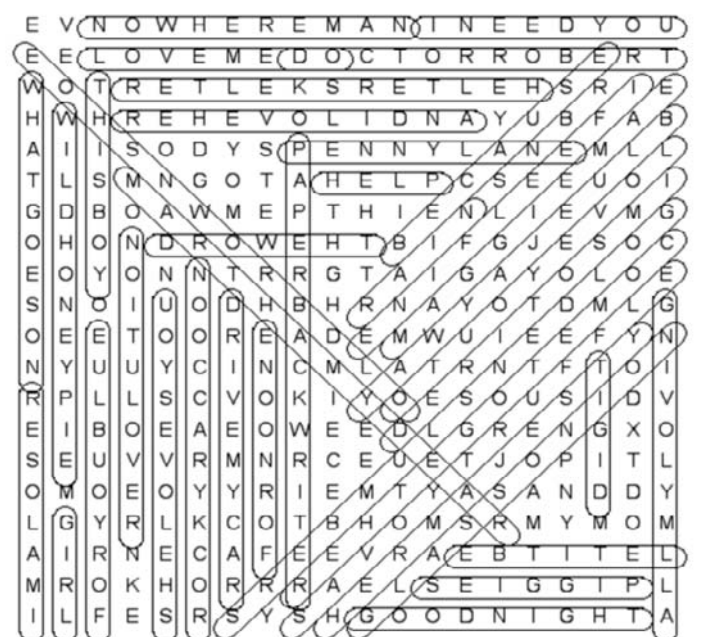
Find and circle all of the birds that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional bird.



- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| BLACKBIRD | EAGLE | MARTIN | ROBIN |
| BUDGIE | EMU | MOCKINGBIRD | SEAGULL |
| CANARY | FALCON | MYNA | SPARROW |
| CARDINAL | FINCH | OSTRICH | SWAN |
| CHICKEN | FLAMINGO | OWL | TURKEY |
| CRANE | GOOSE | PARAKEET | VULTURE |
| CROW | HAWK | PARROT | WOODPECKER |
| DODO | HERON | PELICAN | WREN |
| DOVE | JAY | PIGEON | |
| DUCK | MAGPIE | RAVEN | |

Yesterday Solution

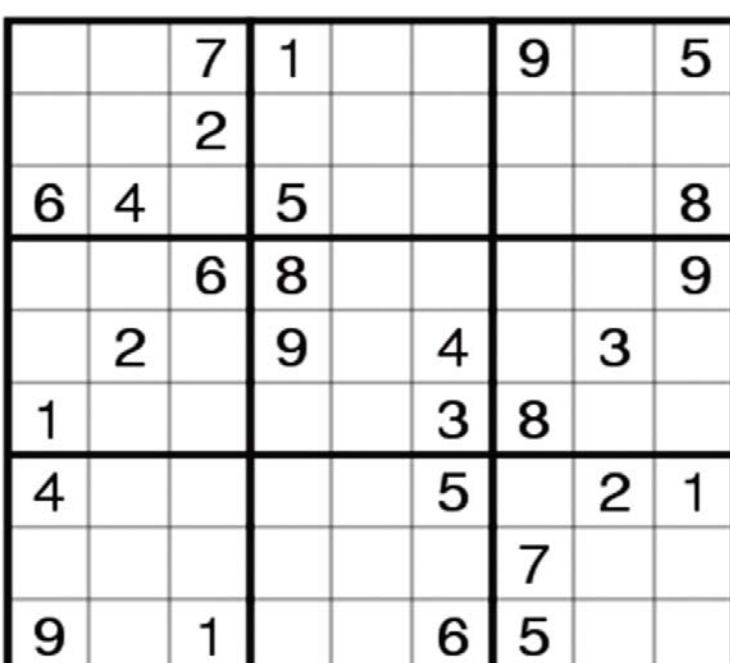
Beatles Songs 2



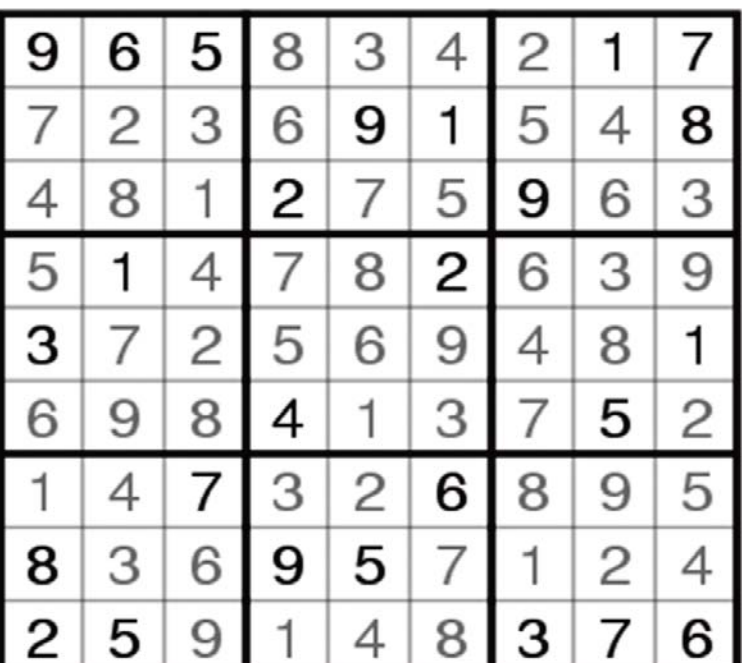
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| ALL MY LOVING AND I LOVE HER | GIRL GLASS ONION | I'M SO TIRED LET IT BE | PIGGIES |
| BECAUSE | GOLDEN SLUMBERS | LOVE ME DO | RAIN |
| BLUE JAY WAY | GOOD NIGHT | LOVE YOU TO | ROCKY RACCOON |
| COME TOGETHER | HELP | MAGGIE MAE | SAVOY TRUFFLE |
| DIG IT | HELTER SKELTER | MARTHA MY DEAR | SHE LOVES YOU |
| DOCTOR ROBERT | HER MAJESTY | NOWHERE MAN | THE WORD |
| DRIVE MY CAR | I FEEL FINE | OLD BROWN SHOE | THIS BOY |
| FOR NO ONE | I NEED YOU | PAPERBACK WRITER | WHAT GOES ON |
| FOR YOU BLUE | I'M A LOSER | PENNY LANE | WILD HONEY PIE |

Hidden song: EVERYBODY'S GOT SOMETHING TO HIDE EXCEPT ME AND MY MONKEY

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128



PHARMACIES
ON 24 HRS DUTY

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahael 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

Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macao	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



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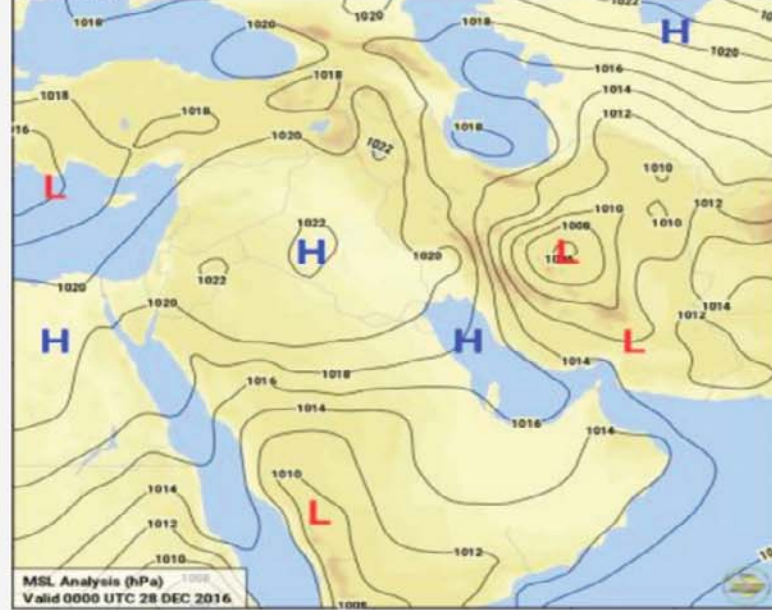


Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours
Issued 28/12/2016-09:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 22 °C

By Day : Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening gradually at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h
By Night : Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening gradually north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	Mostly sunny	partly cloudy	Mostly sunny	sunny
Min Temp °C	13	13	15	12
Max Temp °C	23	25	27	22
Wind Direction	north westerly to light variable	variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly	variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 28	08 - 28	08 - 30	22 - 40

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	16	20
KUWAIT AIRPORT	17	22
ABDALY	14	21
BUBYAN	16	18
JAHRA	16	22
FAILAKA ISLAND	16	21
SALMIYAH	16	20
AHMADI	16	21
JAL ALIYAH	14	21
QAROH ISLAND	18	23
UMM AL-MARADEM	19	23
NUWAISIB	16	23
WAFRA	15	24
MANAGISH	14	23
SALMY	12	21
MUTRIBA	13	22

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	22
Min Temp (°C)	13
Max Rel Hum (%)	98
Min Rel Hum (%)	50
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	28 NE
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	06:41
Sunset	16:58

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:16
Sunrise	06:41
Zuhr	11:49
Asr	14:39
Sunset	16:58
Isha	18:20



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabaea	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-Daary	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-Mikhaazem	23926920
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 Abidallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abidallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25732123

The banal looks beautiful in the poetic 'Paterson'

Waking up. Making coffee. Walking to work. Talking to coworkers. Coming home. Walking the dog. Going to the bar. Repeating it all again. These are the mundane activities Jim Jarmusch's "Paterson" is made of. While they're the things most of us do without much thought, and often with a little dread, in "Paterson," they're everything, they're life and they're beautiful. This quiet sentimentality is because Jarmusch is showing us this world through the eyes of a peculiar man named Paterson (a subtle, wonderful Adam Driver), a bus-driving poet in Paterson, New Jersey, who favors William Carlos Williams, author of the epic poem "Paterson." He lives with a beautiful woman, Laura (Golshifteh Farahani), and he goes about his life gently, often letting his poems take over his thoughts. As he walks through the brick-lined, industrial landscape of Paterson, we hear him working out a poem in his head. "We have plenty of matches in our house ... we have plenty of matches in our house ..." He writes it down when he can and expands from there.

This happens often, but instead of just audio, Jarmusch scribbles Paterson's verses across the screen, daring us to really consider the words. This film isn't some quirky gimmick about a blue collar fellow with

an artist's heart; it's deeply sincere and lifelike. Part of that is because Paterson's world is full of characters - real-ish seeming people who come in and out of his life. He seems to delight in the randomness. When Paterson drives, he takes in his environment, listening and enjoying the conversations between the two kids whose feet don't touch the floor of the bus talking about Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, who is from Paterson and "looks like Denzel Washington," or the men talking about girls and obviously lying to each other but both accepting the other's delusions, or even the teens (who some viewers might recognize as the kids from "Moonrise Kingdom") talking about anarchy. He also tolerates his perpetually aggrieved co-worker who always has a laundry list of woes to rattle off when presented with a courtesy "how are you?"

Sort of magical

At home, he listens attentively to Laura, who is sometimes ridiculous, but endlessly supportive of him. When he wakes up, peacefully and without an alarm, she turns to him and says something sweet. During the day, she borders on eccentric, painting everything in their house shades of black and white. One day she tells him with the utmost sincerity that she's going to

be in the cupcake business and the next, she's ordering a guitar online because she also might just become a famous country star like Patsy Cline or Tammy Wynette. Paterson looks at her lovingly and nods and goes along with her whims and her petulant dog because it's love, after all.

It's at the corner bar where Paterson really comes to life, though. The bar is that sort of magical, perfect dive that's homey and dark and pleasant and has jazz playing faintly in the background while patrons speak and drink quietly and play chess and just unwind. This place likely does not exist, but in Paterson's Paterson it might as well. He talks to the owner about the town's famous alumni, like Lou Costello, and smiles and laughs more than he does under any other circumstances. But he never comes up with poems at the bar. It's his break, too.

The film has a somewhat meditative effect, which, I imagine for some, might also be a sedative on. That's not a jab, but this is not a passive, turn your brain off time at the movies. And, if you let it, it might just be one that leaves you reconsidering whatever awaits you after the film, whether it's taking out the garbage, shoveling the driveway or whatever unsung banalities your future holds. "Paterson," a Bleeker



Street/Amazon Studios release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "some language." Running time: 118 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four. — AP

This image released by Amazon Studios & Bleeker Street shows Adam Driver, left, and Golshifteh Farahani in a scene from, "Paterson." — AP



Review

'Gaza Surf Club'

Audiences everywhere will be embracing "Gaza Surf Club," an inspiring, warmhearted look at a group of resilient spirits who find a way to indulge their passion for surfing while living in the Gaza Strip, one of the world's most battle-scarred locales. Directors Philip Gnad and Mickey Yamine focus most on two people: a 23-year-old man dreaming of training in Hawaii, and a teenage girl whose journey to adulthood means having to give up life in the waves. While all the expected surfer pic shots are included, this isn't a documentary for the usual aficionados but a spirited and moving profile of an informal, independent group finding escape via that most free-spirited of sports. The film's release in Germany in early 2017 is likely to prefigure a wider international rollout.

Strangled by Israel and ruled by the fundamentalist organization Hamas, the Gaza Strip has become an embodiment of misery, its tightly-packed population trapped between relentless Israeli assaults and a strictly controlled seafloor. It's not a place one expects to find surfers, but for years a group of men - and some girls - have looked to riding the waves as their only form of mental escape. Using rough, homemade boards and precious professional ones brought in by groups such as Surfing 4 Peace, these determined nonconformists find relief from the hopelessness of their situation in the Mediterranean's waves.

Ibrahim Arafat, 23 at the film's end, would fit in anywhere that fellow board-worshippers congregate. Mentored by Matthew Olsen, an American who helped connect the Gaza surfers to the international community

through his organization Explore Corps, Ibrahim resists family pressure to become a fisherman, instead dreaming of going to Hawaii to intern with board makers. Visas however are extremely difficult to come by for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and he's already been rejected five times.

Sabah Abu Ghanem, 15, faces a different problem. Before puberty, her father, Rajab, taught her to surf, and she adored the feeling of freedom. But Hamas enforces a conservative interpretation of Islam, and now that she wears a hijab, she can only look longingly at the sea since even bathing can be considered immodest. Trapped not only by politics but religion as well, Sabah embodies the frustration of dreams by the regime's rigid application of fundamentalist constraints. For Ibrahim at least, good news breaks through the clouds of oppression, and his visa application is accepted. It's a thrilling moment, with the directors following him on his journey from bombed-out lots and constant uncertainty to the surfing paradise of Hawaii, which unsurprisingly leads to a high degree of culture shock that the documentary only briefly touches upon. What has happened since the cameras stopped rolling is left deliberately hanging in the air, and there are sure to be scads of Google hits as viewers try to learn more about Ibrahim and Sabah. The film's widescreen visuals nicely capture the thrill of the waves and the sense of the beach as a haven from the prison-like existence that characterizes the Gaza Strip. — Reuters



'Ali, the Goat and Ibrahim'

A curious buddy-road movie with surrealist touches, celebrated short-film director Sherif El Bendary's feature debut brings together disparate elements for an unexpectedly warm-hearted finale that asserts the primacy of love in whatever form it may take. Audiences will likely spend at least half the viewing time trying to work out the metaphors, only to conclude that they're thinking too hard: "Ali, the Goat and Ibrahim" is perhaps most surprising because it wants to be taken straight, even if it is about a man in love with a goat, and another tormented by phantom sounds. Balanced in that nether-region between mainstream and art house, the film has occasional missteps but ultimately projects a refreshing degree of guilelessness, and could nicely slot into festival programs in need of more upbeat fare.

