

KNPC to set up company to run refinery complex



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BOMBINGS NEAR DAMASCUS SHRINE KILL MORE THAN 60

IS CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEADLY ATTACK

Min 02°
Max 19°
High Tide 04:42 & 17:03
Low Tide 10:44

AGENCY PREDICTS BUDGET SURPLUS

KUWAIT RATINGS 'STABLE'

KUWAIT: Kuwait's sovereign ratings maintained its 'stable' outlook in an analysis by Capital Intelligence, a global ratings agency, which noted the country's "strong macroeconomic fundamentals and large net external creditor position" in a note released to investors yesterday. The CI analysis takes into account the steep decline in oil prices but also notes that the central government budget - which includes estimated investment income - is expected to register a small surplus of 1.3 percent of GDP in the 2016 fiscal year, compared to a surplus of 26.3 percent in 2015.

Fueled by renewed capital spending and the resumption of infrastructure projects, the Kuwaiti economy is expected to expand by 1.2 percent in the current fiscal year which ends in March and by 2.5 percent and 2.7 percent in 2017 and 2018, respectively. The intermediate-term fiscal outlook shows increasing downside risk in view of the ongoing period of low oil prices. However, Capital Intelligence reports that it is expecting the budget to remain in surplus in 2017 and 2018, benefiting in part from renewed efforts to contain current expenditure, prioritize capital expenditure and diversify revenue sources.

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DAMASCUS: Syrian security forces and residents gather at the site of suicide bombings in the area of a revered shrine in the town of Sayyida Zeinab on the outskirts of the capital yesterday. — AFP

DAMASCUS: Bombings claimed by the Islamic State group killed more than 60 people and wounded dozens yesterday near a revered shrine outside the Syrian capital Damascus. The blasts, which came as the UN's Syria envoy struggled to convene fresh peace talks in Geneva, tore a massive crater in the road, overturning and mangling cars and a bus and shattering windows.

Syrian state media said more than 50 people had been killed in three blasts near the Sayyida Zeinab shrine, with some 100 people wounded. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 63 people were killed in yesterday's blasts, among them 29 civilians, including five children. It also said 25 non-Syrian militants were among the dead, without specifying their nationalities.

Official news agency SANA said the first blast was caused by a car bomb that detonated at a bus station near the shrine. It said two suicide bombers then set off their explosive belts when people gathered at the scene. An AFP photographer said the explosions damaged the facade of a nearby building, scorching all of its six storeys.

In the aftermath of yesterday morning's attack, smoke rose from the twisted carcasses of more than a dozen cars and a bus, as ambulances ferried away the wounded and firefighters worked to put out blazes. In a statement circulated on social media, IS claimed responsibility for the attacks, saying two of its members had detonated suicide bombs. "Two soldiers of the caliphate carried out martyrdom operations in a den of the infidels in the Sayyida Zeinab area, killing nearly 50 and injuring around 120," it said.

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SUBSIDY CUTS WON'T AFFECT LOW-INCOME CITIZENS: OMAIR

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly bureau announced yesterday that it will meet with the economic committee of the Supreme Planning Council on Wednesday and with the minister of finance and a team from his ministry on Sunday to discuss the issue of reducing subsidies on commodities and services. The announcement came after a meeting of the Assembly bureau chaired by speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, which comes ahead of a scheduled Assembly debate to study government plans to reduce or lift subsidies on public services and commodities.

Minister of Public Works and State Minister for National Assembly Affairs Ali Al-Omair said that any reduction in subsidies will not affect low-income people, adding that a discussion is ongoing about the issue. He said that the debate over the issue is focused on the best means to stop squandering of public funds and to rationalize expenditures. The minister

said that the Cabinet and the Supreme Planning Council discussed the issue on Wednesday and approved certain measures and solutions.

The proposed solutions will not undermine the interests of low-income people, adding that the proposed solutions will be acceptable to all and that it will have no negative impact on citizens. The minister said that the meeting discussed specifically subsidies on petrol, electricity and water.

Meanwhile, local Arabic daily Al-Anbaa said the Cabinet will study subsidies during its weekly meeting today and authorities have recommended raising the price of petrol by around 40 percent. According to the proposals, the price of low-grade petrol will be raised from 60 fils a litre to 85 fils and high-grade petrol will be sold for 90 fils a litre instead of 65 fils. The government has however vowed not to take any action on subsidies before discussing the issue with the Assembly.

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SARAJEVO: A picture taken on Jan 19, 2016 shows several houses under construction in Sarajevo's suburban area of Blazuj. (Inset) Abdullah Al-Kulaid, the Kuwait co-owner of real estate agency Al-Diyar. — AFP



GULF TOURIST INFLUX TO BOSNIA FUELS LUXURY DEVELOPMENTS

SARAJEVO: With 360 villas and apartments around an artificial lake, swimming pools, a halal supermarket and a Muslim prayer area, the 'Sarajevo resort' is one of Bosnia's most ambitious residential projects to date. It is one of dozens of real estate ventures in the picturesque hills surrounding the capital of the Balkan country that are specifically

targeting visitors from Gulf states. The lush greenery of the country has in recent years become a magnet for wealthy Arabs looking to escape the Middle Eastern summer heat. The result has been a massive boost to tourism in what is one of Europe's poorest countries.

"People from the Gulf are attracted by the natural beauty, the pres-

ence of Islam and the warmth of Bosnians," said Tarek Al Khaja, Emirati co-owner of tourist and real estate agency Al Suwaidi and Al Khaja. "They feel welcome here." Khaja, who opened his business three years ago in a Sarajevo suburb, said the housing and real estate market was in "constant growth".

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Dr Saleh Al-Mutlaq, President of the Arab bloc and the Secretary General of Dialogue Front of the Republic of Iraq.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a memorabilia shield from Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos

AMIR CHAIRS KUWAIT'S DELEGATION TO DONOR CONFERENCE ON SYRIA, REGION

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah leaves Kuwait today accompanied by an official delegation, heading to the United Kingdom, where he is set to chair Kuwait's delegation and participate in the 4th international donor conference on Syria and the region.

In other news, His Highness the Amir received Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Seif Palace yesterday. Sheikh Fawaz delivered a memorabilia shield marking the 10th anniversary of His Highness the Amir's ascension to power.

His Highness the Amir also received Minister of State

for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, accompanied by Dr Saleh Al-Mutlaq, President of the Arab bloc and the Secretary General of Dialogue Front of the Republic of Iraq. Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah attended the meeting. Later, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah separately received Mutlaq.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah. His Highness also received Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah, as well as Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Chairman of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group and member of British Conservatives Party Dr Phillip Lee (third from left) leads a UK delegation during a press conference at the National Assembly yesterday. — KUNA

BRITISH OFFICIAL PRAISES AMIR'S HUMANITARIAN ROLE

SPEAKER GHANEM RECEIVES BRITISH LAWMAKERS

LONDON/KUWAIT: British Minister of State for International Development Desmond Swayne lauded His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a humanitarian leader who has transformed Kuwait into an international hub for humanitarian giving.

Swayne expressed his appreciation, in a statement to (KUNA) yesterday, for planned participation of His Highness the Amir and the accompanying official delegation at the Fourth Syria Donors Conference, due in London on Thursday, to support the humanitarian situation in the war-stricken country in cooperation with Britain, Norway, Germany and United Nations leaders.

He recalled the significant role played by Kuwait for hosting the three previous conferences at this level, noting that the resulting commitments have contributed to alleviation of the humanitarian crisis in Syria and its neighboring countries.

The British official urged the international community to contribute generously to avoid last year's problems when the United Nations World Food Program announced that it will limit the services provided to refugees due to lack of financial support.

He also called on the participants in the London conference to ensure that all children and young people, affected by the conflict, have sustainable access to safe, qualitative and relevant educational opportunities during the 2016/2017 academic year.

"The UK has committed more than 1.1 billion sterling pounds in aid for the region," he added, noting that Britain is doing its moral duty in terms of funding the refugees to alleviate their humanitarian suffering. Kuwait hosted the previous three donation conferences to support the humanitarian situation in Syria, gathering pledges of more than \$7.7 billion, of them \$1.3 billion by Kuwait.

Historic relations

Meanwhile, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem received yesterday the delegation of the British-Kuwaiti membership committee in House of Commons. During the meeting, Ghanem and the delegation's head, Philippe Lee, discussed relations between the two countries and means of promoting them in all fields, mainly in the parliamentary sector.

The delegation stressed the status of

historic relations between the two countries, reaffirming Britain's commitment to maintaining security of Kuwait and all GCC member states, as well as stability in the region. The delegation also emphasized that the agreement between the two countries on extradition of those wanted has reached its final phases, to be approved as soon as possible.

The delegation included Chris Leslie, Stephen Phillips, Chris Evans and Kevan Jones. The meeting was attended by MPs Adel Al-Kharafi, Yousef Al-Zalzalah, Faisal Al-Shaya, Mubarak Al-Herais, Mohammad Al-Jabri, Ahmed Al-Qudabi, Rakan Al-Nisf and the parliament's Secretary General Allam Al-Kandari.

Significant part

Dr Lee meanwhile praised the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Britain describing the ties as "strong and historic." After meeting the head of Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee MP Kamel Al-Awadhi at the National Assembly, Lee spoke to the press saying that this visit is aiming to reinforce the relations between the two countries, especially on the 55th anniversary of Kuwait's independence from Britain, and the 25th anniversary of Kuwait's Liberation "in which the British forces took a significant part."

About the Syrian Refugee cause, he mentioned that Britain plans to receive 20,000 Syrian refugees, mostly orphan children. He said Britain is pleased to host the fourth donors' conference for Syria in London this week, with co-host from Kuwait, noting that Britain is playing a big role currently as the second largest donor in the region, helping Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. Meanwhile, British MP Jones talked about the British visa for Kuwaitis, saying that easing the visa procedures is a very important step, due to the large flow of Kuwaitis visiting Britain for different reasons.

Diplomatic Institute

Also yesterday, Director General of Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Sharekh met with the British delegation to discuss ways to enhance cooperation. A press statement issued by the institute said that Sharekh briefed the visiting delegation on recent activities the institute has conducted in the diplomatic realm.

Both parties reviewed historic relations between Kuwait and Britain as Al-Sharekh acknowledged British efforts of upholding security and eliminating all threats that Kuwait had encountered during the last

century, the statement noted. The meeting was also attended by Deputy Director General of the institute Abdullah Al-Yahya and the British Ambassador to Kuwait Matthew Lodge. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of the Socialist Republic Vietnam Nguyen Hong Thao hosted a reception on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Kuwait. Higher officials, diplomats and media persons attended the event, which took place recently at Crowne Plaza hotel. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

In my view

VIETNAM-KUWAIT RELATIONS



By Javaid Ahmad

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The Vietnamese Embassy in Kuwait celebrated the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the State of Kuwait. It was held at the same time as Vietnam's 12th national party congress of the Communist party. The congress has already approved Vietnam's foreign and economic policies for the next five years. The main features of these policies are:

1. Vietnam shall relay its policies based on the principles of independence, self-reliance, multilateralism and diversification of external relations. In addition to this, a positive posture for international integration and looking forward to playing an active and responsible role among the international community. These relationships are based on the fundamental principles of law and international commitments and the new free trade agreements that Vietnam has already signed.

2. Vietnam shall strengthen its relations with partner countries, especially strategic ones, as well as with major countries that can play an important role in the development of the country.

3. Vietnam is determined to play an active role in multilateral forums, particularly at the forum of regional ASEAN bloc, as well as on the forums of the United Nations. The country shall enhance its participation in multilateral mechanism of defense and security related issues including intensive cooperative activities such as peace operations with the UN, military exercises/drills and non-traditional security and other related activities.

4. Apart from the key role in the field of culture, society, science, technology, education and training, Vietnam is likely to play a proactive role by taking further steps towards greater integration of the country towards multilateral trade agreements within the World Trade Organization's mechanisms. Vietnam has signed 11 free trade agreements and has established extensive trade relations with more than 55 partner countries including 15 out of 20 G20 members that account for 65 percent of its GDP and 50 percent of global trade amongst member countries.

When it comes to the ASEAN economic community, Vietnam has been considered as one of the important and effective members of ASEAN. Vietnam has gradually consolidated its position towards reforming its economy based on liberal economic principles and has integrated itself with almost 59 official partner countries. Over time, the country has attracted a total of more than \$250 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) since it has started reforms. Vietnam has been considered as one of the most open economy and has been ranked fifth in the world in terms of trade openness by more than 100 top multinational corporations.

Middle East economies are paying close attention to an emerging Vietnam and the region is likely to take concrete steps towards further promoting trade and economic relations with this emerging South Asian nation.

Nguyen Phu Thong was re-elected as Secretary General of the Communist Party of Vietnam for the next five years at the end of 12th congress. The congress, which usually meets every five years in the one-party state, brings together 1,510 delegates from around the country. These delegates elect the Central Committee, which in turn elects the party's General Secretary (who used to be the country's supreme leader) and Politburo members. The outgoing central committee usually elects the next party chief, politburo members, the next prime minister and the next state president, the next national assembly chair and the next cabinet members.

Vietnamese people elect their legislature - the National Assembly - via a direct voting system. The national assembly is being elected for a five-year term by more than 500 delegates countrywide. This assembly elects the President of Vietnam. The president in turn appoints the Prime Minister of Vietnam and the Chief Justice of Vietnam, which is likely to be approved by the National Assembly. The ministers are then appointed by the Prime Minister who are supposed to be approved by the National Assembly.

Forty years ago, on Jan 10, 1976, Vietnam and Kuwait established their bilateral diplomatic relations. Kuwait was the first country among GCC countries which allowed Vietnam to open its embassy. Kuwait was also the first country in the GCC that Vietnam chose to establish its trade representative office in 1993, and embassy in 2003. Both countries have officially concluded friendly visits to each other. The former Prime Minister of Kuwait HE Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his Vietnamese counterpart Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung in 2009 visited each other's countries.

The bilateral trade and economic relationship is well established between the two countries since 1979. Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has provided about \$140 million for 13 infrastructure projects. Beside this, Vietnam and Kuwait are now cooperating closely and effectively towards establishing an oil refinery and petrochemical projects in Vietnam. Kuwait has one of the largest investments in Vietnam with a capital of \$9 billion. It is expected that once the commercial operations of the projects commence, the total trade volume may reach \$2 billion a year by 2020. Vietnam has tripled its per capita GDP to \$2,100 over the past 10 years. With a stable political system, Vietnam is likely to emerge as one of the most attractive, stable, secure and emerging destination for foreign investment.

Letters to Badrya

Dear Ms Darwish,

With regard to the letter you published in the Kuwait Times (page 1 on Thursday 28th January), I have to say that I was quite frankly amazed by your deductions and quite honestly your analysis is unworthy of a good journalist such as yourself. The objective of your letter appears to be that you are demanding that private schools provide a free education for your children. You seem to be confused about the distinction between education provided by the state and education that is private and which is available for people to choose to send their children to if they so wish and if they wish to pay for it.

Firstly you mentioned oil prices plunging to \$20 a barrel. Yes, you are correct, but that hasn't brought down salaries (either of politicians or journalists or of teachers), that hasn't brought down the price of food, cars, rents, and so on and so forth, so what is the formula that connects oil prices uniquely with school fees? How much did one pay for a car in 1989 and how much does that car cost today?

Perhaps you are unaware or omitted to mention that the average annual salary of a British secondary teacher 25 years ago was £14,800 and that in 2007 the salary was £35,700 and that was 2007 not 2015. That is the salary of one teacher in the United Kingdom, not a British teacher who has to be attracted to come to Kuwait. Salaries in Britain go up with inflation EVERY SINGLE YEAR which means the salary scales of teachers in Kuwait must be raised annually in tandem.

Secondly, you mention the good old days, before the invasion when you paid 2000 KD for tuition fees for your son. A quarter of a century ago? Did I read something incorrectly? You're a journalist and have access to resources. Please do check the price of everything before the invasion.

You mentioned that you sent your children to a school in England for free. As in Kuwait, the United Kingdom has state education and private education. I presume you sent your children to a state school? If you had decided to send your children to a private school in Britain then, you would, today, find yourself paying fees in the range of £15,000 to £35,000 a year. I am astonished that you are even making the comparison. We have state schools / government schools in Kuwait. Any Kuwaiti can send their children to a state school. For free! If the standard of the state schools does not meet the standards required by the Kuwaiti population, I have to say that that is not the fault of the private schools. The private schools are here to provide an education (in some cases a wonderful education) to people who WISH to or CHOOSE to send their children there. These schools do not have the support of the state. They provide a service that is paid for and what a parent pays in tuition fees goes towards paying the salaries of excellent teachers, the accommodation of the teachers, buildings, equipment, materials, non-teaching staff and so on.

Yes, the schools in Britain teach in English as Britain is an English speaking country but that doesn't mean they can be equated to private schools in Kuwait. You managed to educate your child in Britain for free because you sent him to a government school. In Britain, if one does not have the means to pay for a private school, then one sends one's child to a state school. If a parent here does not have the means to pay for a private school, government schools are also available for them, in Arabic of course as Kuwait is an Arabic speaking country.

You suggest reducing schools fees rather than raising them. Which of course would mean reducing teacher's salaries? Please also campaign to reduce the cost of transport, accommodation, food, travel, medical expenses, as well as the salaries of journalists. And all the expensive cars that are so popular here.

You suggest easing the granting of licenses for schools as a solution, which might not be a bad idea but, every school, if it is to provide teaching, must employ teachers and teachers must be paid salaries, and given accommodation and so on. Unless of course you are suggesting that teachers' salaries are held down to the levels of 1988 or 1989? Whether you have 10 private schools or a 1,000, they will still have to charge fees in accordance with the cost of living. Fees do not go down just because you have more schools. The economies of scale do not apply here.

My dear Ms Darwish, you should be campaigning to the government and the National Assembly to improve the level of state education in Kuwait and not campaigning to destroy the very schools which provide the best education in the country. The reason people choose to send their children to a reputable school such as ours is because they know they are paying for the best education available in this country and that with this education the doors are opened to the best universities around the world. Universities which, incidentally, charge very high fees.

Dr Ziad Sayid Rajab
Director
New English School
Kuwait

13 TENDERS PENDING FOR EDUCATION MINISTRY

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A report issued by the Ministry of Education (MoE) showed that the ministry has 13 project tenders pending with the Central Tenders Committee (CTC), including those of kindergarten meals and student dormitories with a total value of KD 22 million. The report added that other tenders involved replacing, operating and maintaining swimming pools, as well as supplying meals at various training centers in all educational zones and the private education department in the period of March till May 11, 2016. The tenders also include replacing and repairing elevators and spare parts in schools and various MoE departments, repairing and maintaining Oracle software database systems, renewing software licenses, technical back-up, hiring various vehicles and drivers, hiring cleaners, supplying, installing and maintaining devices in kindergartens and primary schools and upgrading art gallery tools and equipment. The report also added that six more tenders had been recently offered for bidding with a total value of KD 571,000 for photocopying, photocopier maintenance, spare parts and toners and printer maintenance.

KUWAIT TO SET UP COMPANY TO RUN REFINERY COMPLEX

KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Petroleum Company (KNPC) said yesterday it will set up a new company to run its planned Al-Zour refinery and petrochemical complex which, when built, will be the biggest in the Middle East.

The new company, KBRC, will also manage a planned permanent liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal, said KNPC Chief Executive Mohammed Al-Mutairi, according to comments on state news agency KUNA. He said that setting up KBRC would allow the independent management of the projects under one structure.

Mutairi told Reuters in October that commissioning of the 615,000 barrel per day refinery was expected to start in November 2019. Contracts to build the 3 billion cubic feet per day LNG import terminal were expected to be awarded early this year.

Meanwhile, Mutairi further stated that KNPC's capital budget reached around KD 12 billion for the fiscal year 2016-17, while its operational budget



for the same period is estimated to be around KD 889,385 million, adding that the company is implementing multi-billion plans and strategic projects exceeding KD 11 billion.