El Bendary's shorts and medium-length documentary "On the Road to Downtown" had a visible presence on the festival scene, and "Ali" received grants from a number of film funds (Final Cut in Venice, Sanad, Enjaaz, etc.). Based on an unpublished story by fellow director Ibrahim El Batout ("Winter of Discontent") and fleshed out by rising screenwriter Ahmed Amer, "Ali" makes remarkably few political statements, but perhaps it's not too much of an over-reading to speculate that its apolitical stance is itself a reaction to Egypt's increasingly repressive measures. Rather than going the usual route of using metaphor to obliquely comment on the society, the filmmakers look inward, suggesting that overcoming personal demons through love is the only way Egyptians can currently work towards a more equitable society.

A nicely shot opening introduces a large pink teddy bear, carried by Ali (Ali Sobhy, winner of the best actor award in Dubai). He's bringing the stuffed animal to his girlfriend Nada, but he and friend Kamata (Osama Abo El-Ata) are stopped by a

nasty cop (Asser Yassin in a fun cameo appearance) who disembowels the bear while searching for suspected drugs, ignoring cries of help from an abducted woman in a speeding car. Once Ali and Kamata are released, the two friends look to rescue the woman, who turns out to be a prostitute named Nour, real name Sabah (Nahed El Sebai).

It's unclear why the script bothers with this poorly integrated, unsatisfactory side plot, though presumably El Bendary and Amer felt the need for a female character, as well as an additional example of nontraditional love, along the lines of Don Quixote (in the more Sancho Panza guise of Kamata) and Dulcinea. The cop's preoccupation with the teddy bear rather than the abducted woman makes a statement about police priorities, yet the critique makes barely a dent. Fortunately, attention quickly returns to Ali and his love Nada, who's not exactly a traditional girlfriend: She's a goat - a very sweet, white goat, but still a goat, whom he treats as he would a human companion. Ali's mother Nusa (Salwa Mohamed Aly, one of Egyptian cinema's underappreciated gems) is fed up and takes her son to a spiritual healer, who tells



him to throw a stone into each of Egypt's three bodies of water: Nile, Mediterranean, and Red Sea.

Family ailment

Also at the healer's is Ibrahim (Ahmed Magdy) a sound engineer tormented by phantom screeches, which sound like high-pitched microphone feedback. It's a family ailment: His mother killed herself because of it, and his grandfather made himself deaf to escape the noise. Ibrahim tries to record the sound in order to exorcise it, but he fails, and in desperation seeks out the same witch doctor as Ali. So begins the road movie part of the film, in which this unlikely duo, of vastly different temperaments, try to find inner peace. The story's absurdist elements must come from somewhere, and El Bendary has spoken of the characters' neuroses springing from Cairo's chaotic assault on its residents' sensibilities. The noise in Ibrahim's head can be taken as the cacophonous pressures of the metropolis, and Ali's attachment to the goat as a response to the city's tendency to alienate people from those around them. That viewers accept Ali's profound love for Nada - and even find it touching at the end - testifies to the director's skill as well as actor Sobhy's ability to win over audiences with a nuanced performance that combines an all-out charm assault with surprising depth.

The film has intermittent balance problems, particularly around scenes with Sabah the prostitute. When Ali and Kamata rescue her from a gang of nasty clients, they douse the car with accelerant and set it alight with the perpetrators still inside - an excessive action out of keeping with Ali and Kamata's characters. Rapid editing during Ibrahim's torments feels ungainly, though for the most part the camerawork has a smooth, satisfying sense of movement. — Reuters

'Rogue One' dominating holiday box office, 'Sing' leads newcomers

'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story' remains powerful at the US holiday box office with a dominant \$15 million on Christmas Eve at 4,157 sites, and projections of a \$120 million-plus haul over the six-day Dec 21-26 period. Illumination-Universal's animated comedy "Sing" easily led the rest of the pack on Christmas Eve with a solid \$7.9 million at 4,022 locations, followed by Sony's "Passengers" with \$2.9 million, Fox's "Assassin's Creed" with \$2.2 million, and Fox's "Why Him?," which tied with Disney's "Moana" at \$1.8 million. Paramount launched Denzel Washington-Viola Davis' "Fences" with \$750,000 at 1,547 sites in Saturday night showings and plans to expand the drama to about 2,200 locations Sunday.

Overall moviegoing slowed on Christmas Eve, as expected, with "Rogue One" falling about 33% from Friday and "Sing" declining about 40%. Business should rebound sharply on Christmas Day on Sunday and on Monday, an official holiday for many. Disney-Lucasfilm's "Rogue One" wrapped business on Christmas Eve with about \$260 million domestically in its first nine days and is projected to finish the holiday on Monday with about \$327 million. That will be enough to pull it past "Suicide Squad" as the eighth-highest domestic grosser of the year.

'Sing'

Felicity Jones stars as Jyn Erso, a rebel attempting to steal the plans for the Death Star, in a story set immediately before the events in the original "Star Wars." Diego Luna, Ben Mendelsohn, Donnie Yen, Mads Mikkelsen, Alan Tudyk, Riz Ahmed, Jang Wen, and Forest Whitaker also star. "Rogue One," the eighth "Star Wars" movie, is running about 42% behind the pace of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," which opened a year ago and grossed a still-stunning \$571 million in its first 11 days on its way to a record \$936.6 million domestic total.

"Sing" is projected to come in second with about \$71.5 million over the six days in line with forecasts followed by the Jennifer Lawrence-Chris Pratt sci-fier "Passengers" at about \$29 million to \$30 million, and video game adaptation "Assassin's Creed" at \$22.6 million. "Sing," which has a \$75 million budget, follows a group of animals performing in an "American Idol"-style contest. The voice cast includes Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Seth MacFarlane, Scarlett Johansson, John C. Reilly, Taron Egerton, and Tori Kelly.

"Passengers" carries a \$110 million price tag with financing from Village Roadshow, LStar Capital, and Wanda Pictures. It's performing at the low end of expectations amid an unenthusiastic critical reception, earning

32% rating on Rotten Tomatoes. "Assassin's Creed," which has a budget of \$120 million and was financed by New Regency, is generating even less support from critics, with a 19% rating on Rotten Tomatoes. Michael Fassbender stars as a career criminal sent back to the Spanish Inquisition in the movie, based on the popular Ubisoft video game franchise. Fox also reported Sunday that "Assassin's Creed" has grossed \$13.3 million internationally from 2,878 screens in 22 markets, with strong holiday launches from France with \$5.1 million and from Spain with \$2 million for a first-place finish. Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand also saw first-place openings.