On a different front, Mutairi said KNPC has completed around 42 percent of environment-friendly petro project and expenses reached around

KD 1.15 billion by the end of 2015, expecting expenditure on the project to reach KD 1.07 billion by the end of 2016. Mutairi also noted that KNPC is planning to establish 100 new oil stations to provide future adequate number of oil stations due to expanded overall developments in the country. — Agencies

SCHOOLS AUTHORIZED TO SUSPEND CLASSES IN CASE OF EXTREME COLD

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Following his instructions to cancel morning assemblies at schools to avoid the extreme cold, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa authorized school directors to suspend classes in case of extreme cold.

Hawally shelters

Hawally Governor Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah yesterday

presided a meeting with senior officials at his office to discuss updating Hawally's existing shelters and building new ones as needed according to population density in cases of emergency. Officials in attendance were Major General Abdullah Al-Ali, Director of the General Department of Civil Defense, Mansour Al-Thafeiri Hawally educational zone's director, Dr Adel Al-Khatrash, Hawally health zone's director, Dr Ahmed Al-Husseini, Mubarak Hospital's manag-

er and Muhannad Al-Khayyat, Hawally roads maintenance's manager.

Bedoon's ID

The court of appeals yesterday mandated the Central Apparatus For Illegal Residents' Affairs to issue a civil ID to a bedoon (stateless) woman. Meanwhile, the court yesterday released a suspect who had been accused of embezzling KD 313,000 from a company he used to work for.



KUWAIT: Major General Abdelfattah Al-Ali gives instructions during a crackdown carried out in Hawally Governorate yesterday.



Firefighters tackle a blaze reported yesterday.

89 PEOPLE ARRESTED IN HAWALLY CRACKDOWN

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Eighty nine people were arrested during an unscheduled police crackdown carried out in Hawally Governorate yesterday. The detainees include 13 persons arrested for violation of residency law, three people wanted to serve court sentences, 33 for failure to compete visa procedures, 27 for carrying out transactions in violation of the law, two wanted on civil cases, three absconders, and 18 persons who were not carrying IDs. A total of 387 people were inspected during the campaign, which was led by Major General Abdelfattah Al-Ali, the Interior Ministry Assistant's Undersecretary for General Security Affairs.

No injuries in fires

Farwaniya and Sabhan fire centers responded to a fire in three homes in Kheitan. Firemen found out that the fire started on the roof of one house, then the flames spread to two others. One shack made from galvanized iron collapsed as a result. Firefighters managed to prevent the flames from spreading further, and no injuries were reported. In another incident, Hawally and Salamiya firemen put out a fire in a Hawally building. The fire started in the kitchen of a 9th floor apartment. The fire was put out quickly and no injuries were reported. Separately, a fire was reported in a Reqqa apartment, prompting Mangaf firemen to respond and extinguish the blaze. No injuries were reported.

Motorist injured

A two-car collision left one of them turned upside down, and injuring one driver. Mangaf firemen helped the driver out of his vehicle, then handed him over to paramedics who rushed him to Adan hospital.

Infant suffocates to death

An infant died and his parents were admitted in the intensive care unit (ICU) in a critical condition after suffocating on smoke from burning charcoal left in a closed room yesterday. The couple had left the coal burning for heating. A day before, two workers died while a third was hospitalized in a critical condition when they suffocated inside a closed-door room at a Wafra farm.

Crackdown at camps

Ahmadi municipality's emergency team carried out a campaign at Jalah camps resulting in confiscating 50 ATVs, revoking four camp licenses and removing an illegal shack.

Impersonator caught

An Iraqi man was sent to the criminal detectives department on charges of posing as a policeman. His phone, which contained photos of him in uniform, was confiscated. The man said during questioning that the uniform in the pictures belonged to a friend, adding that he did not use it to commit crimes.

KUWAIT DIVE TEAM COMPLETES ASHERIJ COAST CLEAN-UP

KUWAIT: The Environmental Voluntary Foundation's Kuwait Dive Team has completed a campaign to remove 25 tons of harmful waste from the Asherij Coast. The 'Clean Shores Kuwait' project was undertaken by Kuwait Dive Team in cooperation with the Kuwait Municipality, the Environmental Public Authority, the Council of Ministers, and the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

Kuwait Dive Team President Waleed Al-Fadhel reported that the campaign was undertaken to remove plastic materials, ropes, tires, neglected fishing nets, sunken vessels, and ships run aground from Asherij Coast. During two days of work, the Team lifted more than 25 tons of waste harmful to the marine environment. The heaviest objects were removed with bulldozers provided by the Kuwait Municipality. Fadhel believes that the majority of the waste originated on merchant ships in the Gulf coming into Doha Port, blown onto the Coast by northern winds. Industrial plants, construction sites, abandoned ships, heavy rains, and sewage added to the waste. In response, the Kuwait Dive Team called for tighter sanctions on polluters and violators of environmental regulations. Fadhel expressed his hope for a Standing Committee for the Development and Monitoring of the Environment in Kuwait Bay and the John, given the area's importance for marine and coastal life.



Legalese

HOW TO START A BUSINESS IN KUWAIT

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Many of us come up with new innovative ideas that could be, might be, the next best business idea. It is not easy to take those first steps though. Starting a business is always a bittersweet experience. For me personally, it was mixed emotions because it was long hours of work at the start but it turned out to be my biggest achievement.

Commercial laws in Kuwait have taken a major leap over the past two years and will continue to change now that we are going through some difficult economic reform. I have received plenty of questions inquiring on how to start a business in Kuwait and thought I would answer the basic questions on here.

Registering an app

Question: I would like to start my own business, my business idea is actually an app. I want to register in Kuwait commercially but I am not sure if I start a business online or from home?

Fajer: Unfortunately under Kuwaiti commercial law for you to obtain a commercial license/ permit, you must have a physical commercial location. Other countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council do not have such requirements. Commercial locations are in specified areas only and that does not include residential areas so you cannot start a business from your home.

Question: How do you know which areas are commercial?

Fajer: Well, when you register to obtain a permit (after having provided all the required documents and met all the required qualifications), the Ministry of Commerce will send a representative to check your location, representatives from the Ministry of Health will be sent to check health and safety for kitchens and restaurants, the Fire Department will check health and safety from their side as well. With that said, some commercial areas can be for specific businesses as well, so maybe only a restaurant can open in that location or only a bookstore and so forth.

Fortunately though there is plenty of platforms in Kuwait that support small startups or businesses and can be legally used for you to pursue your business endeavors and test out your business idea before taking major steps of starting a business. These can be markets, applications by big companies, community centers, exhibitions and so on.

As for online businesses or applications, you will still need a physical place, a lot of successful local applications in Kuwait have physical spaces for legalities that they don't really use, as most of their work is based online.

Getting a license

Question: How long does the process of obtaining a permit take?

Fajer: As I mentioned above many different entities are involved in order for you to obtain a permit, therefore it can take from a month to a few months. The issue is not with the process itself as much as it is with the fact that the procedures are not clear. In my opinion any procedure provided by the government should be written clearly and easily accessible to the layman. My advice is to do your research whether personally or through a lawyer and find out what the requirements are for your business and then submit your papers.

Online payments

Question: Can I legally receive online payments if I do not have a registered company?

Fajer: No. Local companies that provide online payment platforms will not provide their services to non-registered companies.

Ownership

Question: Is it true that I have to be from Kuwait to obtain a commercial license? Or have a Kuwaiti partner that owns a majority of the shares?

Fajer: Previously a Kuwaiti citizen had to own 51 percent of the shares of the company but with the new reform laws there are some exceptions to that rule. With that said, I don't think the new laws are of any significance to those that want to set up small businesses without getting into the details. So, yes you will need to have a Kuwaiti or Kuwaiti partners that own the majority of the shares.

Legalities

Question: What should we keep in mind from a legal perspective before starting a business?

Fajer: Each business has its different needs, but I shall answer this question generally.

1) They type of company you want to establish should be the first thing you consider. There are multiple options under Kuwaiti law and each type has its own responsibilities and consequences depending on the partnership that you would like to create.

2) When you submit your papers to obtain a permit, you will need to also register your company's trademark including the logo. So I advise that you finalize those issues internally before submitting your documents.

3) A general partnership agreement can be found at the Ministry of Commerce, also the general draft for the articles of association of the company (should your company need one). I advise you to read and review them carefully even if they are general and are commonly used in Kuwait. Internal policies are also things that you should consider.

There are other elements that you will need to carefully plan out but that are not legal matters that I will not get into, like your mission, vision and so on. It will require a lot of planning and commitment but hopefully you will find a pot of gold at the end of a very long road.

For any legal questions or queries, email ask@fajethelawyer.com.

In Brief

INT'L DOCTORS VISIT

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health announced that the visiting international consultants to the ministry's hospitals will arrive next February. The visiting doctors' program aims to share experience with international universities and medical centers, while also giving patients the opportunity to receive advanced treatment without going through the hassle of seeking medical care abroad, said ministry's director of public relations and media Faisal Al-Dosari. The consultants are highly qualified doctors specializing in ear, nose, and throat, Orthopedic Surgeries, Urinary tract, Heart disease and tumors, Chemotherapy, Pediatrics and other fields, he said. —KUNA



COLON CANCER TESTS

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health said that 2,025 people have carried out tests for possible colon cancer over the past nine months, of them 32 were confirmed to have the disease. Dr Wafa Al-Hashash, Director of the Digestive and Liver Unit at Al-Sabah Medical Area, said that the number of people - citizens and expatriates - was on the rise throughout the campaign due to their awareness and conviction that it was extremely important to do the test. She underscored that early test was the only way to discover tumors, which would not transform into cancer if they were removed at early stages. —KUNA



WINTERLAND VILLAGE OPEN

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Sports (PAS) inaugurated on Saturday 'Winterland,' a recreational village in Mubarak Al-Abdullah area, offering a myriad of entertaining games. In a statement to journalists during the launch of the village, patronized by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah, PAS Deputy Director General Ahmad Al-Khazal said that the aim of initiating the village is to designate the allocated land as a youth center, providing cultural and sporting events. Similar projects will spring up in other areas in the near future, he added. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: This photo shows the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) building, the Shuwaikh Port, the First Ring Road and other Kuwait City landmarks. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT'S GOLDEN ERA AND THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

KUWAIT: The hall of Masaha 13 social hub in Shuwaikh was filled with attendants to hear two seminars organized by HIKMA, a Kuwaiti non-profit organization. The



Dr Rossol Bourisli speaks during a seminar organized by HIKMA yesterday.

speakers were Dr Rossol Bourisli, PhD in Psychiatry and Dr Saleh Al-Nafisi, PhD in Government and International Affairs on Saturday evening. Dr Nafisi began with a lecture about whether the golden era of Kuwait is really golden. He said: "It is an interesting question because it allows us to evaluate our past and think about it more, and where we might have gone wrong. This is an exercise of evoking thoughts rather than an academic presentation. Are we talking about the 1950s, 1960s or 1980s? The older the person is the older, the further back in history he goes." He also wondered whether the problems we are facing today are the result of what we called the golden age.

In the second lecture, Dr Rossol Bourisli talked about the chaos of information and the negative effects of the data satiety on the physical and psychological health of human beings. She said that there is a big difference between the IT boom and knowledge because having a large amount of information does not make you a highly cultured person. "According to a scientific study, the number of times the average person spends in front of a mobile screen is 150 times per hour," She warned.

Non-profit, non-sponsored HIKMA was established a year and a half ago. It aims to enrich the minds of society with wisdom, experience and deep understanding to cultural, social and political concepts. Events are held in both English and Arabic.



Dr Saleh Al-Nafisi speaks during a second seminar organized by HIKMA.

'KUWAIT BENEFITED FROM GULF NANO FORUM'

KUWAIT: Kuwait has benefited substantially from the Second Gulf Forum on Nano technology which was held in Oman, said Adnan Al-Meer, Office Director of the International Movement for Leisure Activities in Science and Technology (MILSET - Asia).

Kuwait has become aware of "all latest developments in Nano technology" as a result of its participation in that forum, Meer said, adding Kuwait was keen to participate with Gulf experts in the field, in an effort to bolster development and innovation for the society, in general.

Meanwhile, Bushra Al-Bahr, a participant in the forum and Computer Science instructor from Kuwait Ministry of Education, said Kuwait participated in the forum, with presentations on role of Nano technology in scientific research, promotion of education and awareness of this technology.

The Kuwaiti presentation about Nano's role in research was addressed by professor Ali Abo Mejjad, who particularly shed light on students' abstention from specializing in sciences, such as chemistry, physics and biology.

He suggested application of a special program for elementary-level students to help them absorb scientific knowledge, with usage of the iPad. The experience has already drawn substantial applause from Arab and international quarters. Established on July 1987, MILSET - Asia aims at establishing coordination among organizations in the field of scientific and technological hobbies for the benefit of youth. —KUNA

KEPS, AIRPORT JOINS FORCES TO PRESERVE WILDLIFE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS) has joined forces with the Directorate of Civil Aviation at Kuwait International Airport in an effort to preserve the country's wildlife. KEPS Chairman Wajdan Al-Eqab said yesterday that KEPS has forged an alliance with the Directorate of Civil Aviation and will in the near future, initiate a strategy designed to conserve the environ-

ment. KEPS members will be given access to licenses belonging to unmanned planes in an attempt to monitor any detrimental effects these planes could have on the environment, Eqab noted.

One strategy KEPS has developed to help keep biological and environmental diversity intact is a plan to observe these wireless planes so as to prevent any unfavorable effects they

could have on the environment, Eqab revealed. Deputy Director General of Air and Transportation Affairs at the airport Emad Al-Jalawi said the partnership with KEPS represents a concerted effort to safeguard the environment. He further indicated that he had inspected a KEPS report on vegetation and organisms, calling them two critical components of the country's wildlife. —KUNA



KUWAIT: KEPS Chairperson Wajdan Al-Eqab (center) is pictured with DGCA officials. —KUNA

In my view

UNPRECEDENTED VIOLENCE



By Labeed Abdal

local@kuwaittimes.net

Through its ancient and contemporary history, the Arab region has never witnessed all this violence, killing and displacement of innocent people it is currently witnessing. This calls for not burying our heads in the sand and ignoring the fact that we do have some serious problems that require seriousness and credibility in approaching and solving them.

Fighting, violence and the absence of rule of law have contributed in creating radical organizations that destroy all elements of civilization in the Arab region and put an end to religious coexistence regional peoples have enjoyed for thousands of years. The reason behind such extremism is despair of many young people, who were the main target of radical groups, have been feeling. So the arena was wide open for many failures in some countries.

Finding some practices like slavery, torture, genocide and sexual abuse of women by religious and racial minorities and the fact that some voices have been in favor of such practices, is both social and humanely dangerous. This also poses an inclination towards crime and sabotage, which make a minority explain religion as they wish by banning halal things and allowing taboos. This in itself is an imminent threat to principles of protecting current regimes' pillars.

Regional countries are undoubtedly facing major terrorist challenges, but solutions that adopt violation of human rights and the principles of justice, eventually leads to more extremism. Facing extremism will lead nowhere unless the basic reasons are adequately approached and suitable solutions are responsibly set.

There is a great deal of confusion leading to lack of clear vision. The Arab world has been struck by diverse uprisings in some parts and this should have made the rest of the Arab countries learn their lessons, especially those having similar symptoms.

All regional efforts should continue and be integrated to make use of social media and the speed of circulating information worldwide. We should not focus on highlighting violations, disputes and strikes. We should instead focus on highlighting achievements and positive news that would help build a brighter future and make more people happy.

Special Report

KOC IMPLEMENTS FIRST WIRELINE ESP PROJECT

KUWAIT: In terms of methods pertaining to artificial lift in the oil industry, Electrical Submersible Pumps (ESP) play a significant role in the extraction process. In the field, artificial lift is created by lowering the ESP string under tubing during well work-overs. The power cable is connected directly to the motor and clamped externally along the tubing string while the pump runs until failure. Because of rig work-over costs, operators utilize ESPs as sacrificial equipment, which means that no maintenance program can be scheduled.

The method

Wireline Retrievable ESP (WRESP) pertains to a change in ESP deployment. The method consists of first lowering a large bore tubing (e.g. 5 1/2") with a docking station attached underneath as a permanent part that provides three receptacles for the wet mate electrical connectors. It also is comprised of a power cable connected directly to the connectors of a docking station and clamped along the tubing to the surface.

A retrievable part composed of a standard ESP string (motor, seal protector, gas separator, and pump) utilizes on its bottom side a motor connector provided with a three pin wet mate electrical connector designed to connect the ESP in a docking station once landed. On the top side, a seal assembly is present to separate discharge pressure from intake pressure inside the tubing; it also provides an internal fishing neck profile for lowering or retrieving the ESP string with a slick line method using a 5/16" non-electrical braided-line. A 5" GS running/pulling tool is used to engage this internal fishing neck for ESP deployment.

Obstacle

During this first implementation at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), we faced an obstacle in which the ESP was stuck due to damage of a



seal assembly that occurred each time during the ESP retrieval with a wireline method. The issue of seal failure was faced from the beginning of the pilot project in June. First, seal damage occurred to standard seals. After extracting from the hole, seals from the seal assembly were completely damaged and left in the hole.

We posit that rubber pieces had fallen down and might be deposited on the docking station connectors, thus preventing electrical connection. Many attempts were performed with a slick line junk basket to retrieve these small pieces of damaged seals.

Three months after the first trial, Zeitecs (a company that specializes in artificial lift technologies) delivered packer cup seals that were newly designed and used in Guiberson completion packers. These seals were used in the

seal assembly to prevent any fluid recirculation through the pump. Unfortunately, during ESP retrieval with the wireline method, a huge over pull was registered on the way up at each tubing collar, even at low speeds (10 feet/min). Once the ESP was at the surface, we found that severe damage occurred to the packer cup seals.

Additionally, due to the continuous up and down movement (attempt to release the ESP string), the GS profile fishing neck was unscrewed and became loose. At this point, it was likely that the ESP string would fall on the permanent part.

After a long discussion with a technology provider, an alternative solution was developed. This solution consisted of lowering the ESP system in two parts that would be assembled with a PBR (Polished Bore Receptacle) as a separation tool. The first part would be a motor connector, seal protector and a pump atop the PBR; the second part would be the seal assembly.

The PBR and seal assembly are designed for two specific applications. As an expansion joint, it provides a stroke length for extreme tubing movement during well treatment and production. As a separation tool, it allows removal of production tubing string while leaving a "polished bore" and "anchor seal assembly" set in the packer.

Results

Unfortunately, after careful evaluation, we found that:

* After lowering the first part, it would be difficult to insert the polished bore in the second part because of the light weight of the wireline tool string.

* During ESP retrieval, there is a high risk



that the top part will stick inside the polished bore. Therefore, the entire retrievable ESP part will move together, then most likely on the way up. The first part will be free from the second part (at "separation tool" level) and fall down; consequently, serious damage occur to a completion system.

Due to the repetitive sticking problems faced in the retrieval of the wireline ESP in each retrieval, and after a five-month downtime of the project, the client was at the point of halting the pilot project of this technology. In parallel, a KOC Well Surveillance slick line specialist was conducting a study of the root cause analysis for the problem. The conclusion was as follows:

As designed, packer cup seals create seals and prevent fluid recirculation inside the 5 1/2" tubing in flowing conditions. During ESP

retrieval, seals are not retractable. This means the entire hydrostatic head will be supported by these seals, thus a huge over pull will be created while moving up with a retrievable ESP that leads to serious sticking issues.

After calculation, it was determined that 4,200 feet of fluid above the seals would create a large forces acting downward that is equal to 27,800 lbs. This exceeds the maximum safe working load of the 5/16" braided line cable. On the other hand, a swabbing effect will happen and a well control issue will be faced. In addition, a force created due to the swabbing effect will be added to dragging forces created by fluid.

Submitted by the Well Services Technical Team, Well Surveillance Group - Kuwait Oil Company



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القباس

Al-Qabas

BU KHALID, LISTEN TO THIS STORY

By Qais Al-Usta

Bu Khalid is Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, and Farid Behbehani is a Kuwaiti citizen, a relative and friend. I know him for 20 years, and also know that he is a peaceful citizen who does not have friction with anyone. Farid told me that he sent the family driver to the traffic department to renew the car's registration, but he (the driver) returned home dejected, then following questioning, it was found that the officer in charge asked the driver to repair the windshield, which had a crack.