'La La Land'

James Franco's romantic comedy "Why Him?," which opened Friday, is forecast to finish the four-day weekend with about \$14.4 million at 2,917 locations. That's about in line with recent expectations for the film, in which Franco plays a freewheeling Silicon Valley tycoon attempting to ingratiate himself to his girlfriend's horrified father, portrayed by Bryan Cranston. "Why Him?" has a \$38 million budget and also stars Zoey Deutch as the girlfriend and Megan Mullally as her mother. It appears to be performing similarly to Paramount's "Office Christmas Party," which took in \$974,000 on Christmas Eve, and will wind up the weekend with about \$44 million in three weeks.

Disney's animated film "Moana," now in its fifth weekend, remains a decent draw as one of five titles to earn more than \$1 million on Christmas Eve. The movie should wind up the holiday weekend with more than \$184 million. Lionsgate's awards contender "La La Land" reeled in an estimated \$815,000 at 205 locations on Christmas Eve for \$9.7 million after 16 days of limited release. The romantic comedy-drama, starring Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling, expands to 734 locations Sunday.

Martin Scorsese's historical drama "Silence" is projected to finish the four days with \$170,000 at four theaters. The film stars Liam Neeson, Andrew Garfield, and Adam Driver as 17th century priests who face brutal persecution in Japan. "Patriots Day," from CBS Films and Lionsgate, took in \$34,336 on Christmas Eve from seven locations and is projected to wind up the six-day holiday break with about \$280,000. The Boston Marathon bombing movie is directed by Peter Berg and stars Mark Wahlberg. — Reuters



'Hello Fort Lauderdale'



Emirates 777-200LR

EMIRATES MAKES FORT LAUDERDALE ITS 11TH US DESTINATION



(From third left) Hubert Frach, Emirates Divisional Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations, West, Mayor Barbara Sharief and Mark Gale, CEO and Director of Aviation in Florida during the event. — Photos by Sahar Moussa

By Sahar Moussa

Emirates launched its 154th destination in the world and its 11th destination in the United States with the start of a daily nonstop service between Dubai and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL) on Thursday, December 15, 2016. The inaugural flight EK 213 to Florida touched down at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport at 10:50 am local time after a nonstop 16-and-a-half hours after taking off from Dubai at 3:30 am Dubai time early Thursday morning, where it was greeted by the customary water cannon salute, the airport's staff and local media.

The aircraft, a Boeing 777-200LR, was full, which was expected, according to Hubert Frach, Emirates Divisional Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations, West, when asked why Emirates chose Fort Lauderdale to be its 11th destination, especially as it is the second gateway to Florida after Orlando, that was launched last year, he said, "We believe that Fort Lauderdale is certainly a very interesting and large market. It is big in terms of commerce and tourism in the area of Fort Lauderdale, Miami and West Palm Beach. In addition to the six million people living in this area, the ports of Port Miami and Port Fort Lauderdale are the number one and number three cruise ports in the US, so you have a lot of interesting market segments in and around Fort Lauderdale," said Frach.

Passengers wishing to travel beyond the Fort Lauderdale-Miami area to onward destinations can take advantage of Emirates' partnership with JetBlue Airways (B6) that offers connection options to 32 destinations in the US and connection to destinations in Bahamas, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, and Peru.

Passengers from the Middle East, Africa, South Asian subcontinent, and the Far East can enjoy quick and convenient connections in Dubai before they travel onwards to Fort Lauderdale. In particular, passengers from destinations such as Beirut, Doha, Riyadh, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Bangkok, Cebu, Singapore,



Photo shows (from third left) Hubert Frach, Emirates Divisional Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations, West, Mayor Barbara Sharief and Mark Gale CEO and Director of Aviation in Florida, are pictured cutting the cake during event.



Kuwait Times' Entertainment Editor Sahar Moussa (third right), Journalist Jocelyne Elia with Emirates' hostesses.



Photo shows Hubert Frach, Emirates Divisional Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations, West and Mayor Barbara Sharief during the event.

He later addressed journalists from Florida, reporters from Kuwait, UAE and Britain, VIPs and members of the aviation authorities in Fort Lauderdale. "At Emirates, we're proud to be global connectors of people, places and economies. Today's flight carried passengers from North America, the Far East, the Middle East, South Asia, the Asian subcontinent and Africa - a powerful demonstration of this point. In fact, it is the first scheduled commercial service from the Middle East in the airport's history. We expect this new route to significantly enhance South Florida's commercial and cultural connections with this important region of the world, and throughout our global network," he said.

Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, as well as Colombo and Karachi will experience connection times of less than four hours in Dubai.

Mark Gale, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport's Director of Aviation, was elated. "The arrival of Emirates to our airline portfolio at FLL means Christmas has arrived 10 days early." He highlighted the local economic impact of Emirates' flight to Broward County, expected to be \$105 million annually, supporting 1,000 local jobs in the tourism field. Also present at the event was Broward County Mayor Barbara Sharief, who said FLL is one of the fastest growing airports in the US, servicing more than 29 million passengers this year.

Fort Lauderdale is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the United States, thanks to its abundant sunshine and temperate weather. Its immaculate beaches and championship golf courses attract leisure travellers. Fort Lauderdale is also a popular destination for the cruise industry with Broward County's Port Everglades one of the top three busiest cruise ports in the world, with more than four million annual visitors.

As for Emirates' future plans and what its 12th US destination will be, Frach said: "We have been in the US since 2004, when we launched our first flight to JFK. We are interested, but there are no immediate plans for the immediate future."

At the end of the event, Emirates offered a silver nao diorama to the Broward County Airport authority, while the County declared the 15th as the Emirates Airline appreciation day.

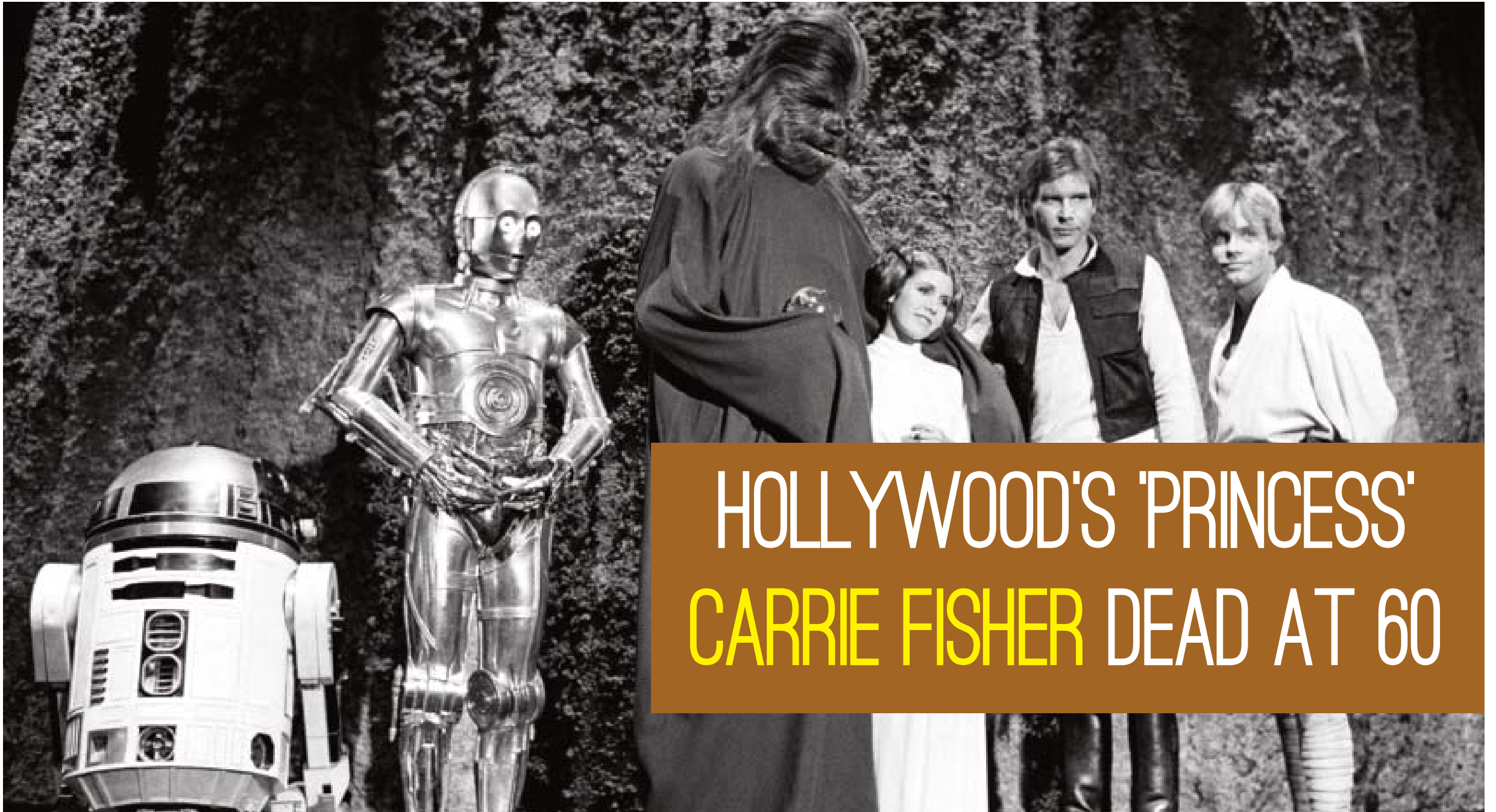


Kuwait Times' Entertainment Editor Sahar Moussa and Hatem Omar, Emirates' Public Relation Manager



Emirates 777-200LR

OBITUARY



HOLLYWOOD'S 'PRINCESS' CARRIE FISHER DEAD AT 60

This Nov 13, 1978 file photo shows, from left, Kenny Baker, Anthony Daniels, Peter Mayhew, Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford, and Mark Hamill during the filming of the CBS-TV special 'The Star Wars Holiday' in Los Angeles. — AP/AFP photos

After decades of fast living that her fearless "Star Wars" character Princess Leia would have struggled to keep up with, Carrie Fisher died Tuesday following a massive heart attack. She was 60. The American actress, best-selling author and screenwriter who suffered from numerous addictions she later turned into writing gold—was a member of Hollywood royalty, both on screen and off. Born in Los Angeles in October 1956, the daughter of actress Debbie Reynolds and singer Eddie Fisher became an international star overnight with the release of "Star Wars" in 1977.

Leia was the tough rebel princess in a white dress with a strange hairdo and blaster guns, who was unafraid to stare down the villainous Darth Vader. Six years later in "Return of the Jedi," she became a sex symbol in a barely-there metal bikini—but remained the tough heroine, killing her slug-like gangster jailer Jabba the Hutt by choking him with the chain he used to hold her captive.

The blockbuster space saga is now part of pop culture legend and a worldwide fan favorite. Fisher was back in the spotlight after reprising her iconic role in 2015's "Star Wars: The Force Awakens." She was returning Friday from the London leg of a tour promoting her headline-grabbing memoir "The Princess Diarist" when she collapsed 15 minutes before landing in Los Angeles, where paramedics and hospital staff were unable to revive her.

"It is with a very deep sadness that Billie Lourd confirms that her beloved mother Carrie Fisher passed away at 8:55 this morning," family spokesman Simon Halls said in a statement to AFP on behalf of Fisher's daughter. Tributes began

pouring in soon after news of her death spread on social media, led by "Star Wars" co-stars Mark Hamill-Luke Skywalker in the saga—who initially tweeted that he was "devastated" and had "no words."

"It's never easy to lose such a vital, irreplaceable member of the family, but this is downright heartbreaking," he said later. "Carrie was one-of-a-kind who belonged to us all—whether she liked it or not." "Star Wars" creator George Lucas called Fisher "extremely smart; a talented actress, writer and comedienne with a very colorful personality that everyone loved." The legendary filmmaker Steven Spielberg described her as "a force of nature, of loyalty and of friendship" while Walt Disney Company chief Bob Iger said she was "a true character who shared her talent and her truth with us all."

Hollywood royalty, Hollywood excess

Steeped in Hollywood excess from an early age, she was the product of the four-year marriage between Reynolds, best known for her role in "Singin' In The Rain," and Fisher. The relationship, and the happy home in Beverly Hills, came to an end when Fisher left Reynolds for her close friend, the actress Elizabeth Taylor. The early 1980s were marked by problems with alcohol, drugs and depression for Fisher, who appeared in a number of critical flops, including "Under the Rainbow" (1981) and "Hollywood Vice Squad" (1986).

She was widely praised for her performance in the hit 1989 comedy "When Harry Met Sally," but began to turn her back on acting in favor of writing. She became known for her searingly honest semi-autobiographical writing, including her best-sell-

ing debut "Postcards from the Edge," which she turned into a film of the same name in 1990 starring Meryl Streep and Shirley MaLaLaine. A talented screenwriter, Fisher has revised numerous scripts, including "Sister Act" (1992), "Outbreak" (1995) and "The Wedding Singer" (1998). She gave various interviews over the years about her diagnosis of bipolar disorder and addiction to prescription drugs and cocaine, which she admitted using on the set of "The Empire Strikes Back" (1980).

'Unhappy experiences'

Asked by Vanity Fair in 2006 how she persuaded "Star Wars" director George Lucas to give her the part of Princess Leia, she said: "I slept with some nerd. I hope it was George." She "took too many drugs to remember" who it was, she added. She also discussed being treated with electroconvulsive therapy, in which small electric currents are passed through the brain, to trigger brief seizures and treat depression. In her first agony aunt column for the British Guardian newspaper in June, the actress promised to "provide solicited advice, based on a life filled with pratfalls and accidents." Fisher told her readers that the addictions, heartbreak and mental illness she had endured amounted to a "fair share of challenging and unhappy experiences." "Over time, I've paid attention, taken notes and forgotten easily half of everything I've gone through. But I'll rifle through the half I recall and lay it at your feet." Her recently-released memoir "The Princess Diarist" is based on journals she kept while filming the "Star Wars" trilogy.

The memoir made headlines because of a section in which Fisher admits a three-month affair with co-star Harrison Ford

while filming "Star Wars: Episode IV-A New Hope" in 1976. "Carrie was one-of-a-kind—brilliant, original. Funny and emotionally fearless. She lived her life bravely... We will all miss her," Ford told AFP in a statement. Fisher was briefly married to singer/songwriter Paul Simon in the 1980s. Her daughter Billie, also an actress, comes from her relationship with talent agent Bryan Lourd.

The eighth episode of the main "Star Wars" series—due for release in December next year—wrapped filming in July, according to Variety magazine, and will probably be her last big-screen appearance. She was due to appear in 2017 fantasy adventure "Wonderwell," according to the Internet Movie Database, although the status of the shoot was not immediately clear and it has no publicly announced release date. — AFP



In this Nov 13, 1978 file photo, Harrison Ford talks with Carrie Fisher during a break in the filming of the CBS-TV special 'The Star Wars Holiday' in Los Angeles.

Harrison Ford remembers Fisher as 'one-of-a-kind', 'original'

Harrison Ford eulogized his "Star Wars" co-star Carrie Fisher as a "one-of-a-kind" person and an "original" after the actress died Tuesday at the age of 60. "Carrie was one-of-a-kind...brilliant, original," Ford said in a statement. "Funny and emotionally fearless. She lived her life, bravely." Ford went on to say that his thoughts were with Fisher's mother Debbie Reynolds, daughter Billie Lourd, and brother Todd Fisher.