Farid said that one or two days later he went himself to find a young officer with a middle rank to explain to him what happened, but he still insisted on the same request. Farid said, "I became somewhat angry, and told the officer, 'Repair the streets, then ask us to repair the windshields, because I will repair it today, then the gravel guns will spray and smash the windshield again'. Yet the officer insisted on his stand, and told me loudly that, 'This is not my problem, the public works is responsible about the roads' conditions - either you change the windshield or no renewal!'

Of course, I did not mention that Farid is born in 1957, and through the explanation, it is clear that the officer is as young as Farid's children, and the question arises: Is it natural for an officer to tell a citizen that the problem is in another ministry, as if the other ministry does not follow the government in which the officer is working, and if so, is it the responsibility of the citizen to correct the ministry? Then since when some of our uniformed men shout in the face of a citizen of the same age as their father?

Bu Khalid, I wish, your excellency, that you would issue a decision to stop asking for change of windshields until we know the right thing about the street gravel, because people have begun to tighten their belts according to the wishes of the wise government, and demanding the change of windshield is not logical, because the public works ministry received substandard roads.

Bu Khalid, I know how effective is your media apparatus, so I conclude by saying: Was the message received? Because I know this column will be at your excellency's desk at 8:00 am.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

LABOR TRANSACTION FEES INCREASING THIS WEEK? 5,500 RECEIVED PAY ILLEGALLY

KUWAIT: The Manpower Public Authority (MPA) is about to issue new fees on labor transactions within days, informed sources said. The MPA has completed the study on increases, the sources said, adding that transfer fees will be increased to KD 50 instead of KD 10, first time work permit to KD 50 and renewal to KD 10. The sources expected the decision to be issued this week.

In other news, the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) detected suspected violations by 5,500 employees in 45 government departments who received social and children allowances (labor support) based on a Cabinet decision to pay these allowances to those working in non-government areas. MGRP Secretary General Gawzi Al-Majdali said the total amount of support funds that were spent undeservedly are up to KD 10 million. He added that "those areas were contacted to take all necessary measures to recover this money by the government."

Majdali said the auditing the program did on those who deserve allowances revealed that those employees were working for the private sector before transferring to the government and were receiving the allowances set for them by law, but the program discovered that they were continuing their studies at the same time, and the law does not allow those who deserve allowances to combine work in the private sector and study at the same time. Majdali said "the program must be provided with copies of study certificates of employees the government departments were contacted about". He said the program asked that the allowances amounts those employees received to be deducted from their salaries. Majdali demanded all these employees to pay what they owe and the money they received unrightfully from the state. — Al-Anbaa, Al-Qabas

PROPOSED LAW ALLOWS PARENTS TO SUE FEE-HIKING SCHOOLS

KUWAIT: While Education Minister Bader Al-Essa said the private education law whose draft was submitted to the parliamentary education committee will put an end to the issue of private school fee hikes, committee rapporteur MP Humoud Al-Hamdan revealed that for certain categories of private schools - foreign, bilingual or Arab - in the new private education law enables parents to take the schools to court if they raise fees without complying with the law after its approval.

"We were keen to prepare a comprehensive law that keeps the schools' rights while at the same time guarantees parents' rights," Essa said. He added that the law has items that organize the fees, and the issue of private education will be opened in the coming days, and "we will cooperate with the education committee in order to come out with a law that protects all parties". — Al-Rai

ALARMING BUDGET FIGURES: SUPREME PLANNING COUNCIL MORE TREATMENT REQUESTED FOR DIPLOMATS

KUWAIT: The Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) has warned the government in general and the finance ministry in particular about the budget deficit. A SCPD report stressed that the 2016-2017 budget was void of any solutions or tangible measures to fix the current problems and undo what it described as "financial laxity" that has impacts on political and sociopolitical stability.

The report also warned of vast negative impacts of declaring unprecedented deficits while the government does not make clear scheduled pledges to carry out the needed remedies. The report used phrases like: "the economy is heading towards a very sharp slope", "continuation of current spending would lead state economy to big shocks" and "those figures, then, foretell a terrifying future".

Total revenues

The report made by the council's economic development committee after reviewing the 2016-2017 budget said that total revenues were estimated at KD 7.4 billion, which is less than that of 2015-2016 by KD 4.8 billion (39.3 percent), that oil revenues would drop by 46.3 percent, non-oil revenues would only be 14.3 percent of total revenues, total expenditure would be KD 18.9 billion, which is 1.6 percent less than that of 2015-2016 and that total expected deficit would be KD 12.2 billion.

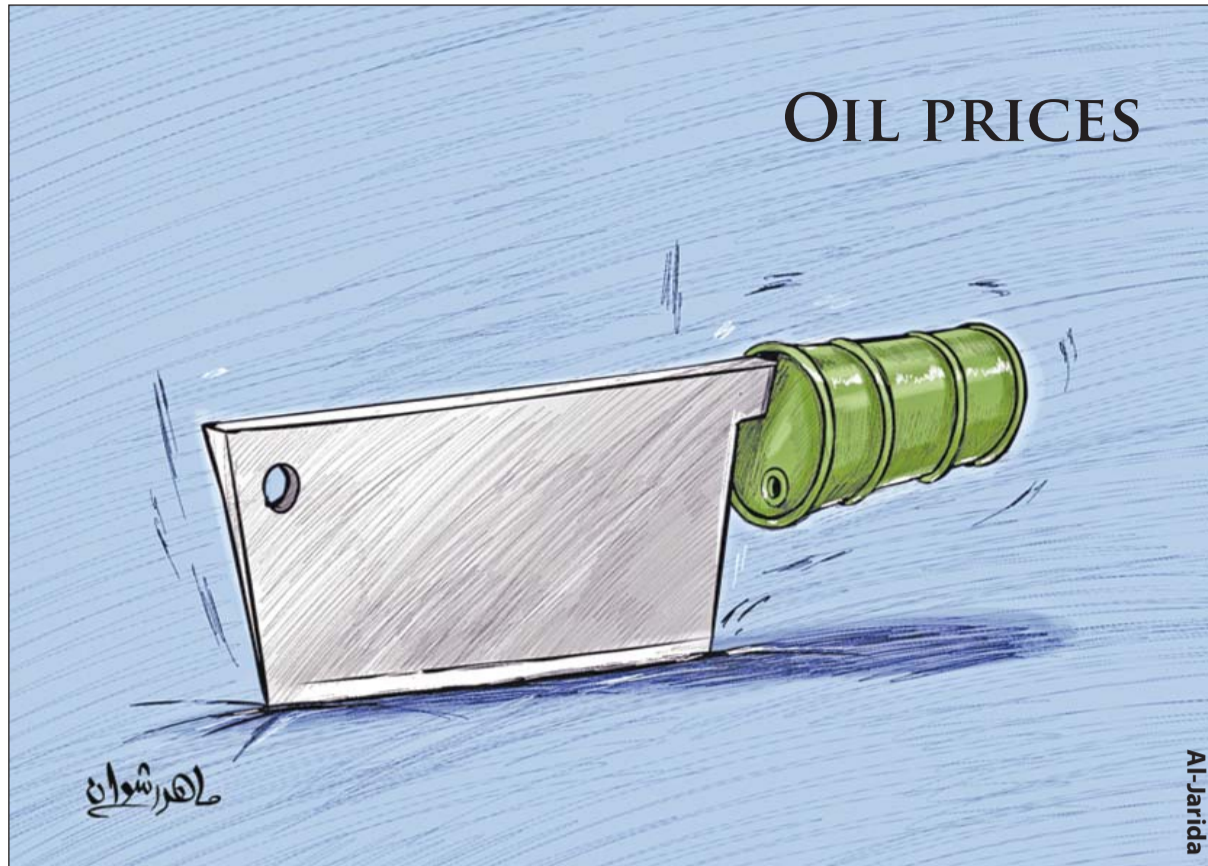
Accordingly, SCPD recommended imposing taxes on companies' profits, imposing taxes on luxury goods, adjusting the fees collected for using public properties, reconsidering goods and services prices, replacing goods subsidies with cash to be only

paid to deserving citizens, limiting recruitment in the public sector, suspending any pay rises or incentives, limiting the cost of overseas treatment, cutting down the expenses of hospitality, gifts, ceremonies and luxury furniture, halting the establishments of new public authorities or establishments and merging exiting ones, limiting committees' rewards and renting new buildings, privatizing all local state-owned companies and parts of the oil companies, offering projects like ports and airports to local and international private sector bidders and selling some assets to the private sector through public auctions.

Diplomats' treatment

In other news, well-informed governmental sources said that the

Cabinet intends to amend financial regulations for foreign ministry employees and that the new regulations were submitted to various relevant government bodies for advice. The sources explained that the amendments included adjusting article 28 of decree law number 245/2005 pertaining including foreign ministry employees and their families in health insurance that allows them to receive medical treatment in any country they see fit. "This will expand the number of beneficiaries from the foreign ministry's health insurance," stressed the sources, noting that such an adjustment would cost the government a lot at a time when the entire government is working on cutting expenses following austerity measures to face budget deficits. — Al-Qabas



Al-Jarida

Crime

Report

Infamous policeman caught with drugs

KUWAIT: The police officer who became infamous after a video clip went viral showing him forcing an Asian man to do push-ups while being kicked inside Sabah Al-Salem police station in 2014, was arrested by Qadisiya police in possession of shabu (the local name for crystal meth) and paraphernalia. He was sent to Drugs Control General Department (DCGD). A security source said that Najda police patrols suspected a person and asked for his ID and found that he is a police officer in an inebriated condition, and when he was subjected to a precautionary search, the drugs were found on him.

Bedoon wanted for death threat

A bedoon youth was placed on the wanted list for charges of threatening to kill his father, and possession of a fire arm and ammunition. An elderly bedoon man told Sulaibiya police, that he is in his seventies and retired recently, and his 24-year-old son takes care of the family expenses. He said he was surprised by his son pulling a pistol in his face threatening him, and added that his son told him that next time it will not be a threat only. The father said he did not know why his son acted this way.

Child molester caught at airport

Salmiya police foiled the attempt of a haris (building janitor) who tried to flee the country after he was accused of molesting an American child. Colonel Majid Al-Adwani ordered airport officers to keep the suspect from escaping, and they stopped him minutes before leaving. A security source said the child's father told Salmiya police the eight year old was molested by the Indian haris while playing outside their apartment.

No doctors hurt at Al-Amiri

An informed security source denied reports of doctors being attacked by individuals at Amiri hospital, and causing damage. The source said the incident is only about a domestic dispute and a verbal exchange.

Felon arrested

A citizen wanted on 14 felony cases, most notably kidnapping and restricting freedom of others, was arrested by policemen in Salmi after fierce resistance in his attempt to escape, and he was jailed.

Driver beats daughter

A citizen accused a driver of insulting and beating her daughter after chasing them in Abdallah Al-Mubarak area, and lodged a complaint against him. The lady told police that a person was driving a sports-utility-vehicle (SUV) harassed and chased her and her daughter, then forced them to stop, then knocked at the glass. The daughter went out of the car to find out what was going on, the man beat her while insulting her verbally in front of other motorists, then drove off. Investigations are underway.

Traffic officer insulted

Not only did a driver violate the traffic law in Fahaheel area as she left her car in a no parking area, but she also insulted the officer who ticketed her. An officer had noticed the female citizen parking her car, so he told her to move, but she refused and kept her car in the place. The officer then wrote her a ticket and she became angry and insulted him verbally. The officer lodged a complaint against her at Fahaheel police station.

Citizen conned

A citizen told Adan police that a Syrian cheated him when he made him believe he will buy him a truck engine for KD 12,000, and lodged a complaint against him. Police are investigating. — Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

BY-ELECTIONS PROBLEM GETS MORE COMPLICATED

KUWAIT: It seems that a constitutional problem over registering voters in the third electoral constituency in February is getting more complicated, said the elections department manager Lt Col Salah Al-Shatti. According to the official, registering voters for election lists, that is usually done in February and is supposed to be done till the end of the month, will have to be suspended until finishing the constituency's by-elections. "Article 8 of the elections law number 35/1962 bans changes to voter lists once voters are invited for elections, and thus we will have to wait until the by-elections are concluded," he explained, adding that candidate Abdullah Al-Kandari is already a municipal council member and if he wins, municipal by-elections would be held, and thus registrations would again have to be suspended as stipulated by the constitution. Other sources at the elections department said that registering new voters would be only open in the last nine days of February when the by-elections end and the results declared. — Al-Jarida

WHERE DID A QUARTER TRILLION DOLLARS GO?

KUWAIT: The state gained KD 231.1 billion during 15 years of surplus, which is more than three quarters of a trillion dollars, and despite this the state is heading for austerity and reducing subsidies following the first year of deficit. This issue is dominating discussions in diwanis and creating depressing questions: Where did the billions of the surplus years go? Were they stolen? Were they lost in squandering left and right? Did the state fail in managing them? Those questions were presented to Deputy Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Acting Oil Minister Anas Al-Saleh, so what was his answer?

Kuwait left the deficit era in 2000, and achieved surpluses over 15 consecutive years, during which huge amounts accumulated, reaching KD 52.2 billion, which were sent to the general reserve fund, in addition to KD 33.6 billion that was transferred to the future generations fund. The last surplus years were in 2013-2014, then after that the general budget recorded its first deficit in fiscal year 2014-2015 of KD 2.72 billion, but it was not a true deficit - rather it was a deficit on paper resulting from transferring 25 percent of income (nearly KD 6.32 billion) to the future generations fund.

'Rich years'

Calculations of official figures that were published on the finance ministry site showed the state earned nearly KD 231.1 billion over the past 15 years, most of which came from selling oil. This large figure that is over three quarters of a trillion dollars, which is nearly KD 165 million for each citizen, makes disappointment war-



Anas Al-Saleh

ranted, as people feel the savings of the 'rich years' did not help in the first deficit years. This is only half the truth - the other half is that state expenses jumped tremendously during the surplus years 4.7-fold over what they were in 1999-2000 (from KD 4 billion in 2000 to KD 18.9 billion in 2014), and particularly salaries jumped during the same period nearly fourfold of what they were from (1.3 billion to more than KD 5 billion).

It can be said that of the KD 213 billion gained by Kuwait over 15 years, one third of it was saved between the general reserve and future generations fund (32.3 percent) and two thirds was spent on current and capital expenses (67.7 percent).

General reserve

Saleh said what the state made in surplus over the past 15 years is kept in the

general reserve of the state and did not evaporate as some people think. He said the rationalization the state is heading to is more linked with the deficit registered in state deficit for the current and next year, and not because of weakness in Kuwait's economy. Saleh said the surplus in the budget over the past 15 years accumulated in the reserves one year after the other, so the financial situation of the state is strong and does not call for alarm, but as for the annual general budget, it is facing pressure and the deficit needs to be covered. Saleh explained that despite what the state has in reserves, from the accounting aspect, the surplus is sent to the general reserve, and 10 percent of revenues are taken for the future generations fund, contrary to the registered deficit which needs yearly coverage and cannot be moved to the general reserve without coverage, be it by withdrawing from the reserve or by financing through known borrowing tools.

Saleh said the state's general budget came under pressure because of the sharp drop in oil prices in world markets, so the financial directions included taking measures and having programs that aim at rationalizing spending and reducing spending items. He said efforts of the finance ministry are currently focused on adopting rational financial policies that guarantee not overspending, and avoiding decisions that constitute new financial burdens on the public budget, especially since oil revenues dropped by 74.2 percent, so estimates of oil revenues in the new budget is nearly KD 5.8 billion, 78 percent of total revenues. — Al-Rai

CAFES INCREASE TOBACCO PRICES

KUWAIT: A number of restaurants and cafes yesterday announced increasing the prices of products they offer like cigarettes, tobacco products and soft drinks, explaining that they had already got the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's approval for such

increases. The restaurants and cafes distributed flyers announcing the new price increases, justifying the price increases due to a 30-50 percent increase by suppliers in addition to increasing raw food material prices by 25 percent. — Al-Anbaa

CBK INCREASES NAJMA REWARDS

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced changing its Najma Account rewards program by increasing the mega draws rewards to up to KD 250,000. In this regard, Sahar Abdulaziz Al-Rumaih, CBK's General Manager - Corporate Credit and Acting General Manager - Retail Banking Division, said that Al-Najma account offers the largest daily award in Kuwait with a prize of KD 7,000. She added that the annual mega awards were increased, starting by KD 100,000 in the first quarter, KD 150,000 in the second quarter, KD 200,000 in the third quarter and KD 250,000 in the fourth quarter. Rumaih added that the first draw would be

held on April 3rd, 2016 Rumai said. She added that participants can open the account by depositing a minimum of KD 500. Each KD 25 entitles the account holder to an entry in daily draws after a week as of deposit, and in mega draws after 3 months of deposit. "The more sums deposited, the bigger chances account holders will have to win one of the awards," she underlined.



Sahar Al-Rumaih



India cities get funds to tackle woes, modernize

HOMELESS GAZANS STRUGGLE DURING HARSH WINTER



IOWA: A young girl holds up a campaign sign as people applaud during a campaign event featuring Republican presidential candidate, Sen Ted Cruz, R-Texas, at Western Iowa Tech Community College in Sioux City. — AP

PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFULS SPRINT TO IOWA VOTE

DES MOINES: Months into their White House campaigns, US presidential candidates yesterday made a final frenzied push to persuade voters before Iowa kicks off the nomination process. Democrat Hillary Clinton, fearful of a 2008 repeat when she was beaten to the punch in Iowa by an upstart Barack Obama, was leaving nothing to chance, stumping in the heartland this weekend as her main rival Senator Bernie Sanders did the same, seeking to deny her yet another shot at history. Republican Donald Trump and his nearest rival Ted Cruz meanwhile made unmasked appeals to Iowa's evangelical conservatives so important in the first-in-the-nation contest today. And long-shot hopefuls like Carly Fiorina made their pitch to voters too, reminding them that polls are notoriously unreliable in Iowa, where political upsets are commonplace.

The three Democrats and 12 Republicans aiming to be their party's 2016 torchbearer are leaving it all on the field in Iowa,

hosting several dozen events across this snow-swept heartland state as they gear up for today's debut vote in the presidential marathon.

The state is small and relatively homogeneous, but it is immensely consequential for the top finishers who can claim momentum heading into the primary in New Hampshire. On the Republican side, it is billionaire Trump at the fore, tearing up the traditional playbook and largely avoiding the retail politics that require candidates to put in days and weeks in Iowa.

But he made the requisite appeal to evangelicals, who comprised 57 percent of caucus voters in 2012 and are expected to play a huge part in the February 1 vote. Trump posted a short video on Facebook, showing him holding up a Bible given to him by his mother. "I want to thank the evangelicals. I will never let you down," he said.

At a Saturday rally in Dubuque, he expressed his usual confidence—"If we win Iowa, we can run the table!"—while knocking Cruz, repeating his concerns about the Texas senator being born in Canada and questioning his eligibility to be president. Cruz is locked in a do-or-die battle with Trump in Iowa, and is counting on a strong evangelical turnout to help propel him to victory here. "We need godly wisdom back in the White House," supporter Pam Cobb said at a Cruz rally in Ida Grove, in northwest Iowa.

Hovering in third place among Republicans is Senator Marco Rubio, whose star is seen as rising perhaps just at the right time. "You have a right to be angry," Rubio told more than 300 people at a university hall in Ames, Iowa. "But anger is not a plan," he said in a dig at the bombastic Trump.

Rubio portrayed himself as the most electable Republican who can challenge Clinton, but warned that internal feuding will only doom the GOP in 2016. "We are going to have our primary, and it's going to get heated," he admitted, noting the tit-for-tat negative politicking between him and Cruz. "But in the end, we are going to bring everyone together. We have to. We cannot win if we are divided against each other."