Related Carrie Fisher Completed Work on 'Star Wars: Episode VIII' Before Her Death "We will all miss her," he said. Fisher recently revealed that she and Ford had an exciting three-month affair during the making of the first "Star Wars" film. She was 19 years old, while Ford was 33, married, and a father of two. Fisher said that she informed the actor that she was going to reveal their affair in her memoir, "The Princess Diarist," which was published this year. She had some regrets about going public.

"He's incredibly private," Fisher told People. "I feel really bad about doing that to him. But yes, I told him I found the journals and I was going to publish them, and he sort of went, 'Lawyer!' Ford and Fisher also created on-screen sparks. Their characters in the "Star Wars" films, Han Solo and Princess Leia, have a combative relationship that ultimately results in a passionate romance. Both actors reprised their roles in last winter's "Star Wars: The Force Awakens." Fisher suffered a heart attack on Friday while on a flight from London to Los Angeles. She died Tuesday morning.

She was a member of a prominent show business family: Her mother, Debbie Reynolds, was the star of "Singin' in the Rain," and her father, Eddie Fisher, was a popular recording star. In addition to "Star Wars," Fisher wrote the best-selling novel "Postcards from the Edge" and appeared in "Soapdish" and "When Harry Met Sally." — Reuters



In this Nov 14, 2015, file photo, Carrie Fisher, left, and her daughter Billie Catherine Lourd arrive at the Governors Awards at the Dolby Ballroom in Los Angeles.



In this Sunday, Jan 25, 2015 file photo, Carrie Fisher presents the life achievement award on stage at the 21st annual Screen Actors Guild Awards at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.



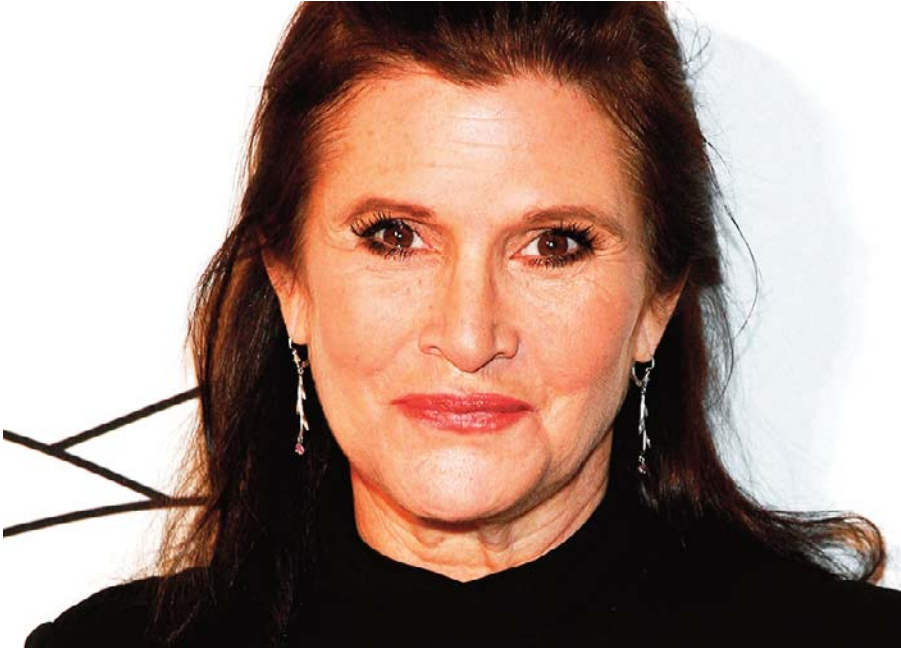
This Sept 14, 1990 file photo shows actress and author Carrie Fisher in Beverly Hills, Calif.



This file photo taken on June 09, 2005 shows (from left) Actors Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher and Harrison Ford speaking on stage during the 33rd AFI Life Achievement Award tribute to George Lucas at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, California.



In this May 23, 1980, file photo, actress Carrie Fisher hugs a person dressed as a stormtrooper in London while promoting the 'Star Wars' epic 'The Empire Strikes Back'.



This file photo taken on November 3, 2011 shows US actress Carrie Fisher attending the 2011 Silver Hill Hospital gala at Cipriani 42nd Street, in New York City.



This May 2, 1973 file photo shows Carrie Fisher, the 16-year-old daughter of Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher, in New York.



In this Jan 2, 1957 file photo, Eddie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds hold their baby daughter, Carrie Frances Fisher, as they pose for a photo in the Hollywood area of Los Angeles.



This May 2, 1973 file photo shows Carrie Fisher, the 16-year-old daughter of Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher, in the back garden of the house on the East Side of New York where she lives with her mother.



In this Friday, Feb 20, 2004 file photo, author Carrie Fisher autographs her new book 'The Best Awful' at a promotional event in London.

Carrie Fisher:

10 things you might not know about her life

Carrie Fisher was born in the spotlight, the Hollywood offspring of two stars, Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher, who were red-hot at the time their first child arrived on Oct 21, 1956. That notoriety colored her life and career. But here are some things you might not have known about the actress, writer and advocate, who died Tuesday at the age of 60.

Reynolds and Fisher had completed production on their first movie together-RKO's aptly titled "Bundle of Joy"-just two months before Carrie was born. The cast and crew gifted the couple with a bassinet at the wrap party. Reynolds and Fisher gave director Norman Taurog a faux gold record with the inscription: "To Dr Norman Taurog who delivered our first production, 'Bundle of Joy,' ahead of the 'Stork,' according to Variety. In the department of odd coincidences, about six weeks after she was born, Variety's Army Archerd reported that "baby Carrie Fisher" received a gift of stock from producer Mike Todd-the same producer who was months away from marrying Elizabeth Taylor, and about 15 months away from dying in a plane crash. A year after that, Taylor wound up marrying Carrie's father after an affair that scandalized Hollywood. In 1973, after dropping out of Beverly Hills High, Fisher moved to England to study acting. She failed her first entrance exam for the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in February 1974. But the next month she was cited in Variety as the "talented youngster" who was set to make her movie debut in Warren Beatty's "Shampoo."

In August 1974 Fisher was featured in her mother's hit cabaret show at the London Palladium. Variety's reviewer gushed: "The dramatic power and depth of her young pipes mark her as a strong bet in the immediate future. All-pro at 17 years of age, she appears to have all the ingredients for a powerhouse career." One month later, Fisher enrolled in London's Central School of Speech and Drama, which she attended for more than a year. Fisher still couldn't escape the reference to her showbiz pedigree when Archerd included this line to "Just For Variety" column for Feb. 23, 1976: "Carrie Fisher, daughter of Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher, who was so effective as the nymph in 'Shampoo,' next stars in George Lucas' 'Star Wars.' Although she never graduated high school, she was admitted to Sarah Lawrence College, but left school to film 'Star Wars.' 'Star Wars,' of course, changed everything for Fisher. But she maintained a sense of humor about herself and her career, as she demonstrated throughout her career. In 1978, Fisher hosted 'Saturday Night Live.' The sketches included one in which she and Gilda Radner are sisters in the high decibel Loud Family (a riff on the public television show about the actual Loud family). "WOW, THIS IS GREAT POT!", is one of her noisy declarations.