Candidates including Rubio were bringing out their surrogates this weekend for added political firepower. Clinton took the stage at Iowa State University in Ames with her daughter Chelsea, and former congresswoman Gabby Giffords, a gun violence victim who has helped raise concerns about the issue. "Hillary is tough," Giffords said by way of introduction. "In the White House, she will stand up to the gun lobby." — AFP

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HOMELESS GAZANS STRUGGLE DURING HARSH WINTER

KHAN YUNIS, Palestinian Territories: Azza Al-Najjar struggles in vain to keep her two-year-old warm by wrapping him in blankets in her prefabricated metal home as a winter storm lashes the Gaza Strip. "The cold increases the suffering of people here," the 24-year-old mother says. "My son has breathing problems and with the weather his condition has worsened."

The family has been staying in the temporary home in the city of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza since theirs was destroyed in the 2014 war between Israel and Palestinian militants in the enclave. But recent rains battering the besieged Strip have seen schools and roads closed, while families like Najjar's have watched water and mud seep through the doorway into their homes.

She, her husband and two children—the youngest of whom is just six months old—live in a metal box just five meters by three meters. It includes just one bedroom, a small corner for cooking and a bathroom. "There is no electricity, water, food or gas," she says. "We don't even have firewood." Israel has for nearly a decade imposed a blockade on around 1.8 million people living in Gaza.

"Our life here is poverty, worries, blockade and homelessness."

'Cold like a morgue'

Her husband Samir, bundled up under blankets, watches helplessly as water gushes past their home. "We live—but that's only because we're not dead," says the 30-year-old, who became wheelchair-bound after being shot by Israeli forces in 2008. The family survives on donations from charities that "are not enough," he adds.

Their home is one of around 100 that an NGO from the United Arab Emirates built as a temporary measure after the war, but that are woefully inadequate for the winter rains. Some families have stretched plastic sheeting over their roofs in a bid to prevent leaks. With UN schools closed by the weather, older kids play idly in the rain.

Three huddle around a small fire in a desperate bid to warm frozen bones. Life in a mobile home is "cold like a morgue in winter and like a furnace in summer," said Abdullah Al-Najjar, 48, who also lives with six family members in one of the temporary shelters.

Aid delayed

Azza Al-Najjar stresses that speeding up the reconstruction of Gaza is the "most important thing" for her family. The United Nations has completely rebuilt just one of the

20,000 homes rendered totally uninhabitable in the July-August 2014 war.

Over 120,000 more homes were at least partly damaged, according to the United Nations. Tens of thousands of them have undergone repairs with its assistance, the UN says, but many families are still waiting for funds. The 50-day conflict—which included an extensive Israeli bombing campaign killed 2,200 Palestinians and 73 people on the Israeli side, and left much of Gaza in ruins.

An agreement between the Palestinian government, Israel and the United Nations allows in a small amount of building materials for reconstruction, but Israel's blockade persists and the Egyptian border has remained largely closed. Billions pledged by donors have been slow to arrive.

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate has reached 45 percent, according to the World Bank. And with the bad weather, many have seen what little they have washed away. Colonel Abdul Aziz Attar, a civil defense official, says crews aided 200 families in the southern Gaza Strip and rescued dozens from homes in Rafah, which has been partially flooded. "We had to evacuate citizens in fishing boats," he says.

The United Nations has provided plastic



KHAN YUNIS, Palestinian Territories: Samir Al-Najjar sits on a wheelchair next to his prefabricated metal home in the southern Gaza Strip town. — AFP

sheets and other aid to around 500 of the worst-hit families. It has also deployed emergency teams in various parts of the Gaza Strip to mitigate the flooding. But Gaza's housing minister Mufid Al-Hasayneh told AFP it would take more than 130,000 apartments to house all those whose homes were destroyed in

three Israeli offensives against the enclave since 2008. This month Qatar provided more than 1,000 apartments to Gaza residents. Still, it is not enough. Azza Al-Najjar says she and her neighbors have "heard a lot of promises, from the UN and others." "But we still don't know when our houses will be rebuilt" — AFP



GENEVA: Syrian ambassador to UN and head of the government delegation Bashar Al-Jaafari (center) gestures as he holds a press conference during the Syria peace talks. — AFP

SYRIA PEACE TALKS IN PERIL BEFORE THEY EVEN BEGIN

MAIN OPPN GROUP THREATENS TO WALK AWAY

GENEVA: The future of the biggest push to date to end Syria's tangled civil war looked highly uncertain yesterday with the main opposition group threatening to walk away before planned peace talks even begin in earnest. Representatives from the umbrella body for mainstream opposition groups, who arrived in Geneva late Saturday, are refusing to enter the hoped-for talks with President Bashar Al-Assad's government.

The High Negotiations Committee (HNC), set to meet with UN envoy Staffan de Mistura yesterday, are demanding that humanitarian aid first gets through to besieged towns, that bombing of civilians ceases and that hundreds of prisoners are released.

"If the regime insists on continuing to commit these crimes then the HNC delegation's presence in Geneva will not be justified," coordinator Riad Hijab warned in a statement in Arabic posted online Saturday. "The delegation will inform de Mistura of its intentions to withdraw its negotiating team if the UN and world powers are unable to stop these violations," he said.

Opposition delegates were due to meet with envoys from Western countries yesterday morning, followed later by preliminary talks between the opposition and de Mistura. In addition the Syrian government's chief negotiator, UN envoy Bashar Al-Jaafari was expected to make a statement to reporters, sources said.

Meanwhile there was no abating of the violence on the ground, with at least 12 people

killed and dozens injured in a double bomb blast near the Shiite shrine of Sayyida Zeinab, south of Damascus, yesterday morning, a monitor said. And highlighting the dire humanitarian situation, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) Saturday said 16 more people had starved to death in Madaya, one of more than a dozen towns under blockade by regime or rebel forces. Since December, 46 people have died of starvation in the town, and MSF warned dozens more were on the verge of death in the town where many residents reportedly have been surviving on boiled grass.

They are among more than 4.5 million people with "immense humanitarian needs" are living in areas extremely hard to access because of fighting, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

'Siege soup'

On Friday, the scheduled start of a planned six months of talks, protesters in Geneva highlighted the plight of ordinary Syrians with "siege soup" of grass and leaves. The war that has killed more than 260,000 people since 2011 is a complex conflict sucking in-on different sides-Turkey, Iran and Gulf states and also Western countries and, since September, Russia.

A fresh spat between Russia and Turkey erupted Saturday after Ankara accused Moscow of violating its airspace two months after it shot down a Russian jet. The chaos in Syria has allowed the extremist Islamic State group to overrun swathes of Syria and also Iraq, giving it a launch pad for

attacks the world over, most notably in Paris on November 13 with 130 dead.

Half of Syria's population has fled their homes, forcing millions to seek refuge in neighboring countries and also in Europe, where the influx is proving to be a major political and social headache. On Saturday, dozens of migrant men, women and children, including Syrians, drowned when their boat sank off of Turkey-adding to the almost 4,000 who perished trying to reach Europe by sea in 2015.

Ambitious roadmap

The intra-Syrian negotiations, if they get going, are part of an ambitious roadmap set out in November in Vienna by all the external powers involved. The process envisions elections within 18 months but leaves unresolved the future of Assad, whose regime has been making gains on the ground since Russia began supporting him with airstrikes in September.

Another thorny issue is which rebel groups will be involved in the talks, although all sides agree on the exclusion of extremists from Islamic State and the Nusra Front tied to Al-Qaeda. Ahrar Al-Sham, one of the most controversial groups in the HNC because of its ties to Nusra, was not represented in Geneva, HNC spokesman Riad Naasan Agha said. And the powerful Army al-Islam rebel group "is here, they are a negotiator," he told reporters, but said HNC chief negotiator and Army of Islam member Mohammed Alloush had not arrived yet. — AFP

SHOOTING WOUNDS ISRAELIS IN WEST BANK, ATTACKER KILLED

RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories: A Palestinian opened fire at a checkpoint near a Jewish settlement in the West Bank yesterday, wounding three Israelis before being shot dead, officials said, the latest in four months of violence.

An attempted car-ramming also occurred later in the day at a military checkpoint in the West Bank north of Jerusalem, with the attacker shot and taken to hospital for treatment, Israel's military said. No Israelis were reported wounded. The Israeli army said the shooting attack took place near the Beit El settlement, close to Ramallah. Israeli medics said two of the three wounded had serious injuries.

"A gunman opened fire near Beit El, north of Jerusalem," the Israeli military said in a statement. "Forces at the scene responded to the attack and shot the assailant, resulting in his death. Three Israelis were wounded and are being evacuated for emergency medical treatment in hospital." It was not immediately clear whether the victims were civilians or members of the security forces.

An AFP journalist saw the body of the Palestinian man killed near the checkpoint. A bullet-riddled silver car apparently used in the attack was next to the body. The car had plates seeming to indicate it belonged to the Palestinian government. A Palestinian intelligence source said Israeli authorities had informed them that the man, Amjad Sukari Abu Omar, around 30 years old, worked as a bodyguard for the Palestinian attorney general's office.

Palestinian ambulances sought to move toward the body, but were prevented from doing so by Israeli soldiers. The body was later handed over to Palestinian authorities. A wave of Palestinian knife, gun and car-ramming attacks erupted in October. Most of the attacks have been stabbings, though shootings have occasionally occurred. The violence has killed 25 Israelis, as well as an American and an Eritrean, according to an AFP count. At the same time, 160 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces, most while carrying out

attacks but others during clashes and demonstrations.

French push for peace

Some analysts say Palestinian frustration with Israel's occupation of the West Bank, the complete lack of progress in peace efforts and their own fractured leadership have helped feed the unrest. Israel says incitement by Palestinian leaders and media is a main cause of the violence.

Many of the attackers have been young people, including teenagers, who appear to have been acting on their own. International efforts to halt the violence have so far failed. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said Friday his country was looking to revive plans for an international conference aimed at bringing about the two-state solution.

Should efforts to breathe life into the moribund peace process fail, France would move to unilaterally recognize Palestine as a state, Fabius said. Peace talks collapsed in April 2014 and the situation has since deteriorated, with the prospects of fresh dialogue appearing increasingly remote. Palestinian leaders welcomed the initiative, having long argued for an international process to end the Israeli occupation and bring about the two-state solution.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday criticized France's threat to recognize a Palestinian state, arguing that it gives Palestinians no incentive to compromise. "This will be an incentive for the Palestinians to come and not compromise," Netanyahu said at the start of a cabinet meeting. "The substance of negotiations is compromise and the French initiative, as it has been reported, in effect gives the Palestinians in advance reasons not to do so."

The rightwing premier said "I believe that we will see a sobering up on this issue. In any case, we will work to bring this about and our position is very clear: We are prepared to enter into direct negotiations without preconditions and without dictated conditions." — AFP



RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories: Israeli soldiers react as they secure the scene of a reported Palestinian shooting attack at a checkpoint near the Beit El settlement, close to West Bank city. — AFP

SAUDI AUTHORITIES ARREST 9 AMERICAN 'TERROR' SUSPECTS

RIYADH: Saudi authorities have arrested nine American citizens among 33 "terror" suspects rounded up over the past days, the Saudi Gazette newspaper reported yesterday. Four Americans were arrested on Monday and five others over the past four days, the paper reported citing an unidentified source.

The arrests also included 14 Saudis, three Yemenis, two Syrians, an Indonesian, a Filipino, an Emirati, a Kazakhstan national and a Palestinian, the paper said. It did not say if any of the "terror suspects" was linked to the Islamic State group, which has claimed several deadly attacks

against security and Shiites in the kingdom in recent months.

On Friday, a suicide bomber attacked a Shiite mosque in Eastern Province killing four people before worshippers disarmed and tied up his accomplice who had fired on them.

IS, a radical Sunni group that considers Shiites heretics, did not claim that attack. The Saudi Gazette said some 532 IS suspects accused of plotting attacks in the kingdom are being questioned ahead of their trial at the criminal court in Riyadh. They are members of six cells arrested in "pre-emptive" raids across the kingdom and include a Saudi woman and a Filipina, the paper said. — AFP

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned Moscow on Saturday that it would be forced to "endure the consequences" if its jets continue to violate Turkish airspace, after Ankara reported a new border infringement incident by a Russian plane.

NATO-member Turkey said another Russian warplane violated its airspace on Friday despite several warnings - two months after Turkey's military shot down a Russian jet for crossing over its territory. The past incident seriously strained the previously close ties between the two countries, damaging a strong economic partnership.

"We regard this infringement which came despite all our warnings in Russian and in English as an effort by Russia to escalate the crisis in the region," Erdogan told reporters before departing on a Latin American tour. "If Russia continues the viola-

tions of Turkey's sovereign rights, it will be forced to endure the consequences." He did not specify what those consequences might be. Russian Defense Ministry spokesman, Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov, denied that there was any violation of Turkey's airspace and called the Turkish statements "unsubstantiated propaganda." His statement was carried by state news agencies Tass and RIA Novosti. Erdogan said he attempted to reach Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss the issue but that the Russian leader did not respond.

"These irresponsible steps do not help the Russian Federation, NATO-Russia relations or regional and global peace," Erdogan said. "On the contrary they are detrimental." Turkey's Foreign Ministry said the Russian SU-34 crossed into Turkish airspace on Friday, ignoring several warnings in Russian

and in English by Turkish radar units. It said Ankara summoned the Russian ambassador to the ministry Friday evening to "strongly protest" the violation. It was not clear where exactly the new infringement had occurred. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg also called on Russia "to act responsibly and to fully respect NATO airspace" but also urged "calm and de-escalation" of tensions between Moscow and Ankara. "Russia must take all necessary measures to ensure that such violations do not happen again," he said in a statement. "NATO stands in solidarity with Turkey and supports the territorial integrity of our ally, Turkey." There was no immediate comment on the incident from Moscow.

In November Turkey shot down a Russian plane which violated its airspace near Syria, touching off a crisis between the two coun-

tries. It was the first time in more than half a century that a NATO nation had shot down a Russian plane. Turkey brought down the Russian Su-24 bomber near the border with Syria on Nov. 24, saying it violated its airspace for 17 seconds despite repeated warnings. Russia insists the plane never entered Turkish airspace. One pilot and a Russian marine of the rescue party were killed in the incident. The Russian military quickly sent missile systems to Syria and warned that it would fend off any threat to its aircraft. Moscow also punished Turkey by imposing an array of economic sanctions. On Saturday, Stoltenberg said NATO had agreed in December to increase the presence of AWACS early warning planes over Turkey to increase the country's air defenses. He said the decision was taken before Friday's incident. — AP

TURKEY SENDS WARNING TO RUSSIA AFTER LATEST AIRSPACE VIOLATION



IOWA: Democratic Presidential Candidate Bernie Sanders speaks at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. — AFP

SANDERS: DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST CALLING FOR POLITICAL REVOLUTION

INSPIRING PASSIONATE SUPPORT IN YOUNG LIBERALS

NEW YORK: Bernie Sanders, the Democratic presidential hopeful beating Hillary Clinton in the Iowa polls, is the country's longest serving independent Congressman who is calling for a political revolution in America. An outsider like Donald Trump, albeit at the opposite end of the spectrum, the 74-year-old Democratic socialist may be the eldest contender in the White House race but he has done the most to inspire passionate support among young liberals.

Outwardly serious-even friends call him grumpy-the senator from Vermont has spent a lifetime in public office addressing income inequality and fumes that the top 0.1 percent of Americans owns as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent.

Bernie, as he is known to fans, calls inequality the great moral, economic and political issue of the times, and demands campaign finance reform that would prevent billionaires from spending unlimited funds in propelling their candidates to the White House.

He has drawn thousands to his rallies, winning endorsements from Oscar-winner Susan Sarandon and Ben and Jerry's ice cream, which concocted a new flavor "Bernie's Yearning"-mint covered in a thick chocolate-in his honor.

"We are touching a nerve with the American people who understand that establishment politics is just not good enough. We need bold changes, we need a political revolution," he said during a CNN townhall debate in Iowa today. Written off by his opponents as a wacky socialist, Sanders admits to being taken aback

by the extent to which his message has resonated in a Democratic race where Hillary Clinton is expected to win the nomination.

He has run a progressive campaign calling for universal health care coverage, a \$15 minimum wage, reining in Wall Street, free tuition at public universities, taxing the wealthy and pulling 27 million Americans out of poverty. The big question, as with Trump, is whether Sanders can transform his popularity among people who generally do not vote into turnout today.

Struggled for money

Born in Brooklyn, New York on September 8, 1941 and brought up in a hard-working Jewish family that could never afford to move out of their small apartment, he has spoken of knowing first hand the struggle for money. His father was a Polish immigrant whose family was wiped out in the Holocaust. He attended James Madison High School and Brooklyn College, before transferring to the University of Chicago. As a student, he became involved in the civil rights movement and took part in the march on Washington, where Martin Luther King Jr delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963. After graduating, Sanders worked on an Israeli kibbutz and moved to Vermont where he worked as a carpenter and filmmaker.

In 1981, he was elected as mayor of Burlington, the state's largest city, by a mere 10-vote victory and went on to win another three terms. Under his administra-

tion, the city made strides in affordable housing, progressive taxation, environmental protection, child care and women's rights. In 1990, he was elected to the House of Representatives as an independent for Vermont, taking his fight against inequality to Congress. After 16 years in the House, he was elected to the Senate and is serving his second term after winning re-election in 2012 with 71 percent of the vote.

Pillar of integrity

In 2014, he worked with Republican Senator John McCain to pass legislation to make it easier for veterans to get medical care, beating the partisan gridlock that has paralyzed much of Washington life in recent years.

He registered as a Democrat last year and announced his presidential run. Sanders has steadfastly refused to wage personal attacks on Clinton, including over the email scandal that dogged her stint as secretary of state, or her husband's extra-marital liaisons. "The American people are sick and tired of hearing about your damn emails," he said during a televised debate in October, while acknowledging it was not good politics to let Hillary off the hook. In the end, his outburst hogged the headlines, earning him plaudits for his integrity. It is a message lapped up by Democrats disillusioned with the Clintons and Americans asking why they work so hard and yet lag so far behind other industrialized nations in having the right to paid leave and health care. — AFP

MARCO RUBIO HITTING TIMELY STRIDE AHEAD OF IOWA VOTE

AMES: If the Republican establishment can indeed strike back, as several 2016 presidential campaigns are hoping, this might be Marco Rubio's moment. Florida's freshman senator is making his mark just before the Iowa caucuses, the crucial first contest in the party nomination races.

At rallies and coffee shops across the state, he presents himself as the rational, policy-focused conservative in the campaign, countering the heated rhetoric of frontrunner Donald Trump and the Tea Party ideology of core conservative Ted Cruz. He is attracting interest from young voters who share his optimism about America and appreciate his family story of a dynamic son of Cuban immigrants who pulled himself up by his own bootstraps.

And he is courting Iowa's all-important evangelical voters, invoking God and religion now perhaps more than ever. "He draws from all corners of the party," Rubio's communications director Alex Conant said at a Saturday rally in Ames, one of several Rubio is holding up until caucus time today.

While he still trails billionaire Trump and fellow US senator Cruz in polls, a stronger-than-expected bronze medal finish here would boost his claim as the pre-eminent mainstream Republican in the race going into the votes in New Hampshire and South Carolina.

"Traditionally there are three tickets out of Iowa, and we'd be thrilled with a strong third place," said Conant, downplaying expectations even as Rubio narrows the gap on Cruz. So why isn't Rubio eyeing Iowa's top two spots? "We're running against the greatest showman on Earth, and the greatest ground game that's ever been assembled in Iowa," Conant observed about Trump and Cruz.

"If we can finish ahead of the other traditional Republican candidates going into New Hampshire, I think that's a strong position for us."

Rubio is well ahead of Jeb Bush, the former Florida governor and son and brother of two presidents, and governors Chris Christie of New Jersey and John Kasich of Ohio.

In New Hampshire, however, he trails Kasich and Bush, along with Trump and Cruz. In Iowa, though, Rubio has risen to 14.5 percent in the RealClearPolitics poll average, while second place Cruz has slipped to 24.5 percent support. Trump has also declined, but still leads at 30.8.

While Cruz recently had been launching a comprehensive assault against Trump, he now trains his fire on Rubio, a sign the Texan is concerned about Rubio's Iowa rise. On the campaign trail now, Cruz regularly invokes Rubio's name, often to slam his positions on immigration.

On the 'same wavelength'

Rubio is doing something regularly in Iowa as well-talking a lot about God. Like his rivals, Rubio has launched a full court press to woo evangelicals, the religious conservatives so vital in first-to-vote Iowa. "Our rights don't come from our government, our rights don't come from our laws," he said in Ames. "Our rights come from our Creator."

The 44-year-old Rubio's secret weapon might well be young voters, who are expressing dissatisfaction with Trump's coarse, confrontational rhetoric and are turning to Rubio as an optimistic 21st century leader. "Rubio and I are on the same wavelength on a lot of important issues," said Nathan Haila, 36, a product manager for a manufacturing company.

He said he appreciates some aspects of Trump's message, "but at the end of the day, policy matters." Trump's relentless combativeness, insults and simplifications of complex policy issues can be counterproductive, Haila said. "It's hard to hear sometimes through the rhetoric what somebody's actually going to do." — AFP



IOWA: Republican presidential candidate, Sen Marco Rubio, R-Fla, speaks during a campaign rally, Saturday, Jan 30, 2016, in Des Moines. — AP

'LEAVE US ALONE': OREGON TOWN TIRED OF STANDOFF

BURNS: People who live in Burns, the small high desert town near a wildlife refuge that has been occupied by an armed group for a month, say they are sick of the disruption to their lives. "We just want to go back to the way we were," Barbara Ormond, who owns a quilt store in downtown Burns, said Saturday. "We want everyone to leave us alone."

Four people occupying an Oregon wildlife refuge held their position Saturday and posted live videos describing their situation and reiterating their demand that they be allowed to leave with being arrested. The jailed group's leader, Ammon Bundy, and 10 others who were arrested earlier in the week remained in custody. Through his

lawyer, Bundy on Saturday again called on the remaining occupiers to leave. The FBI has said it's trying to resolve the situation peacefully. While the standoff that originated over federal land-use policies has led to filled-up hotels and restaurants as police, protesters and media have flocked to the area, locals say the conflict is upsetting and pitting neighbor against neighbor.

Community dissension

"It's tearing the community apart," said Bonnie Angleton, who owns a gift shop downtown. "I care about the people who live here." Kate Marsh, an artist in town, said many residents work for the government, while others have their livelihoods depend on govern-



BURNS: Protesters stand in front of the Harney County Courthouse. — AP

ment agencies. "There is some dissension in the community," Marsh said.

Authorities say Bundy, the leader of the group that seized the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, and others used the social media and other platforms to summon recruits to join their takeover. Court documents against the 11 occupiers under arrest show FBI agents have scrutinized social media postings, interviews and online talk shows that have been made during the standoff that began Jan 2.

Bundy and several other jailed leaders appeared Friday in federal court in Portland, where a judge denied their release. US Magistrate Judge Stacie Beckerman said Bundy, his brother Ryan Bundy and Ryan Payne pose a danger to the community, and she is concerned they would not follow orders to return to Oregon for criminal proceedings. The only woman arrested so far in the standoff, Shawna Cox, will be allowed to go home while her case makes its way through the court system. But Beckerman said that won't happen until after the armed occupation ends. Ammon Bundy's lawyer, Lissa Casey, said her client is not aligned with those remaining at the refuge near Burns and he wants to go back to his family. Bundy and his followers took over the refuge to demand that the federal government turn public lands over to local control. They have complained about what they say are onerous federal rules governing grazing and mining rights across the West. — AP

COP TO SUE ESTATE OF BLACK TEEN HE KILLED

CHICAGO: A white police officer plans to sue the estate of a black teenager he shot dead because he was traumatized by the fact that he accidentally killed the teen's neighbor in the incident, his lawyer said Saturday.

"The damage is my client feels horrible that Bettie Jones is dead because of the actions he was forced to take," attorney Joe Brodsky said. "It's affected him greatly. It's a burden he's going to have to carry for the rest of his life." The December 26 shooting came as the US city was reeling from a series of incidents in which police were accused of being too ready to pull the trigger on their service weapons.

The family of Quintonio LeGrier, 19, has repeatedly said there was no reason why police should have opened fire when responding to a domestic disturbance at their home. They have sued

both the city and the officer who shot him: Robert Rialmo, 27. A wrongful death suit filed by LeGrier's father, Antonio, argues that the teen "never had possession or control of a weapon" and was not a threat to Rialmo or anyone else at any point. Rialmo was standing outside when he opened fire on LeGrier, who was inside the building, the lawsuit said. Antonio LeGrier is also suing for wrongful arrest after police made him leave his dying son in order to file a statement about the incident. City officials have apologized for the death of Jones, a 55-year old mother of five, but have said LeGrier's shooting was justified.

The city has released few details about the incident except to say that LeGrier was brandishing a baseball bat when he was shot after his father called for help in the wee hours of the morning. LeGrier, an engineering student who was

struggling with mental health problems, had called 911 for help several times earlier that evening but the dispatcher did not send an officer to the house until his father called. Brodsky said that makes the incident a "double tragedy because if my client had advance knowledge he was dealing with a mentally ill person he may have handled this in a different way."

'Winning the lottery'

Police tactics and racism have been the subject of a national debate since protests erupted in Ferguson, Missouri, in mid-2014 over the shooting death of a black teenager, 18-year-old Michael Brown. The US Justice Department is investigating how Chicago police use force after the death of another black teenager, Laquan McDonald, who was shot 16 times as he was walking away from officers. — AFP

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BELOVED BBC PRESENTER TERRY WOGAN DIES AT 77

LONDON: BBC presenter Terry Wogan, one of British television's most familiar faces and long-running anchor of its Eurovision coverage, died of cancer yesterday aged 77, his family announced. "Sir Terry Wogan died today after a short but brave battle with cancer. He passed away surrounded by his family," said a family statement.

Irish-born Wogan had a successful television career, most notably anchoring Britain's flagship chat show during the 1980s, and hosted a hugely popular radio show for 27 years, retiring in 2009. Prime Minister David Cameron said Britain had lost a huge talent.

"I grew up listening to him on the radio and watching him on TV," he wrote on Twitter. "His charm and wit always made me smile. "Britain has lost a huge talent—someone millions came to feel was their own special friend," he added. Wogan started his career as a banker in Ireland but after five years left to become a radio newsreader, beginning a remarkable broadcast career that was recognised with first an OBE and then a knighthood in 2005.

He began presenting the BBC Radio 2 breakfast show in 1972, helping it become Europe's most-listened radio broadcast with a combination of smooth

Irish charm and a subversive sense of fun. He also hosted BBC TV chat show "Wogan" from 1982 until 1992, presiding over many memorable moments watched by millions of viewers.

They included football legend George Best turning up drunk, former sports presenter David Icke proclaiming himself as "a son of the Godhead", US actor Chevy Chase remaining silent throughout the interview and music icon David Bowie refusing to cooperate. "David Bowie, well he probably wasn't at his best when I interviewed him," he later said. "I thought a solid slap would have helped the situation. I didn't hit him, of course, but it came close."

'Most remarkable' Eurovision host

Tony Hall, the BBC's director general, led the tributes, calling Wogan "a national treasure". "For 50 years Sir Terry graced our screens and airwaves," he added. "His warmth, wit and geniality meant that for millions he was a part of the family." Broadcaster and journalist Piers Morgan called him "one of the greatest broadcasters who ever lived".

Wogan offered commentary on the Eurovision Song Contest from 1980 until 2008, garnering a huge following with his light-hearted cynicism of the kitsch

music competition. In an address to Eurovision delegates shortly after handing over the British commentary to fellow Irishman Graham Norton, Wogan criticised countries who voted together along political lines in the annual singing contest.

He told them to stop taking the event so seriously because "everybody knows it is rubbish". Despite occasionally irritating organisers with his remarks, for instance when he named the 2001 hosts "Dr Death and the Tooth Fairy", Eurovision yesterday tweeted that it was "deeply saddened" by Wogan's passing.

"He was without doubt the most remarkable Eurovision commentator in history," the organisation said. Wogan, born in Limerick in 1938, also hosted popular quiz show "Blankety Blank" and annual fundraising event "Children in Need" for over 30 years.

"Sir Terry has always been at the heart of the Charity," said the fundraiser. "We will miss him so much." He even entered the pop charts in 1978 with his version of popular English folk song "The Floral Dance". A keen golfer, Wogan holds the distinction for sinking the longest ever televised putt, holing from 33 yards during a pro-celebrity tournament. He is survived by three children, another one dying shortly after birth, and wife Helen Joyce. — AFP



LONDON: This file photo taken on September 7, 2009 shows TV and radio presenter Terry Wogan taking part in a charity recording of a Children in Need album, joining forces with Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason, ex-Rolling Stone Bill Wyman, singer Midge Ure and many others at Abbey Road studios. — AFP



ADDIS ABABA: UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon gives an address at the 26th presidential summit of the African Union on January 30, 2016. — AFP

AU FORCE FOR BURUNDI IN DOUBT AMID GOVT REFUSAL

'LEADERS STAND WHILE CIVILIANS ARE SLAUGHTERED'

ADDIS ABABA: A proposed peacekeeping force for troubled Burundi appeared in doubt yesterday, as African leaders pulled back from sending troops amid vehement opposition from the government in Bujumbura. The UN has warned Burundi risks a repeat of a 1993-2006 civil war, with hundreds killed since April 2015, when President Pierre Nkurunziza announced he would stand for a controversial third term in office. At least 230,000 people have fled to neighboring countries.

Burundi has consistently opposed the idea of the AU's proposed 5,000-strong peacekeeping mission, saying the deployment of troops without its express permission would be tantamount to an "invasion force". The AU charter's Article 4 (h) gives the pan-African bloc the right to intervene in a fellow nation state "in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity."

But top African Union diplomats said that sending troops without Burundi's approval was "unimaginable," and suggested the bloc might rather send a "high-level delegation" to hold talks with the government. "It has been, I think, bad communication. It was never the intention of the African Union to deploy a mission to Burundi without the consent of Burundian authorities," Ibrahim Fall, AU Special Representative

for the Great Lakes Region, told French radio RFI yesterday. "This is unimaginable," the Senegalese diplomat added.

'We don't do enough'

AU leaders are debating the crisis in Burundi on the second and final day of the 54-member bloc's summit in Ethiopia. The talks are being held behind closed doors and it is unclear when a final decision will be taken. Analysts say other African nations are wary of setting a precedent of deploying troops against the government's wishes.

Chad's President Idriss Deby, speaking after he took over the post of African Union chairman on Saturday, warned colleagues against inaction. "Our organization acts as it has for the past 20 or 30 years: we meet often, we talk too much, we always write a lot, but we don't do enough, and sometimes not all," Deby said.

Nkurunziza's quest to remain in power sparked weeks of street protests that were brutally suppressed and a failed coup. Since his re-election in July, clashes between government loyalists and the opposition have become increasingly violent. The political rhetoric has also become more ethnically-charged, sparking fears the ruling party may be trying to drive a

wedge between majority Hutus and minority Tutsis.

Leaders 'must be held responsible'

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, speaking on Saturday as the AU summit opened, made clear troops were needed to stem the violence. "Leaders who stand by while civilians are slaughtered in their name must be held responsible," Ban said, insisting that the Burundi crisis required the "most serious and urgent commitment".

He said the UN backed the AU's proposal "to deploy human rights observers and to establish a prevention and protection mission". But Burundi has remained defiant in its opposition and has apparently won supporters.

Asked whether Bujumbura had the support of other nations opposed to the plan, Burundian Foreign Minister Alain Nyamitwe insisted it did. "Yes, very strong (support), you will see," he said on Friday. While the official theme of the AU meeting is human rights, leaders are again dealing with a string of crises across the continent during talks at the organization's headquarters in the Ethiopian capital. Rather than a new AU mission, other nations have called for better support for existing forces, including the 22,000-strong AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM). — AFP

DISAPPEARING CAST THREATENS DANISH ASYLUM-SEEKERS BALLET

COPENHAGEN: A performance at Copenhagen's Royal Theatre faces an unusual problem: The stars of the show-sold out in advance — could face deportation before the final curtain falls. In "Uropa-An asylum-seekers' ballet", six migrants tell their stories with the help of dancers from the Royal Danish Ballet, hoping to change perceptions of refugees in a country that has recently rolled out some of Europe's strictest asylum rules.

"The hardest part is, during the rehearsals, to speak about your own issues... without showing any feelings," said Salam Susu, a 32-year-old PhD student in musicology from the Syrian city of Homs. Disco funk music and ballet moves are mixed with harrowing tales of persecution and rape in the performance, which opened just days after Danish lawmakers voted to allow police to confiscate valuables from refugees and delay family reunifications by three years.

With few props on stage, dialogue and dance are at the centre of the English-language play, which opened on Friday and runs for three weeks. Although the script involves Susu and her partner, a music teacher, describing how their lives descended into chaos as Syria's civil war escalated, they say rehearsals helped take their minds off the nagging uncertainty that permeates life in an asylum centre.

Three days before the opening of "Uropa" — the title being a play on the Danish words for unrest, "uro", and Europe — they were finally told that their applications for asylum had been accepted. "It's crazy, I cannot believe that before the premiere we had our asylum," Susu laughed.

Shrinking cast

Others have been less fortunate since an original lineup of 10 were recruited last year: Two cast members have had their asylum appli-

cations rejected and one person has gone into hiding. A fourth asylum seeker, Mahyar Pourhesabi from Iran, was sent to France under the Dublin Convention, which requires asylum seekers to have their requests processed in the first EU country where they arrive.

In a segment of the play he appears to be sitting in an Internet cafe, speaking to the audience via a video link about living on the streets of Paris and sleeping in airports and train stations. "The asylum system here is not working well at all," he says. Director Christian Lollike said there was no guarantee the remaining cast of six wouldn't be decimated further, but maintained that using real migrants on stage was an essential part of the show.

"The meeting of their real presence and the dancers, these two languages, when they meet that's when something new is happening," he said. Lollike has previously cast maimed Danish war veterans in a "war ballet", and he courted controversy in 2012 by staging a play based on the manifesto of Norwegian mass killer Anders Behring Breivik.

"I'm hoping that people will have another view on what is an asylum seeker... And I (would) like the refugees to speak for themselves and to tell them how they have experienced coming to Denmark and meeting the Danish system," he said.

Changing perceptions

In one scene the actors echo some of the main arguments used by Danes who want to curb immigration. "How much tolerance can we afford?" asks Ali Ishaq, a 45-year-old gay man from Pakistan. "Shall we tolerate these migrants who prevent their children from going to state schools? Or who force their women to dress or behave in a certain way?" he says. — AFP

SUSPECTED JIHADISTS ARRESTED IN GREECE

THESSALONIKI: Two men with Swedish passports and carrying machetes and other "combat paraphernalia" have been arrested in Greece, suspected of links to jihadist groups, Greek police sources said yesterday.

A 28-year-old man of Bosnian descent and a 19-year-old of Yemeni origin were travelling by bus when they were arrested Thursday in the northern city of Alexandroupolis, near the Turkish border, according to police sources. Inside their luggage were found two machetes, army uniforms and other "combat paraphernalia", the sources said.

Both men have been charged with carrying weapons and will go before a magistrate on Tuesday, police said. The 28-year-old is known to European authorities for ties to jihadists, having been convicted in the past

for planning a terrorist attack and was under the close eye of Swedish authorities, police sources said.

Mega Channel reported yesterday that in 2005 the man was arrested in Bosnia after the police, during a raid at his house, found a suicide belt, explosives and a video showing a man with a covered face threatening terrorist acts against the US Capitol and the White House. He was sentenced to up to 14 years in Bosnian prison, but was released in 2011 and asked for political asylum in Sweden, according to Greek police sources. The two men arrived in Greece by plane from Sweden "ten days ago", and they travelled by bus to Thessaloniki and then to Alexandroupolis with tickets bound for Turkey, police said. — AFP



MOSCOW: In this photo taken late Saturday, Jan 30, 2016, firefighters prepare to work to extinguish a fire at a textile workshop. — AFP

AT LEAST 12 DEAD IN MOSCOW FACTORY

MOSCOW: At least 12 people, including three children, perished in a fire in a Moscow factory that caused the roof to collapse, Russian authorities said yesterday. Investigators said the blaze engulfed an area covering 3,000 square meters in a factory situated in the east of the Russian capital, which makes clothing according to local media.

"Twelve bodies were recovered" at the site, emergency ministry spokeswoman Oksana Zolotova told TASS news agency. Authorities said the victims of the fire were likely migrants who worked and lived at the factory. Russia's child rights commissioner, Pavel Astakhov, wrote on Twitter

that three children had died in the blaze.

"Three children were killed, one of whom was a baby," Astakhov wrote. "Preliminary evidence suggests that migrants lived at their workplace, some even with their children." The fire broke out at around 1800 GMT on Saturday and was only extinguished around five hours later, authorities said. The cause of the blaze remains unknown. A criminal investigation was launched to determine whether it may have erupted due to negligence or arson. The emergency situations ministry initially reported that there had been no fatalities in the fire, but investigators later said that bodies had been found at the site. — AFP

MILLIONS OF ETHIOPIANS FACING WORST DROUGHT FOR DECADES

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia is struggling from its worst drought for 30 years with millions in dire need of life saving aid, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned yesterday. At least 10.2 million people need food aid in Ethiopia, a figure the UN has warned could rise sharply, as "forecasts indicate that it could double within months" casting a fifth of the population into hunger.

Floods and failed rains caused by the El Nino weather phenomenon have sparked a dramatic rise in the number of people going hungry in large parts of Africa, with Ethiopia of special concern. "People of the country are facing the worst drought in 30 years...the scale of emergency is too much for any single government," Ban told reporters in the Ethiopian capital. "Immediate support will save lives and also support the impressive development that Ethiopia has made during the last decade."

Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen warned his country had less than half of the \$1.4 billion (1.3 billion Euros) needed. "Last year Ethiopia was hit by one of the strongest El Nino events on record...the scale and severity of humanitarian needs have significantly increased," he said. Food insecurity is a sensitive issue in Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous nation which enjoys near-double-digit economic growth, but which has struggled to change its image following famine in 1984-85 after extreme drought.

'Disturbing sense of deja vu'

"Those who remember Ethiopia in the 1980s may feel a disturbing sense of deja vu,"

the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a report earlier this month. "The country is once again facing devastating climatic conditions: Rains have failed; millions of people need food aid; children are suffering from severe malnutrition."

Thousands have left hardest hit regions, with stream of refugees still travelling across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen despite the conflict raging there. Nearly 100,000 Ethiopians and Somalis last year travelled by boat to Yemen, according to UN figures.

El Nino is triggered by a warming in sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean. It can cause unusually heavy rains in some parts of the world and drought elsewhere. In southern Africa, around 14 million people across southern Africa face going hungry after a prolonged drought wrecked harvests, with Malawi among the worst hit countries. Little rainfall in 2015 has left 2.8 million people in Malawi facing hunger, 1.9 million in Madagascar and 1.5 million in Zimbabwe, where last year's harvest was half that of the previous year.

In war-torn South Sudan, bordering Ethiopia, UN-backed experts warned late last year of a "concrete risk of famine" with tens of thousands of people feared to be starving to death outside areas aid workers can reach.

Some aid has been delivered, but civilians report dire conditions. The conflict has triggered a humanitarian crisis with 2.3 million people forced from their homes and 5 million around half the population-in need of emergency food aid. — AFP



GORAYE: This file photo taken on March 24, 2006 shows sheep carcasses covering the ground on the path leading toward the crater of an extinct volcano in Goraye in the Borana district of southern Ethiopia. — AFP

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Finance Manager
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 Qatar Airways - Qatar

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INDIA CITIES GET FUNDS TO TACKLE WOES, MODERNIZE

NEW DELHI: India took a step toward modernizing its cities by awarding 20 with funds to solve problems from shoddy sewage treatment to snarled traffic. The government eventually plans to spend \$15 billion to remake 100 cities over five years, Urban Development Minister Venkaiah Naidu said. The first 20 to receive financing include the capital of New Delhi, the western cities of Pune, Jaipur and Ahmadabad, and the southern cities of Chennai and Kochi.

Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi first touted his vision for creating so-called smart cities across India, there has been little clarity over what "smart" actually means beyond a better life for the country's 400 million city dwellers. While India has rapidly urbanized in

recent decades, most towns and cities still lack basic infrastructure like running water or stable electricity. Many feature huge slums housing millions of poor.

The cities were selected based on their proposals after more than 15 million Indian citizens weighed in on which problems should be solved first, marking "a paradigm shift" in having India's development guided by the public, Naidu said.

Some sent ideas to city officials via social media. Others entered local contests for designing logos or writing essays. Bhubaneswar, the capital of the eastern state of Orissa, unfurled a 10-kilometer-long (6-mile-long) canvas banner across the city and invited residents to scroll down their suggestions. "We are big believers in the power of

competition to spur bottom-up creativity, citizen engagement, and stronger proposals," said James Anderson of Bloomberg Philanthropies, which advised the government on the program.

Some of the proposals mentioned a need for better transportation, sewage treatment, security or trash management. Many envisioned funding through public-private partnerships. The Rajasthan heritage city of Jaipur wants to improve waste management, while New Delhi plans to install underground fiber-optic cables for more Internet connectivity. The traffic-clogged city of Chennai has plans for improving public transportation as well as dealing with disasters like last year's devastating floods. — AP



NEW DELHI: In this June 12, 2015 file photo, an Indian motorist rides past an overflowing roadside garbage-dumping site. — AP



NAYPYIDAW: In this photo taken on January 30, 2016, newly-elected National League of Democracy (NLD) members of parliament sit in a bus as they depart the city development committee compounds for parliament. — AFP

NEW ERA AS SUU KYI'S MPS BRACE FOR OFFICE

A POET, EDITOR AND AN ACTIVIST - NOW ELECTED MPS

NAYPYIDAW: In a modest dormitory in Myanmar's capital Naypyidaw, novice MP Tin Thit recites a poem he has penned called "No Retreat," steeling himself to enter Myanmar's parliament carrying the dreams of a nation left traumatized by army rule.

A poet, editor, activist and now newly elected MP, he is among hundreds of political newcomers poised to take their seats today in the country's most democratic legislature in generations, following the huge November landslide win by Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD).

"This is our era," the newly minted NLD lawmaker told AFP on Saturday as he prepared for a last-ditch round of parliamentary training organized by his party, brushing off concerns about his and his colleagues' lack of experience. "This is our responsibility. We will just do the job we have to do," he said. The new parliament marks a momentous political shift for a country that was held in the chokehold of oppressive junta rule for decades. Many of the NLD MPs have served prison time in Myanmar's long struggle for democratic change. They are a diverse bunch, counting singers, lawyers and businessmen among their ranks. But few have any experience of the cut and thrust of Myanmar's complex parliamentary process. They will need to show the country's 51 million people that they can deliver the "change" that was virtually the sole message of Suu Kyi's triumphant election bid. And that will not be easy.

Poverty endemic

While the junta handed power to a quasi-civil-

ian reformist government in 2011, the Southeast nation remains blighted by poverty and corruption. Junta-era neglect has left a legacy of ravaged education, healthcare, infrastructure and a creaking bureaucracy. Ethnic minority divisions have also torn deep fractures across the nation and civil wars continue to ravage border areas, fought by a military that has ensured it will retain huge political and economic powers under the new government.

"Our region is another world," said Cing Ngaih Mang, a newly elected MP for a small ethnic minority party from western Chin State, marveling at the grandeur of Myanmar's junta-built capital. "The difference in development is like comparing earth and sky," she told AFP, adding that she had been watching parliamentary TV to brush up on protocol.

For his part Tin Thit never aspired to be a politician. But he managed to topple former defense minister Wai Lwin in November's vote, winning a lower house seat in the military heartland of Naypyidaw. Some 390 NLD MPs are due to take their seats in the national parliament on Monday, turning the tables on the army-backed party that dominated the legislature alongside a bloc of unelected military MPs for the last five years.

While the NLD-led parliament will be seen as essentially a rubber stamp for Suu Kyi's government, complex political maneuvering awaits in the coming days. The parliament will shortly nominate a new president to replace incumbent Thein Sein, a former general, in late March.

'We can endure'

Suu Kyi is barred from the position by a military-scripted constitution because she married and had children with a foreigner. She has vowed to rule "above" the next leader, a move that is likely to put her at loggerheads with the army which holds an effective veto on charter change because it retains a quarter of seats in the legislature. Only around two dozen NLD MPs entering parliament Monday, including Suu Kyi, have prior legislative experience, meaning the party has few veterans to show new lawmakers the ropes. To combat this the party has been running workshops in recent weeks, while new MPs flocked to Naypyidaw to watch their predecessors in the last days of the previous parliament which ended on Friday.

At a series of squat regimented housing blocks where shabby one-storey dorms cost \$4 a day, new MPs were moving in. "We can endure it, we came here for the country," said one NLD lawmaker who asked to remain anonymous, adding many had "served time in prison" and could get by without luxury. Tin Thit said the experience was like a reunion, with former cellmates, school friends and other acquaintances gathered together in a the junta-built capital. He served seven years in jail for poems deemed critical of the state. But the 49-year-old is also eager to put the past behind him, in a sentiment that reflects the extraordinary scenes of camaraderie in the parliament in recent days as the army elite sought to hand over power with grace-even throwing a party to mark the occasion. "We need to move forward," he said. — AFP

PHILIPPINE LEADER: MUSLIM PEACE BID TO CONTINUE AFTER HIS TERM

MANILA: Philippine President Benigno Aquino has ordered special efforts to ensure a peace agreement with Muslim rebels is implemented even after his term ends this year, his spokesman said yesterday. Congressional leaders have said they are unlikely to pass the peace bill before the president's term ends in June.

Aquino had ordered "consultation and meetings with the stakeholders as well as meaningful action so we can continue the peace process", his spokesman Herminio Coloma told reporters. Aquino had hoped to pass the bill to seal a peace accord with the largest Muslim rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). But opposition from some legislators had delayed its passage despite his lobbying.

Aquino's chief peace negotiator Teresita Deles had told him that her office would be meeting concerned parties especially the MILF to firm up the mechanisms and the transition for when the

peace deal is implemented, Coloma said. "We need to do all that is possible to ensure the full implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement... beyond this administration," he quoted Deles as saying.

The draft law is aimed at ending a Muslim separatist revolt in the main southern island of Mindanao that has claimed over 100,000 lives since the 1970s. The law would create an autonomous area and grant a measure of self-rule to the Muslim minority in the south of the largely Christian nation.

Aquino wanted it passed this year but the timetable was set back severely following public outrage over the death of 44 police commandos in an encounter with Muslim separatist guerrillas last year. Adding to the time pressure is parliament's scheduled adjournment in February before the campaign for presidential and other elections in May. — AFP

CHINA REVILES US FOR WARSHIP NEAR ISLAND

BEIJING: China strongly condemned the United States after a US warship deliberately sailed near one of the Beijing-controlled islands in the hotly contested South China Sea to exercise freedom of navigation and challenge China's vast sea claims.

The missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur sailed within 12 nautical miles of Triton Island in the Paracel chain "to challenge excessive maritime claims of parties that claim the Paracel Islands," without notifying the three claimants beforehand, Defense Department spokesman Mark Wright said Saturday in Washington.

China, Taiwan and Vietnam have overlapping claims in the Paracels and require prior notice from ships transiting what they consider their territorial waters. The latest operation was particularly aimed at China, which has raised tensions with the U.S. and its Southeast Asian neighbors by embarking on massive construction of man-made islands and airstrips in contested waters.

Vietnamese Foreign Ministry spokesman Le Hai Binh said that Vietnam respects "innocent passage" of ships through territorial waters in line with international law. State media quoted Binh as reiterating Vietnam's sovereignty over the Paracels and Spratlys and calling on nations to actively and practically contribute to peace and stability in the South China Sea.

The US has claimed the attempts to restrict navigational rights by requiring prior notice are inconsistent with international law and pledged to regularly carry out similar maneuvers. In October, another US warship sailed in the nearby Spratly Islands near Subi Reef, where China has built one of seven artificial islands.

'Unprofessional and irresponsible'

The latest operation also drew Beijing's ire. Defense Ministry spokesman Yang Yujun issued a statement saying the "unprofessional and irresponsible" US action "severely violated Chinese law, sabotaged the peace, security and good order of the waters, and undermined the region's peace and stability." In an opinion published yesterday by the official Xinhua news agency, China described the maneuver as a "deliberate provocation" that raised doubts about the United States' sincerity just days after Secretary of State John Kerry visited Beijing for meetings about the South China Sea and North Korea that were called productive by both sides.

China's official response has been restrained compared to the public outrage seen online, according to Xinhua. A social media search yesterday showed a smattering of posts calling on China to adopt a tougher military posture against US encroachment - if not wage war with the United States.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea and its islands, reefs and atolls on historic grounds. The area has some of the world's busiest shipping lanes, and US officials say ensuring freedom of navigation is in US national interests, while not taking sides in the territorial disputes.

China seized the unpopulated Triton Island, an area of 1.2 square kilometer from former South Vietnam in 1974. In May 2014, China parked a huge oil drilling platform off the Vietnamese coast in the area, prompting Vietnam to send fishing boats and coast guard vessels to harass the rig and nearby Chinese vessels. Skirmishes led to collisions and the capsizing of at least one Vietnamese boat. — AP

DISABLED PASSENGER CLAIMS AIR INDIA MADE HER 'CRAWL'

NEW DELHI: A disabled passenger said yesterday she was forced to crawl on New Delhi airport's tarmac after Air India failed to provide a wheelchair when her plane landed, an allegation the carrier denies. Anita Ghai, 53, a leading disability rights activist, said she was left stranded after arriving in Delhi from the northern Indian city of Dehradun on Saturday evening.

After being helped down steps from the plane by airline staff and a friend, Ghai said no wheelchair was available for her to reach the terminal-bound bus several meters away. "We were kept waiting on the tarmac for half an hour before a passenger coach came to pick me up. I had to crawl on the tarmac to board the coach," Ghai said. "I kept on reminding the staff to arrange a wheelchair throughout the journey but to my shock when we landed there was none and all they said was there were security reasons."

Ghai, who is confined to a wheelchair after suffering polio as a child, described the incident as shocking and embarrassing. Air India denied the incident, saying there was a delay in bringing the wheelchair because the plane was parked in an outlying bay. "We strongly deny the statement... We at Air India give utmost importance to passenger's safety and comfort," it said in a statement, according to the Press Trust of India.

It is not the first time India's state carrier, which has not made a profit since 2007, has been in the news for the wrong reasons. Last month, a London-bound flight with more than 200 passengers was forced to return to Mumbai after three hours in the air over a suspected rat sighting in the cabin. A plane carrying 160 passengers was forced this month to return to Delhi almost 30 minutes into a Milan-bound flight after smoke was detected in the cabin. — AFP

CHINA BRACES FOR 2.9BN LUNAR NEW YEAR TRIPS

BEIJING: Chinese are packing train and bus stations as the peak travel season kicks into high gear this weekend with hundreds of millions of people going home for Spring Festival celebrations - or head for vacation destinations. Chinese travelers are expected to make 2.9 billion trips during the 40-day period between Jan. 21 and March 3, with the majority of those trips falling in the weeks around the Feb 8 Lunar New Year, the Ministry of Transport said.

"I have my parents back in my hometown and I must go back and have the family reunion," said Ma Xijie, a migrant worker from Sichuan province who was travelling back home by train with his son and wife. "It's great to have the whole family sit down and enjoy a family dinner together. I have been working far from home with my kid for a whole year," he said.

At the Beijing railway station, student Ren Chongyuan from Shandong province said it was a bit easier to buy tickets this year, but he still had to book two months in advance. This year's travel crush - considered the largest annual human migration - may be relatively less severe due to a lackluster economy,

In coastal Zhejiang province near Shanghai, officials expect a 4.4 percent drop in passenger traffic as jobs dry up

and migrant laborers pack up early to head to their family homes in China's hinterlands well before the New Year.

By comparison, Chinese made 3.6 billion trips during the same holiday period in 2014. — AP



BEIJING: A train station worker uses a speaker phone to alert Chinese travelers to board their trains at the south train station. — AP

BIBI REJECTS ULTIMATUM ON PALESTINE STATEHOOD

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called yesterday for a more "sober" approach towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in dismissing a French peace initiative as only encouraging Palestinians to shun compromise. The proposal on Friday by French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius for an international peace conference was the latest sign of Western frustration over the absence of movement toward a two-state solution since the collapse of US-brokered negotiations in 2014.

Fabius said that if the French plan did not break the deadlock, Paris would recognize a Palestinian state. Such a step would raise concern in Israel that other European countries, also long opposed to its settlement-building in occupied territory, would follow suit. In public remarks to his cabinet, Netanyahu did not explicitly reject the notion of an international conference - an aide said Israel would examine such a request once it was received - but he made clear that reported details of the plan made it a non-starter.

Netanyahu said a "threat" to recognize a Palestinian state if France's peace efforts did not succeed, constituted "an incentive to the Palestinians to come along and not compromise." "I assess that there will be a sobering up regarding this matter," Netanyahu added. "In any event, we will make effort so that there is a sobering up here, and our position is very clear: We are prepared to enter direct negotiation without preconditions and without dictated terms."

On Saturday, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas welcomed the French proposal, telling an African summit in Ethiopia that "the status quo cannot continue". But Washington responded with caution to the French move, saying it continued to prefer that Israel and the Palestinians reach an agreement on final-status issues through direct talks. US Secretary of State John Kerry called Abbas and the two discussed the French initiative and "the tense political situation in the region," Wafa, the official Palestinian news agency reported yesterday.

While aware the initiative may struggle to get off the ground, French officials said Paris had a responsibility to act now in the face of Israeli settlement activity and the prospect of continued diplomatic inaction as the United States focuses on a presidential election in November. And, the officials said, Netanyahu had gone a step too far in accusing UN Secretary of State Ban Ki-moon of giving a

"tailwind to terrorism" by laying some of the blame for four months of stabbings and car rammings by Palestinians at Israel's door. Ban angered Israel by saying last week that it is "human nature to react to occupation".

The United States, European Union - Israel's closest allies - have also issued unusually stern criticism of Israel in recent weeks, reflecting their own frustration with the policies of Netanyahu's right-wing government. The criticism, particularly about the settlements, where some 550,000 Jews live in around 250 communities scattered across the West Bank and East Jerusalem, has raised Palestinian hopes that world powers might finally be minded to support a UN resolution condemning Israel's policy outright.

Attacks

Since October, Palestinian attacks, partly fuelled by tensions over the freeze in peace talks, have killed 26 Israelis and a US citizen. In an incident yesterday, a Palestinian gunman wounded three Israelis near the West Bank settlement of Beit El and was then shot dead by soldiers, the Israeli army said. Palestinian officials said he worked as a bodyguard for a Palestinian prosecutor in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Shortly after that attack, a Palestinian motorist was shot and wounded when he tried to run down soldiers at a military checkpoint in the West Bank, the army said.

Over the past four months, Israeli forces have killed at least 152 Palestinians, 98 of them assailants according to authorities. Most the others have died in violent protests. "I don't see anything that warrants living as long as the occupation smother us and kills our brothers and sisters ... You were first and I am following you," the Beit El assailant, Amjad Abu Omar, wrote on Facebook.

Palestinians seek a state in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, parts of which have been occupied by Israel since the 1967 Middle East war. Palestine has non-member observer status at the United Nations and its flag flies with those of member states at UN headquarters in New York. Sweden became the first EU member nation to recognize the Palestinian state in 2014. A total of 136 UN-member countries, mostly in Africa, Latin America and Asia, now do so. — Reuters



RIYADH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz meets Turkish Prime Minister Ahmed Davutoglu in the capital. Davutoglu wrapped up a three-day visit to the oil-rich kingdom and met King Salman to review bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries in various fields. — AFP

SUBSIDY CUTS WON'T AFFECT LOW-INCOME...

Continued from Page 1

In another development, MP Abdullah Al-Turajji called on the interior minister to deport Iraqi singer Hatem Al-Iraqi who has been invited to take part in the Hala February festival. Turajji said that the singer is known to have praised former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, who ordered Iraqi troops to invade Kuwait in 1990, and has sang songs to praise Yemen's Houthi rebels against whom Kuwait is fighting along with Saudi Arabia. The lawmaker criticized Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah for granting the

permission for the entry of the Iraqi singer. He however added that the minister had promised that the singer's concert will not be telecast live by Kuwait TV.

Also, MP Abdullah Al-Maayouf lashed out at Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sane claiming that the minister has exploited his posts to appoint his supporters in key posts in the two ministries. The lawmaker accused the minister of making politically-motivated appointments to boost his electoral position as he is an elected MP included in the Cabinet. Maayouf threatened to grill the minister if he does not stop such appointments and urged the Cabinet to investigate the matter.

AGENCY PREDICTS BUDGET SURPLUS

Continued from Page 1

With large financial buffers and substantial room for borrowing, the government is well positioned to weather a sustained period of decline in oil prices. Central government debt remains very low at about 9.9 percent of GDP in 2016 and is issued for monetary policy purposes rather than to finance government spending. Government financial assets are substantial and include the investments of the two state oil funds. The actual level of gov-

ernment assets is uncertain as public disclosure of reserve fund assets is prohibited by law, but is reported to be between 150 percent and 250 percent of GDP.

Reflecting low hydrocarbon prices, Kuwait's current account surplus is expected to fall below 10 percent of GDP this year and over the intermediate term. Gross external debt, which is mostly owed by the private sector, is reasonably low at around 19 percent of GDP, and is entirely dwarfed by the government's external assets.

GULF TOURIST INFUX TO BOSNIA FUELS LUXURY...

Continued from Page 1

Prices, he said, had increased "up to 100 percent in three years" in the Sarajevo region of Bosnia, a nation still rebuilding after its devastating 1990s inter-ethnic war.

In 2010 Bosnia began phasing out visas for nationals of most Gulf countries and the number of tourists from the region has since steadily increased to 24,500 out of 360,000 visitors to the Sarajevo area last year, according to official figures. "They are not the most numerous, but these Gulf tourists spend much more than others, about 150 euros per day per person in addition to hotel costs," said Asja Hadziefendic Mesic, spokeswoman for the Sarajevo tourist board.

At the October opening of the Sarajevo resort, a \$25-million (\$27-million) Kuwaiti investment, local schoolchildren waved the flags of both Bosnia and Kuwait as Bosnian Muslim political leader Bakir Izetbegovic hailed the country's rivers and greenery. "Bosnia is a European country... it has water, forestry, mining, and energy and tourism potential. Our brothers (from the Gulf) spotted this," he said. About 20 km away in Blazuj village, another residential area is being built by the Kuwaiti company Al-Diyar, which sold almost all of its luxury apartments in advance to Gulf nationals.

"So far we have invested 14 million euros. The customers are different, there is no profile," said director Abdullah Al-Kulaib. "We had those who knew nothing about Bosnia, who never set a foot here, even some who do not like nature, but they are buying," he said, adding that the company was preparing another six similar projects. The grandest of the proposed ventures comes from Emirati company Buroj Property Development, which in October announced a \$930-million investment to build an entire "tourist city" on a plot of 137 hectares.

Work is set to begin in April on the complex at the foot of Bjelasnica, one of four mountains surrounding Sarajevo. The design includes thousands of homes, several hotels, a shopping mall and a hospital. One of the

key drivers in attracting Arab investment has been the Bosna Bank International (BBI), founded in Sarajevo in 2000 by Gulf banks on Islamic banking principles, which organises an annual conference to draw such finance to the Balkans. "This is just the beginning, we just opened the door," said Amer Bukvic, BBI director. He suggested that political instability in the Middle East has also fuelled Gulf nationals' interest in buying a pied-a-terre in Europe, "in case it is needed".