Speaking of "SNL" sketches, Fisher had a small part in 1980's "The Blues Brothers," playing the vengeful lover of John Belushi's Jake Blues. Behind the scenes, she was briefly engaged to the film's co-star Dan Aykroyd, who proposed to her on the set. In her 2008 memoir, "Wishful Drinking," she proposed that her own obituary be based on a conversation she had with George Lucas about whether there was underwear in space, and whether it should be seen under her Princess Leia gown. She thought it should read, "Carrie Fisher dies at 60, drowned in moonlight, strangled by her own bra." — Reuters

'Star Wars' cast, creators remember Fisher: 'She Was Our Great and Powerful Princess'

The cast and creators of "Star Wars" paid tribute to Carrie Fisher, who brought the franchise to life as Princess Leia. Fisher died Tuesday morning after suffering what was described as a massive heart attack on Friday while on a flight from London to Los Angeles. George Lucas, the man behind the galaxy far, far away, issued a statement dedicated to Fisher. "Carrie and I have been friends for most of our adult lives," he wrote. "She was extremely smart; a talented writer, actress and comedienne with a very colorful personality that everyone loved. In 'Star Wars,' she was our great and powerful princess-feisty, wise and full of hope in a role that was more difficult than most people might think. My heart and prayers are with Billie, Debbie and all Carrie's family, friends and fans. She will be missed by all."

Related Hollywood Mourns the Loss of Its Princess Leia, 'Star Wars' Actress Carrie Fisher J.J. Abrams wrote, "You didn't need to meet Carrie Fisher to understand her power. She was just as brilliant and beautiful, tough and wonderful, incisive and funny as you could imagine. What an unfair thing to lose her. How lucky to have been blessed with her at all."

"Carrie was one-of-a-kind...brilliant, original," Harrison Ford said in a statement. "Funny and emotionally fearless. She lived her life, bravely." Daisy Ridley wrote in a statement, "Devastated at this monumental loss. How lucky we all are to have known her, and how awful that we have to say goodbye." "No

words," her "Star Wars" co-star Mark Hamill wrote on Twitter. "Devastated."

"There are no words for this loss. Carrie was the brightest light in every room she entered. I will miss her dearly." - Peter Mayhew

"Princess Leia, @CarrieFisher - now one with the Force. Your kindness & sharp wit will be missed. #RIP PS: Thanks for the milk & cookies. xx" - Warwick Davis

"I thought I had got what I wanted under the tree. I didn't. In spite of so many thoughts and prayers from so many. I am very, very sad."

- Anthony Daniels

"I am extremely sad to learn of Carrie's passing. She was wonderful to work with. Condolences to her friends, family & fans around the world." - David Prowse

"Dearest Carrie, so incredibly sad to say farewell so soon to such a beautifully honest and unique human being- see you in the multiverse." - Andy Serkis

"We've lost our Princess." - Gwendoline Christie Bob Iger, chairman and CEO of the Walt Disney Company wrote, "Carrie Fisher was

one-of-a-kind, a true character who shared her talent and her truth with us all with her trademark wit and irreverence. Millions fell in love with her as the indomitable Princess Leia; she will always have a special place in the hearts of Star Wars fans as well as all of us who were lucky enough to know her personally. She will be sorely missed, and we join millions of fans and friends around the world who mourn her loss today."

Kathleen Kennedy, the president of Lucasfilms added, "Carrie holds such special place in the hearts of everyone at Lucasfilm it is difficult to think of a world without her. She was Princess Leia to the world but a very special friend to all of us. She had an indomitable spirit, incredible wit, and a loving heart. Carrie also defined the female hero of our age over a generation ago. Her groundbreaking role as Princess Leia served as an inspiration of power and confidence for young girls everywhere. We will miss her dearly." — Reuters



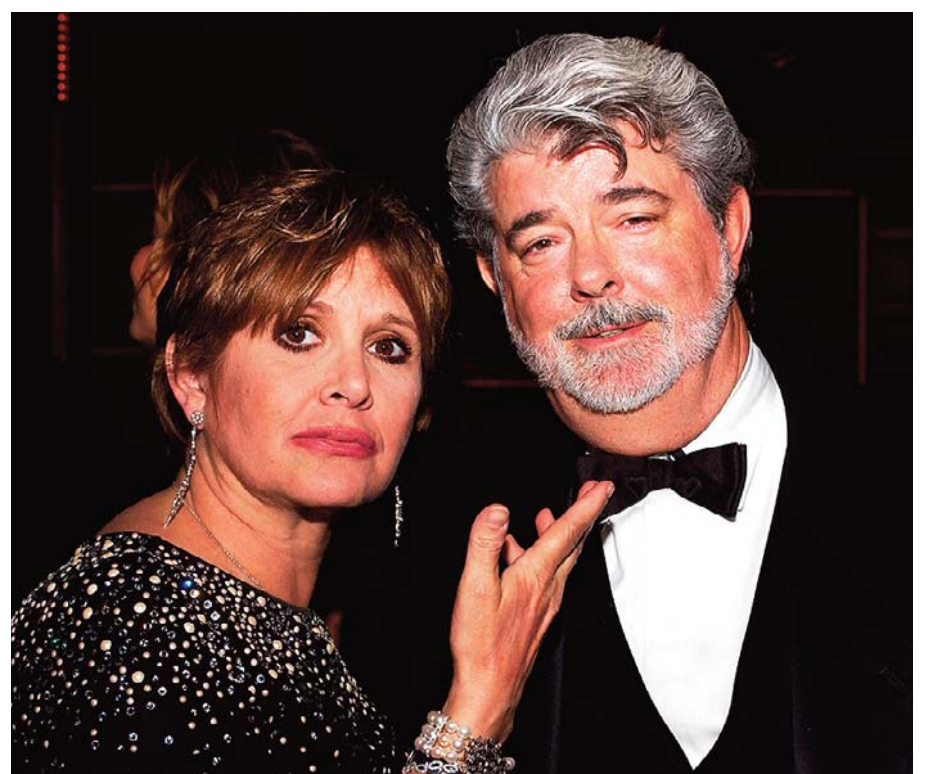
In this Oct 5, 1978 photo, from left, actors Harrison Ford, Anthony Daniels, Carrie Fisher and Peter Mayhew take a break from filming a television special in Los Angeles to be telecast during the holidays.



In this Tuesday, Aug 16, 1983, file photo, actress Carrie Fisher and singer Paul Simon stand together at their apartment in New York during their wedding reception.



This file photo taken on November 3, 2014 shows actress Carrie Fisher, arrives at the premiere of Universal Pictures and Red Granite Pictures' "Dumb And Dumber To" in Westwood, California.



This file photo taken on June 9, 2005 shows actress Carrie Fisher and director George Lucas posing at the dinner during the 33rd AFI Life Achievement Award tribute to George Lucas at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, California.

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2016

Hollywood's 'princess'
Carrie Fisher dead at 60

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WHAT CARRIE FISHER, BOWIE, PRINCE AND MUHAMMAD ALI TAUGHT US

Nothing I can say will make the losses of 2016 hurt less. But it's possible to take something from this year's long parade of deaths (which, for me, include a personal loss). When someone famous dies, and we mourn and feel the pain of a lost connection, it's because that celebrity transmitted something important into the world. They didn't just make art that we remember and cherish, they put messages into the world in the way they lived their lives. These were ideas we needed to hear, and those wild and unruly transmissions changed us and the culture around us.

As 2017 dawns, we will undoubtedly still be in mourning, and quite probably afraid that this difficult year was a mere tune-up for what's to come. A terrifying thought, that. Scraps of comfort are hard to come by. But when I can, I'm thinking about how we can build on what people like Carrie Fisher, Muhammad Ali, Prince, and David Bowie taught us.