The facilities already in place for Bosnia's Muslims - about 40 percent of the 3.8 million-strong population - make the country an especially attractive choice for such visitors. "When they want to eat in restaurants, they don't have to ask whether it is halal. There are also mosques everywhere where they can pray," said Khaja. During and after Bosnia's 1992-1995 war, Gulf countries offered humanitarian aid and financed the reconstruction of homes and mosques, often accompanied by stricter interpretations of Islam, such as Saudi Wahabism.

A small minority of Bosnian Muslims adopted these stricter forms, and local analysts have consistently warned against the religious influence that accompanied foreign aid. While hoteliers and restaurateurs now welcome the injection of Arab tourists' cash - even offering menus in Arabic - others have observed the phenomenon with caution. Some media outlets and users of online forums have spoken of an "invasion" or even suggested that the region around the capital is becoming an "emirate". "The Gaza Strip of Sarajevo," appeared as a September headline in the magazine Slobodna Bosna (Free Bosnia).

A hotelier in the capital, declining to be named, told AFP that he had benefited from the "rush" of Gulf tourists in recent years, but was firmly opposed to the construction of neighborhoods intended only for Arab customers. "They will use these houses and apartments maybe a month or two a year, paying once at the beginning and never again. The best tourist for a country is the one who rents a hotel room," he said. — AFP

BOMBINGS NEAR DAMASCUS SHRINE KILL MORE...

Continued from Page 1

The area around the shrine has been targeted in previous bomb attacks, including in Feb 2015 when two suicide attacks killed four people and wounded 13 at a checkpoint. Also that month, a blast ripped through a bus carrying Lebanese Shiite pilgrims headed to Sayyida Zeinab, killing at least nine people, in an attack claimed by Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front. The area around the shrine is heavily secured with regime checkpoints set up hundreds of metres away to prevent vehicles from getting close.

According to the Britain-based Observatory, members of Lebanon's powerful Shiite militant group Hezbollah are among those deployed at the checkpoints. Hezbollah is a staunch ally of Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad and has dispatched fighters to bolster his troops against the uprising that began in March 2011 with anti-government protests. Early on, the group justified its intervention in Syria by citing the threat to Sayyida Zeinab.

Sayyida Zeinab, south of Damascus, contains the grave of a granddaughter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and is particularly revered as a pilgrimage site by Shiites. It has continued to attract pilgrims from Syria

and beyond, particularly Shiites from Iran, Lebanon, and Iraq, throughout the nearly five-year war. Sunni Muslim extremist groups such as IS consider Shiites to be heretics and have frequently targeted them in attacks.

More than 260,000 people have been killed in Syria's conflict, which has also displaced upwards of half the country's population internally and abroad. It has evolved into a complex, multi-front war involving rebels, jihadists, regime and allied forces, Kurds and air strikes by both government ally Russia and a US-led coalition battling against IS. In a new effort to find a political solution to the conflict, UN Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura has invited regime and opposition delegations to Geneva for fresh talks.

But while the opposition agreed to travel to Geneva after days of delays, it has so far refused to engage in indirect talks with the government. It is demanding that UN Security Council resolutions on ending sieges and protecting civilians be implemented first. On Sunday, De Mistura held informal talks with the main opposition delegation, saying afterwards that he remained "optimistic and determined". The Damascus delegation's chief negotiator, Syria's UN envoy Bashar Al-Jaafari, accused the opposition of being "not serious" about the talks. — Agencies

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Focus

SYRIAN REBEL SPLITS
DEEPEN AFTER FAILED
'MERGER' WITH NUSRA

By Mariam Karouny

The leader of Al-Qaeda's Syrian wing tried unsuccessfully at a recent meeting to convince rival Islamist factions to merge into one unit, several insurgency sources have told Reuters. Abu Mohamad al-Golani, head of the Nusra Front, even suggested he was willing to change the name of his group if the others, including the powerful Ahrar al-Sham organization, agreed to the deal, the sources said. But he made clear that Nusra would not cut its ties with Al-Qaeda, and its allegiance would remain to Ayman al-Zawahri, who took over as leader after US Navy SEALs killed Osama bin Laden in 2011.

Much was riding on the outcome of the meeting, which the sources said took place about 10 days ago. Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham are the most powerful groups in northern Syria. When they briefly teamed up with other Islamists last year in an alliance called the Fatah Army, the rebels scored one of their biggest victories by seizing the city of Idlib. Some rebels believed a merger would create a stronger rival to Islamic State and might attract much-needed military support and recognition from regional and international powers.

But the leaders left without an agreement, and the sources said the atmosphere was tense, with Nusra blaming Ahrar al-Sham for the failure. A few days later, members of the two groups clashed in the towns of Salqin and Harem in Idlib province, near the border with Turkey. Several fighters were killed on both sides, but other insurgent groups brokered a quick ceasefire. Jihadist sources, including some from Ahrar al-Sham, say it is only a matter of time before another battle between the two erupts. They say the rift between them is getting deeper, although mediation continues. One restraining factor has been an imminent assault by the Syrian army and its allied forces in northwestern Syria.

"The situation is charged, the failure of initiatives could cause an explosion," said a jihadi in Idlib who is close to the two groups. "What happened just avoided all-out conflict, all-out battle. But it will be hard to tell what will happen in the future." Outright war between Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham would still further complicate the five-year Syrian conflict, in which rebel groups are mushrooming under different slogans and sometimes fighting each other.

A delegation from Syria's main opposition group, the Saudi-backed Higher Negotiation Committee (HNC), arrived in Geneva on Saturday to join United Nations-mediated peace talks, demanding President Bashar al-Assad's government be made to comply with a UN resolution on humanitarian aid and human rights.

Nusra and Islamic State - designated as terrorists by the UN - have been excluded from the Geneva talks, the first attempt in two years to end a war that has killed a quarter of a million people. Ahrar al-Sham, which presents itself as a Syrian nationalist force in contrast to Al-Qaeda's global jihadist ideology, recently joined the HNC but Russia opposes its participation in the talks.

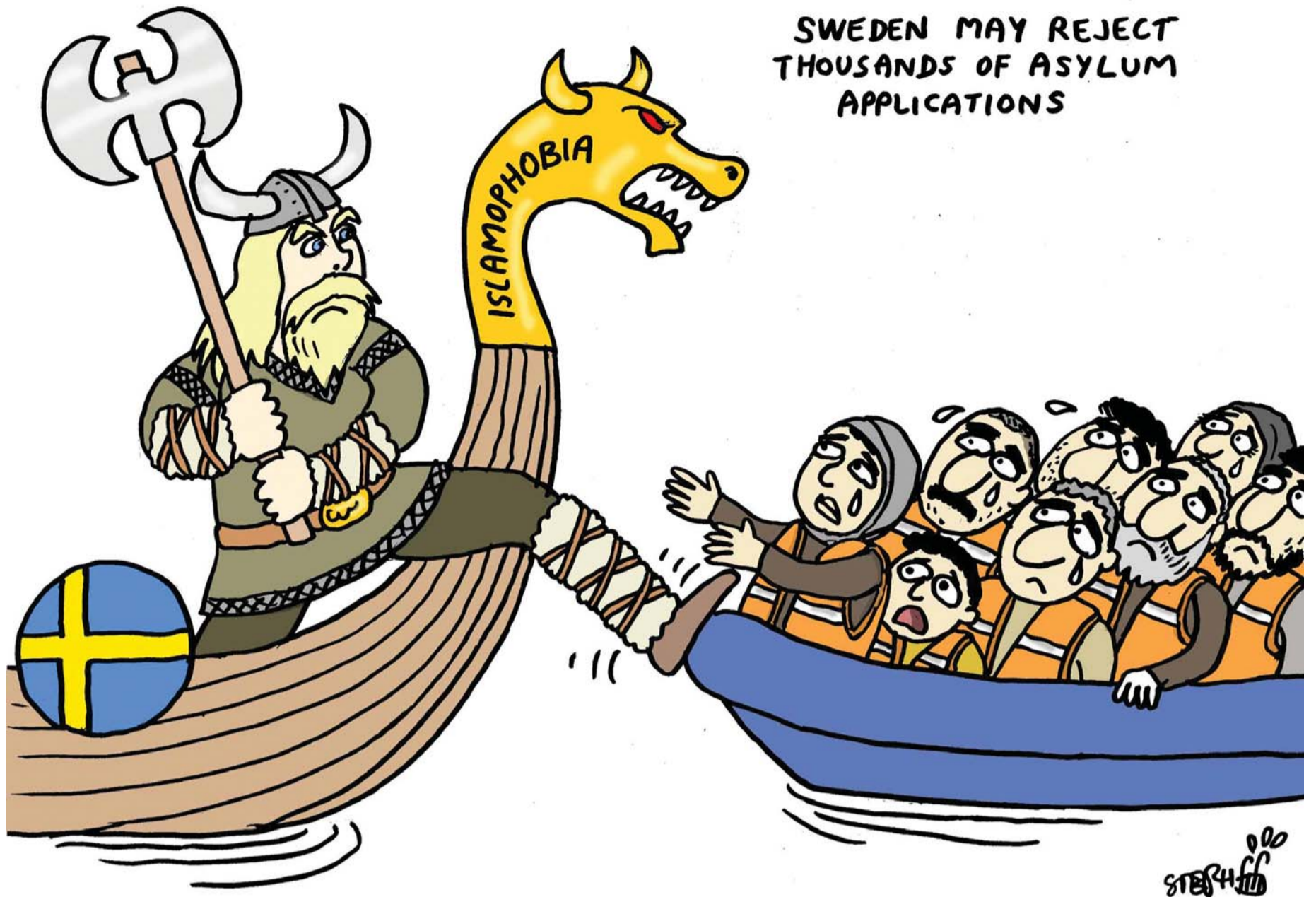
Lack of Trust

Distrust between Nusra and Ahrar is mutual. Nusra accuses its Islamist rival of being a front for Turkey, addressing not the "interests of Muslims" but the agenda of Ankara in order to be part of a future political deal to rule Syria. Ahrar and other groups are pushing Nusra to cut its ties with Al-Qaeda as a step towards becoming more fully engaged in the struggle against Assad. "The problem is with the Qaeda link and its ideological implications. Nusra insists on its agenda, it doesn't want to manoeuvre at all," said a frustrated Ahrar commander, accusing it of "damaging the revolution".

In the first few weeks after last year's capture of Idlib, the two groups divided responsibilities and territory without problems. But gradually divisions began to surface, as Ahrar and other insurgents became wary of Nusra and accused it of trying to seize power and sidelining them. "Nusra cannot work with others, they have a dominating project, they do not accept the others," said a fighter from Ahrar al-Sham in Idlib via the Internet. Some insurgents are suspicious of Nusra's long-term agenda in the region and globally, distrusting its declaration that it has no ambitions outside Lebanon and Syria. "This declared goal is an interim one. After it wins and establishes itself in Syria, they will move to the next step, which objects to the goal of the revolution," said an Islamist rebel who is allied with Ahrar al-Sham. "They will join the global jihad and this is against our revolution. Our revolution is limited to Syria."

No Jeans

On the ground, Nusra imposes strict Islamic rules in villages and towns where it shares power. It has banned women from wearing make-up, showing their hair or wearing tight clothes like jeans, and applied a policy of segregation between the sexes. All these moves have served to assert its dominance, while provoking other groups. "There is no group on the ground that actually objects to having an Islamic government but the implementation and methods are different," said another Islamist fighter from a group that is allied with Ahrar. —Reuters



HOW IRAN KEPT FLYING UNDER SANCTIONS

By Tim Hepner

In Dec 2012, aircraft trader James Kim received a letter from a company based in Cyprus offering to buy four jetliners. It was brief and to the point. The hitherto unknown firm was "ready, willing and able" to buy four used Airbus A340 jets for which Kim was trying to broker a sale. "I talked to them and when I got the Letter of Intent with an Iranian name, I informed them that a deal was not possible because of sanctions," Kim, managing director of British-based aircraft trading company AvCon Worldwide, told Reuters.

The company that tried to buy them, registered in a Nicosia apartment with two directors with names that sounded Iranian, vanished from the radar, Kim said in a telephone interview. The planes, for which there is little demand, remain with their Asian owner but the suspected approach typifies a shadowy trade in airplanes and parts that spanned the globe for decades. Suspected front firms sought to trade in spare parts and even whole aircraft, according to people involved in the trade and other experts who mostly spoke on condition of anonymity. "The Iranians would set up companies to try to do deals and then fold them up. They didn't stay around for long," said Kim.

The methods used to evade sanctions mirror those used in other countries that are or have been under international sanctions in recent decades, such as South Africa, Cuba, Zimbabwe, Iraq and North Korea. After the lifting of nuclear-related sanctions on Jan. 16, Iran's aviation industry is coming out of the shadows. With an order for 118 Airbus jets witnessed in Paris by President Hassan Rouhani, Iran moved swiftly to exchange a collection of vintage jets held together with smuggled parts for a new fleet capa-

ble of taking on rival Gulf carriers.

Like Cuba's preserved 1950s automobiles, the aircraft they will replace symbolize the ingenuity wrought by sanctions but also the scale of the task needed to reconnect the economy. "Our strategy until now has just been to survive," Iranian chairman Farhad Parvaresh said.

Airline 'Masterminds'

At Tehran's airport, rows of mothballed aircraft still sit with bright orange covers on their engines, ready to give up their parts for other old planes needing repairs. Through constant patching, transplants from grounded donor jets and discreet purchases, Iran's fleet stayed aloft although with an alarming safety record. "It was state-of-the-art 'Under the Table,'" Heydar Vatankehah, deputy managing director for engineering and maintenance at Iran's Kish Air, said of the overall effort. "Every airline has a mastermind on this," he said.

Vatankehah spent 31 years helping to maintain an ancient fleet at state-owned Iranair including the world's oldest passenger 747, built in 1976 before the majority of Iranians were born, according to aviation consultancy CAPA, which organized an aviation summit in Iran in January. One Iranian airline official, who asked not to be identified, said he had obtained a Western-built engine weeks after it left the factory by passing it through three countries.

While Iran says it can manufacture parts, the preference was for genuine components, but they came at a price. "It's simple. If this costs \$10,000, I had to pay \$70,000," the engineering chief of an Iranian airline said, waving a can of soda to illustrate his point. Others said they paid four or five times over the odds. As they did so, the middlemen prospered.

"After decades of doing this you see a lot. Everyone takes their cut. It's a dirty business," the engineering chief said.

As confidence grew, a smuggled jet flew directly to Tehran Mehrabad airport, a former senior Iranian official said. However, Iran's covert resupply operation clashed increasingly with foreign law and intelligence agencies. The United States has targeted dozens of front companies suspected by diplomats of links to Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards, widely seen as a beneficiary of the sanctions trade. "They (the West) listened to our calls and read our emails; of course we knew that," said one airline employee. "But we are commercial people, not military men," he said, adding the deals had been elusive but not always complicated. "They know where the wall is, but not where the hole is," he added.

New Ambitions, New Challenges

The United States last year imposed sanctions on two firms in Iraq and the United Arab Emirates for helping Iran's Mahan Air purchase second-hand aircraft. The airline, Iran's largest, was blacklisted in 2011 for allegedly ferrying operatives, arms and funds for the Revolutionary Guards' overseas unit. It remains under sanctions. Iran says it has been forced to use the black market to preserve safety following fatal accidents and sanctions that prevented it from gaining access to parts and manuals. The West says the sanctions were effective in convincing Tehran to negotiate the recent deal on curbing its nuclear activities.

"It was a great suffering for all of us, so we haven't been able to develop in this field," lawmaker Mahdi Hashemi, head of the parliament's Development Commission, told the CAPA event.

Now, Iran's plans to absorb 500 new

aircraft in the next decade look set to turn the well-worn system of improvised repairs and clandestine purchases on its head. As middlemen dissolve into the post-sanctions landscape, with many of them expected to reinvent themselves as legitimate partners for investors, the airlines must contend with foreign regulators and insurers whose mindset is compliance. The can-do mentality which kept Iran's rotting fleet flying through sanctions will be less welcome in future.

That means airlines must adapt to a forest of norms required by manufacturers, investors, lenders, lessors and regulators, said Mark Tierney, director of Crabtree Capital, which provides strategic advice and transaction execution services for airlines, aircraft and engine-leasing companies and financial institutions. The problems of resuming normal operations do not end there. A revolution in plane design has taken place while Iran was off the market. While mastering every nut and bolt of the Boeing 747, its engineers must get used to new types like the A350. "The level of training and technology in airlines to be able to bring those aircraft in and operate without problems doesn't happen overnight," Dick Forsberg, strategy chief of leasing company Avolon, told a panel of Iranian officials.

Even with sanctions lifted, airlines may struggle to get some existing aircraft repaired while waiting for the new European jets, to which Iran hopes to add over 100 Boeings. Many are so riddled with contraband parts that they would be unlikely to pass muster with repair shops, an engineer said. In response, Airbus has agreed to help Tehran comply with foreign regulators and to provide repairs and training: crucial steps as Iran rebuilds its aviation industry from scratch. —Reuters

DROUGHT TESTS A CHANGED ETHIOPIA

By Aaron Maasho and Edmund Blair

On a treeless plain in eastern Ethiopia, thousands of destitute pastoralists have set up camp outside the tiny village of Fedeto. Over the past six months the camp has swelled as one of the worst droughts in decades has decimated herds, dried up pasture and made even drinking water scarce. "We wandered for three months, losing every single animal apart from two donkeys," said Saido Ahmed Keyat, a 29-year-old mother of five, whose family had boasted 200 sheep and goats, 15 cattle, eight camels and seven donkeys. "All my children are malnourished. They need milk, they need many things."

Ethiopia's failed rains, which meteorologists blame on the El Nino weather phenomenon, have created a drought in some areas of the country worse than the 1984 crisis. Back then, water shortages and conflict combined to cause a famine that killed an estimated one million people. In the years since, Ethiopia has transformed under a government that promotes rapid economic development, although it is criticised for limiting many political freedoms. One of its signature schemes is a rural support programme designed to keep Ethiopians from starvation.

The new drought is putting that model to the test. More than 10 million people are now critically short of food, according to figures compiled by the government with its humanitarian partners. That is putting a strain on the government as well as the budgets of international aid groups and donors. "The scale of the need is really huge and has outstripped the Ethiopian government's ability to do this on their own," Carolyn Wilson, chief executive of charity Save the Children told Reuters after touring some of the afflicted regions in the country's north and east.

In all, an estimated \$1.4 billion is needed for food and other resources in 2016, according to the government and aid partners. The government said about 30 percent of that had been raised from donors so far. The WFP said last week about \$500 million was needed by the end of February to extend the aid effort beyond April. In a world facing the demands of the migrant crisis and conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, that won't be easy. "It's not that

donors have not responded," said WFP Country Director John Aylieff. "But they have not managed to keep pace."

New Vision

Today's needs would be far greater were it not for the massive changes in Ethiopia over the past three decades. In 1984, the then-communist government known as the Derg tried to hide the famine, while conflict and social engineering projects like farm collectivisation exacerbated the scale of hunger. Rebels toppled the Derg in 1991 and the government that followed has delivered stellar economic growth rates, hitting double digits in some years, visible from endless construction in the capital and new highways crossing the nation.

In 2005, Ethiopia started the Productive Safety Net Programme, which was helping 7.9 million people facing chronic food insecurity even before the latest drought. Those people receive food or cash transfers in return for community work. To deal with the drought, the government allocated \$272 million extra spending in 2015 and a further \$109 million this year, Mikitu Kassa, head of the National Disaster Risk Management Commission, told Reuters. To put that extra spending in perspective, it is roughly equivalent to Ethiopia's entire state budget two decades ago, he said.

The government says no one has so far died from starvation. Some of those in the worst affected area contradict this. One woman in Fedeto said 20 had died in the past two months, though it was not possible to verify this. Mikitu said the government would spend what it takes if aid did not flow, although he said it could mean cutbacks on other projects. But he said the government's "mega projects" - new national railways, roads and dams - would go ahead.