Personal spirit

From David Bowie, we learned how to create our own realities and personas and effortlessly slip from one identity into another, and still stay true to the our own personal spirit of innovation and revolution. We explored planets and galaxies with Bowie, who found those faraway places inside our hearts

and minds, even as he made us cry and dance. He was the trickster who knew we are all weirdos, and he told us that was our secret strength. From Prince, we learned to question everything and find joy and communion even in the excavation of deep pain and profound longing. Everyone was accepted in Prince's world, regardless of sexuality, regardless of background, regardless of creed, as long as every entrant to the Purple Domain was prepared to let go and find the divine in the funky, and vice versa. Prince taught us to let go and be ourselves and see what fantastical energies would be released as a result.

From Muhammad Ali, we learned how to be poets, to be prophets, to be true our beliefs even when it felt like the entire world was against us. Ali would have been a legend in his chosen sport even if he'd never given an interview. But it was his advocacy, his patience and his unbelievable steadfastness that made him into so much more than a mere legend. He was an example of someone who remade the world around him by never relinquishing the core of what mattered to him, and by communicating those beliefs in the most memorable and evocative way possible. His passionate joy and his righteous anger, combined with his charisma, made him the Greatest of All Time.

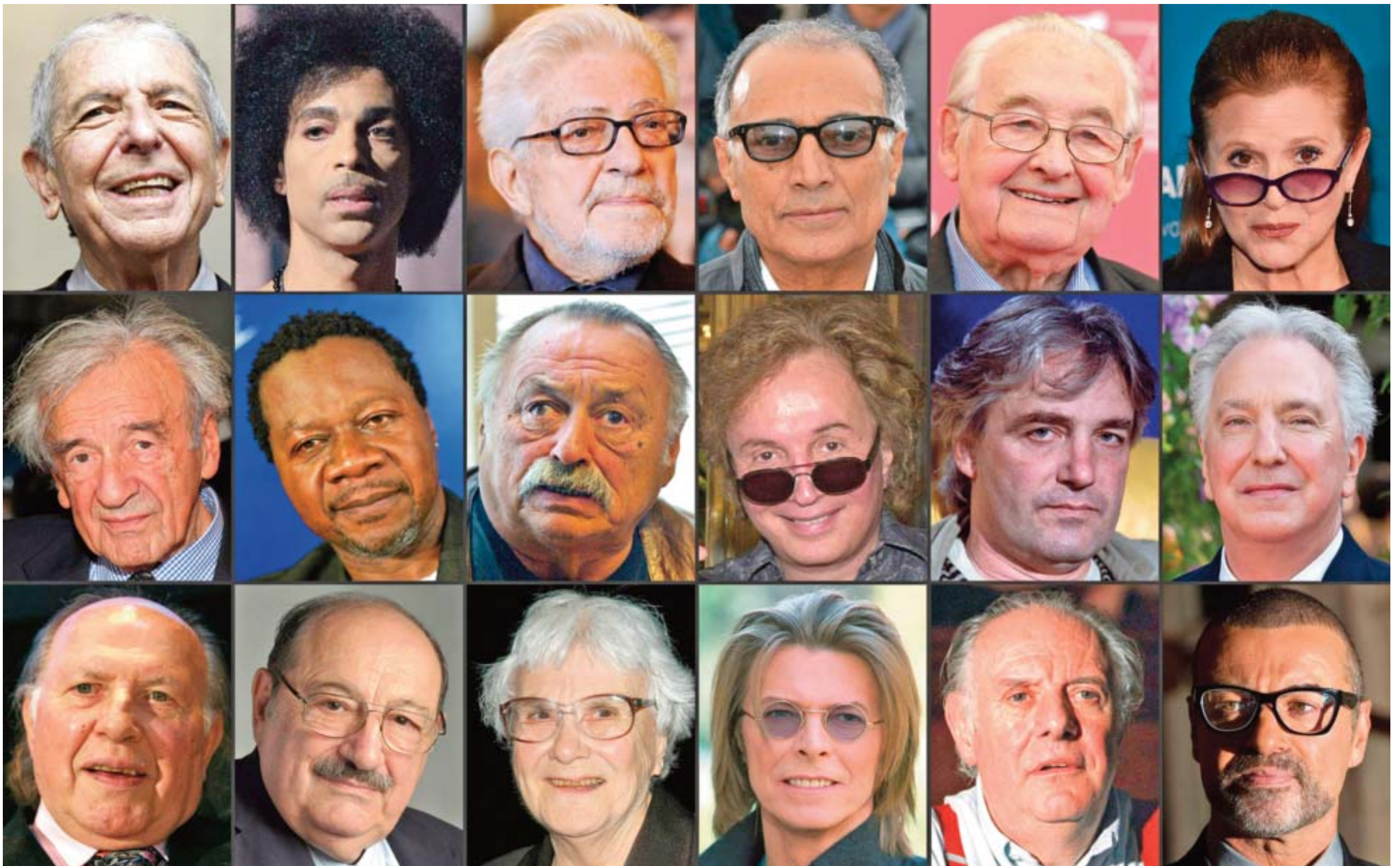
Appetite for adventure

From Carrie Fisher, we learned that the world will try to put you into a category and make sure you stay inside it, but you can pick up a space blaster, blow apart that tiny little cell and rescue yourself. Carrie taught all of us-but especially women and girls-that an appetite for adventure and an irreverent attitude will get you everywhere, on this planet and far beyond, and that you shouldn't wait for someone else to write your story or lead your army. Hollywood has little use for women over the age of 25, for women who speak their mind, for women who are irreverent, and for people who are open about their mental illness. Carrie Fisher gave zero shits about all of that. When she told her stories and shared her brutally, hilarious truths, we all felt less alone. Carrie was unashamedly and unapologetically herself. She said what she thought and she cut through sky-high walls of bullshit in her own way, and she made everyone love her as she did it. She did her best to be kind and she was a tireless advocate for those with mental illness. She was a heroine. And she wasn't a space princess, she was a queen. (And a General.)

Losing these people is hard. Many more famous people died this year, of course, and every one of those losses stings. This year has been full of bad news, and being forced to say

goodbye to so many brilliant hearts, spectacular spirits and unique minds is the icing on one hell of a nightmare cake. But of all we've lost, I think about these four people all the time, possibly because every one of them had a lot in common with my irreplaceable and irreverent mom. When those who loom large in our memories and imaginations leave us, old currents of grief can surge forward again, even if we never met those people. But didn't we, in a way?

Whatever the future holds, we can't say we really loved these artists and advocates unless we're willing to help each other in the new year and beyond. We'll show our love for those we've lost by following their examples and being ferocious about what we believe in, but never forgetting to be ferociously kind. We'll make mistakes, and we'll be honest about it, and we'll try to work as hard as they did, never forgetting to dance and laugh and create joy when we can. We'll honor their legacies by having compassion for those who need it, strapping on our space boots and saving our selves. — Reuters



This combination of pictures created on December 27, 2016 shows public figures who passed away in 2016, Canadian singer Leonard Cohen, US singer Prince, Italian film director Ettore Scola, Iranian film director Abbas Kiarostami, Polish film director Andrzej Wajda, Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, Congolese singer Papa Wemba, US writer Jim Harrison, US film director Michael Cimino, Polish film director Andrzej Zulawski, Hungarian writer and literature Nobel prize Imre Kertesz, Italian writer Umberto Eco, US writer Harper Lee, British singer David Bowie and Italian writer and actor Dario Fo, US actress Carrie Fisher, British actor Alan Rickman, and British singer George Michael. — AFP