Those projects are part of plans to industrialise Ethiopia. Eighty percent of the nation still relies on agriculture, mostly rain-fed pastures or subsistence smallholdings. The better transport links have already proved vital, allowing easier access for relief workers. "The nature of the government that we had in 1984 is quite different from the current government," Mikitu said in Addis

Ababa, where Sub-Saharan Africa's first metro system opened last year and now snakes its way above traffic-clogged streets.

Safety Nets

The architect of modern Ethiopia, rebel leader-turned-prime minister Meles Zenawi, told a 1991 news conference in Addis Ababa that his gauge of success would be "if Ethiopians were able to eat three meals a day." Ethiopia has not yet achieved that goal. Critics of the government - Meles died in 2012 but many of his policies continue under successor Hailemariam Desalegn - say it is authoritarian and stifles opponents. No opposition party won a seat in last year's parliamentary election.

The US State Department said then that it remained "deeply concerned by continued restrictions on civil society, media, opposition parties, and independent voices and views." Ethiopian officials deny restricting freedoms. But in their determination not to let fresh images of hunger overshadow the government's development credentials, some ministers sent conflicting signals early in the crisis about how bad it was and how much help was needed, aid workers say. "We have to walk on egg shells in terms of what we can say," said one international aid worker, who has followed Ethiopia's progress since the 1980s.

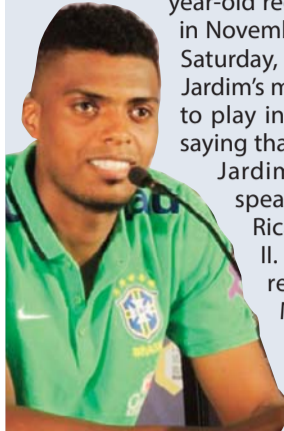
Disaster management chief Mikitu blamed any confusion on the speed at which numbers of those facing critical food shortages grew. In January 2015 it was 2.9 million but swiftly rose - often in increments of several million - to 10.2 million by December. But even the government's ability to gather such figures is testament to the way Ethiopia has changed. Fedeto, in a remote area of the hard-hit Sitti region, has benefited from that change. A tiny clinic, one of thousands built around the country over the past two decades, doles out rations and treats the malnourished. The village also has a water tower and a school.

That helps, though only up to a point. The administrator of the village of 600 people said he was struggling to meet the needs of 7,500 exhausted arrivals who are now camped nearby. "There is a lot of pressure on us," Dahir Omar Hosh said. "People are still coming." —Reuters

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MONACO BRING BRAZILIAN JEMERSON TO EUROPE

PARIS: Monaco have sealed a deal to bring Jemerson to the principality on a four-and-a-half year contract from Atletico Mineiro in his native Brazil. The central defender, who was likened to German legend Franz Beckenbauer, played over 100 times for Mineiro and scored seven times. The 23-year-old received his first call-up to the Brazilian national squad in November, but did not play. Jemerson arrived in Monaco on Saturday, has passed his medical and could play for Leonardo Jardim's men very soon. He told the club website that he wants to play international football and in the Champions League, saying that Monaco is a "big European club with a high profile." Jardim is building a squad with plenty of Portuguese-speaking players as Jemerson joins the likes of Fabinho, Ricardo Carvalho and Joao Moutinho at the Stade Louis II. According to various sources, the fee will be in the region of 11 million euros (\$11.9 million). Meanwhile Monaco have released Spanish defender Borja Lopez after his unsuccessful loan spell at Arouca in Portugal, and the 21-year-old will now play for Barcelona B. — AFP



WCUP SLALOM CANCELLED DUE TO SOFT COURSE

MARIBOR: Organizers cancelled a women's World Cup slalom after 25 starters yesterday because the deteriorating course made a fair race impossible. Days of mild temperatures softened the Radvanje course, which started to wear soon after the race started. The snow surface broke in many spots after just a few skiers had completed their runs. Rainfall further affected the conditions. According to the athletes' representative, Sarka Strachova of the Czech Republic, most skiers didn't want the race to be started. "It's always difficult to decide whether a race should take place or not," Strachova said. "I spoke with several racers. Most of them were against it, some coaches as well. But (skiing's governing body) FIS and organizers wanted to stage the race at all costs." Strachova, who wore bib No. 4, said the course was only good enough for the early starters. "The lower number definitely was an advantage," the 2007 world slalom champion said. "Of course it's not fair." FIS and local organizers suspended the race after 25 starters to allow course workers on the piste, before calling off the event just minutes later.

KOVALEV DESTROYS PASCAL IN REMATCH

MONTREAL: Light heavyweight world champion Sergey "Krusher" Kovalev successfully defended his three titles Saturday, demolishing challenger Jean Pascal in a rematch of their March fight. The 32-year-old Russian dominated every round, masterfully cutting off the ring and landing left jabs at will before Pascal's trainer Freddie Roach put a stop to the slaughter before the start of round eight-giving Kovalev a seventh-round technical knockout. This was the Canadian's first fight with six-time trainer of the year Roach, but the outcome was virtually the same as his March light heavyweight fight against Kovalev, which ended with an eight-round TKO for the Russian. Kovalev retained his World Boxing Association, International Boxing Federation and World Boxing Organization titles as he improved to 29-0-1 with 26 knockouts. Kovalev knocked Pascal down in the first round with a straight left jab but the referee ruled it a slip.—AFP



SINGAPORE: Jordan Spieth of the United States prepares to play on the third hole during the final round of the SMBC Singapore Open golf tournament at Sentosa Golf Club's Serapong Course yesterday, in Singapore. — AP

COOKSON CONFIRMS MOTOR FOUND ON BIKE IN NEW CYCLING STORM

HEUSDEN-ZOLDER: Cycling was being forced to confront a new controversy yesterday after the sport's head confirmed the first top-level case of "technological fraud" with a hidden motor being found on a Belgian cyclist's bike.

The motor was discovered inside the frame of the machine being used by teenager Femke Van den Driessche at the world cyclo-cross championship in Zolder, Belgium, Bryan Cookson, the president of the International Cycling Union (UCI), said.

"It's absolutely clear that there was technological fraud. There was a concealed motor. I don't think there are any secrets about that," Cookson told a news conference.

Yet the 19-year-old Van den Driessche denied suggestions she had deliberately used a motorised bike in the women's under-23 race and was in tears as she told Belgian TV channel Sporza: "The bike was not mine. I would never cheat."

Van den Driessche said the bike looked identical to her own but belonged to her friend and that a team mechanic had given it her by mistake before the race.

The bike was later seized after she had withdrawn from the race on Saturday with a mechanical problem.

"It wasn't my bike, it was my friend's and was identical to mine," Van den Driessche told Belgian TV channel Sporza.

"This friend went around the course Saturday before dropping off the bike in the truck. A mechanic, thinking it was my bike, cleaned it and prepared it for my race."

Van den Driessche said she feared her career could now be over but she still hoped for a second chance and was not afraid of any investigations into the case.



HEUSDEN-ZOLDER: British Brain Cookson, Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) president, speaks during a press conference at the world championships cyclocross cycling yesterday in Heusden-Zolder. The world championships cyclocross cycling takes place this week-end. — AFP

"I'm aware I have a big problem. I have done nothing wrong," she said.

In a sport that has long battled with a major doping problem, suggestions and rumours of 'motorised doping' have long floated around too but nothing has been proved in major competition until this case.

It prompted Cookson, who confirmed the case would be investigated by the UCI's disciplinary commission, to say: "We've heard some sto-

ries for a long time now about the possibility of this.

"We have been alive to a potential way that people might cheat and we have been testing a number of bikes and a number of events for several months.

"I am committed and the UCI is committed to protecting the riders who do not want to cheat in whatever form and to make sure that the right riders win the race." —Reuters

SPIETH, SONG IN CLIFFHANGER AS WEATHER SUSPENDS PLAY

SINGAPORE: A thunderstorm halted the final round of the SMBC Singapore Open yesterday just as world number one Jordan Spieth was attempting to go a stroke behind leader Song Young Han on the 18th hole.

This left the competition in a cliffhanger as the South Korean had two more holes to play and was lining up a 10-foot par on the 16th. The \$1.0 million tournament will now be decided when play resumes Monday morning at the Sentosa Golf Club's Serapong Course.

The South Korean is looking to secure his first career title after taking six-runners-up places in Japan and South Korea during the past three years.

Inclement weather and fading light have dogged the competition since Thursday, suspending play that had to be resumed the following day.

A total of 15 players had to complete round three this morning, with Spieth playing two holes and Song five. The session ended with the Texan trailing the South Korean by five strokes. Plagued by erratic form in the last three days, Spieth conceded he was rushing his game, trying to do too much and making the wrong decisions. Heading into the final round, the 22-year-old resolved to change his approach to nar-

row the gap.

"I have got to hit as many greens in regulation as possible, I just have not done that," said the American. "All it takes is a little bit of a spark, a little confidence with my ball striking to make sure I have got that distance control down and the putting will come."

Spieth lived up to his expectations and put on a commanding performance, shooting five birdies against a bogey before heading into the final hole to shave Song's lead.

"My game really started to come together on the back nine," said the world number one. "I was putting some pressure on the leader. Assuming I make that putt on 18 that is going to put some pressure on him."

Song put on a blistering eight-under-par 63 performance on Friday that equalled the course record, but only managed two and one under in the next two days before play was suspended.

"I am really tired, it has been a long wait. Coming back tomorrow is okay for me as the course should be in a better condition (less wet)," said the 24-year-old. "Tomorrow I will just play shot by shot and hope I can get the win. I have had a lot of second place finishes and it is time for a victory." —AFP

S KOREA'S CHOI CLINGS TO SHARE OF PGA LEAD

LOS ANGELES: KJ Choi, chasing his first US PGA victory in nearly five years, closed with a birdie to share the lead after Saturday's third round of the \$6.5 million Farmers Insurance Open.

The 45-year-old South Korean shot an even par 72 to match American Scott Brown on nine-under 207 after 54 holes at Torrey Pines near San Diego.

Choi, the most successful Asian male golfer in PGA history, has won eight titles on the US tour, the most recent of them at the 2011 Players Championship when he won a playoff over David Toms.

Jimmy Walker fired a 68 to share third with fellow American Gary Woodland on 208 to pace 21 rivals with four strokes of the co-leaders entering the final round, when wet and windy conditions are predicted.

"It's going to be a grind for everybody," Brown said. "Under par or even par is going to be a really good score. You've just got to stay out there and be patient."

Choi stumbled early, answering a bogey at the fifth with a birdie at the sixth but taking a double bogey at the seventh, where he found the rough on his second and third shots and three-putted from 18 feet. Another bogey at the 12th seemed to signal more trouble.

But Choi rebounded, landing his approaches at the par-5 13th and par-4 13th within three feet of the cup to set up birdies.

At the par-3 16th, he found a bunker but sank a clutch nine-foot par putt. At 17, Choi had an 85-foot approach from dense rough over a bunker and rolled the ball two feet from the cup to salvage par.

At 18, Choi planted another approach three feet from the cup and rolled it home to share the lead.

Hoping to qualify for his first Masters start so he can enjoy his hometown's storied event, Brown missed a seven-foot birdie putt at the 18th that would have given him to outright lead.

Brown capped a run of three birdies in five holes with a four-foot putt at the par-3 eighth, then played the back nine at par. Walker charged into contention despite finding only three fairways.

"I know I can't do that again," Walker said. "That's a lot of crazy short game up and downs. It's not much fun. I've got to work on it. I don't want that again." Sweden's Jonas Blixt fired his second consecutive 66 to share fifth on 209 with countryman Freddie Jacobson and Americans John Huh and Michael Kim.—AFP



GEELONG: Britain's Peter Kennaugh of Team Sky celebrates after winning the men's elite cycling race in the 2016 Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race in Geelong yesterday. — AFP

BRIT KENNAUGH WINS AUSTRALIAN ROAD RACE

SYDNEY: Current British road race champion and Olympic gold medalist Peter Kennaugh won the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race in Australia yesterday, as fellow countryman Mark Cavendish pulled out before the finish.

Kennaugh (Team Sky) won the second edition of the 174-kilometre (108-mile) race in Geelong, Victoria, in four hours, four minutes and 59 seconds, six seconds ahead of local sprinter Leigh Howard (IAM Cycling) and Italian Niccolo Bonifazio (Trek-Segafredo).

Australian Simon Gerrans (ORICA-GreenEDGE), who claimed a record fourth Tour Down Under in Adelaide last weekend, finished fifth. Britain sprint great Cavendish (Team Dimension Data), the winner of 26 Tour de France stages, and Australia's Caleb Ewan

(ORICA-GreenEDGE) did not complete the race.

Kennaugh, who won gold at the London Olympics in the team pursuit, made his move with 10 kilometres to go, and was able to keep ahead of the chasing pack.

"They (Team Sky) were telling me to stay calm. I went up the road just over a lap to go and they said it wouldn't work," the 26-year-old told broadcaster Channel Seven on his solo victory.

"But they told me just to hit it, kind of what Richie Porte did on Willunga (in the Tour Down Under). Just commit. I know a lot of things about power all the time and I'm not one who likes numbers and that kind of stuff.

"But I've been doing a lot of work on that

stuff and tried to pace myself to the finish. I had the legs. I felt terrible for the first half of the race and then obviously came around."

Australia's Cadel Evans, whom the race is named after, hailed Kennaugh's win and described the race as fantastic. "The guys raced hard. As we saw, chopping and changing, back and forth, I expect more from the expected favourites so to speak," he told Channel Seven.

"But Peter Kennaugh, often riding in the services of others, got a great win. He stayed on after the race last year and trained away. It's good to see him get repaid for that."

Australian Amanda Spratt (ORICA-AIS) won the women's race on Saturday with a time of two hours, 58 minutes and 45 seconds. — AFP

THE BIGGEST BLOWOUTS IN SUPER BOWL HISTORY

NEW YORK: The Super Bowl has produced plenty of memorably tense moments and unfathomably wild finishes. Just last year, the pinnacle of the NFL season was punctuated by a last-second interception in the end zone by New England that sealed a victory over Seattle, when the Seahawks decided to pass instead of run and the Patriots made them pay.

Then there are the not-so-nerve-wracking games that are decided by halftime. Even with a format designed to pit the two best teams against each other for the championship, or at least produce a high-caliber contest, plenty of duds have emerged.

Here's a look back at three of the biggest blowouts in Super Bowl history:

THE BIG, BAD BEARS

The Chicago Bears were dominant during the 1985 regular season, finishing 15-1 while allowing an average of 12.4 points per game. So this lopsided result was hardly a surprise.

The New England Patriots were the wild-card team from the weaker AFC and making their first trip to the big game. The Bears were confident enough that year to film the famed "Super Bowl Shuffle" video, with players dancing to vintage 1980s synthesized rap music in full uniform with a series of simple rhymes touting their talent and inevitable title.

They had no trouble backing up the bravado with a 46-10 victory. With seven sacks and only seven yards rushing allowed, the defense led by Super Bowl MVP Richard Dent put the Patriots in their

place. Walter Payton had a quiet game on the ground, but he was hardly needed. The Bears led 23-3 at halftime and 44-3 in the third quarter, after defensive tackle William "The Refrigerator" Perry rumbled in for a 1-yard touchdown run.

FANTASTIC 49ERS

Joe Montana and the San Francisco 49ers managed to outscore their own nickname in this 55-10 trampling of the Denver Broncos, still the most points ever scored by a Super Bowl team and the largest margin of victory in the game's history. The first two possessions of the second half by the Broncos ended with interceptions thrown by John Elway, and the outcome was never in doubt. By the time Montana threw his fifth touchdown pass of the night, the 49ers led 41-3 in the third

quarter. That was more than enough for him to win his third Super Bowl Most Valuable Player award.

SUPERIOR SEAHAWKS

The 48th Super Bowl was as low on drama as it was high on hype, with Denver's dazzling offense facing Seattle's stingy defense for the first Super Bowl held in the nation's biggest market.

Propelled by an NFL-best 55 touchdown passes by Peyton Manning during the 2013 regular season, the Broncos set an all-time record with 606 points, an attack so potent they were slight favorites entering the game. The Seahawks, though, were more than ready for them with their hard-hitting, hustling, high-motor secondary dubbed the "Legion of Boom."

This was the first Super Bowl held outdoors in a northern location, but instead of snowy or cold, it was a balmy 49 degrees at kickoff at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey. The opening kick was the last time Manning and the Broncos were actually in it.

The first snap sailed past Manning and into the end zone for a safety 12 seconds into the game, the quickest score in Super Bowl history. The Seahawks built a 22-0 lead by halftime, padded by a 69-yard interception return by Malcolm Smith for one of four turnovers by the Broncos. Percy Harvin took the third-quarter kickoff back 87 yards for another score, and Russell Wilson tacked on two more touchdown passes after that to leave no doubt about the league's best team that year with a 43-8 decision. —AP

DAD-TO-BE MURRAY ON 'NEXT PLANE HOME' AFTER AUSSIE LOSS

MELBOURNE: Andy Murray declared "I just want to get home" and headed straight for the airport yesterday as he raced to be reunited with his pregnant wife after his Australian Open final defeat.

Murray, who has been on baby alert all tournament with his wife, Kim Sears, due to give birth within weeks, said he was getting the next flight home after his loss to world number one Novak Djokovic.

"I'm proud that I got into this position, you know. Just quite looking forward to getting home now," Murray said in a quickfire press conference before rushing for his plane.

The British world number two had pledged to quit the tournament if his wife went into labour, and he was also close to pulling out when his father-in-law Nigel Sears collapsed at Rod Laver Arena last week.

"It was a tough, tough couple of days. Thankfully, he's fine now. Yeah, I just want to get home," said London-based Murray.

He added: "I've been held on flights for, it feels like five days. I've been held on almost every single flight, so the first one out of here, I'm leaving. It's at 1:00, I

think." Earlier Murray had tears in his eyes and a faltering voice as he paid tribute to his wife after he was well beaten 6-1, 7-5, 7-6 (7/3) — his fifth defeat in the Melbourne final.

"You've been a legend for the last two weeks. Thank you so much for all of your support and I'll be on the next plane home," the Scot said at the on-court awards ceremony.

He later explained it had been a difficult tournament as he was beset by distractions, but which also, however, seemed to take the sting out of his latest Grand Slam disappointment.

With the defeat, Murray became only the second man in the post-1968 Open era after Ivan Lendl, his former coach-to lose five finals at the same Grand Slam tournament.

"Regardless of today's result, it's been hard. Had I lost in the third or fourth round it still would have been difficult with everything that's happened," Murray said.

"She's been amazing. Handled everything unbelievably well. Yeah, I have to thank her for allowing me to play and stay here with everything that was going on. But, yeah, it was tough." — AFP



MELBOURNE: Andy Murray, right, of Britain is congratulated by Milos Raonic of Canada after winning their semifinal at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia. — AP

KERBER, RAONIC BIGGEST RANKINGS MOVERS AFTER AUSTRALIAN OPEN

MELBOURNE: Angelique Kerber's upset win over Serena Williams at the Australian Open and Milos Raonic's second Grand Slam semifinal appearance will ensure they're the biggest movers among top players in projected rankings to be released this week. Seventh-seeded Kerber's three-set win on Saturday, which prevented Williams from securing her 22nd major title, is expected to result in the German player moving to No. 2 on the WTA Tour. The rankings, expected to be released Monday, should show Williams at No. 1, Kerber at No. 2 and Simona Halep, who lost in the first round at Melbourne Park, dropping one spot to No. 3.

"She's had a great month," Williams said of Kerber. "She got to the finals in Brisbane. She won here. So, yeah. I was surprised and really happy for her. I'm like, 'Whoa, No. 2.' What's after

2 is 1, so I guess I better be careful." Agnieszka Radwanska, who lost to Williams in the semifinals, remains at No. 4, while Garbine Muguruza drops two places to fifth.

Maria Sharapova, the 2015 finalist who lost to Williams in the quarterfinals this year, moves to sixth, followed by Flavia Pennetta, Carla Suarez Navarro, two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova and Lucie Safarova.

Safarova did not play in Melbourne due to a bacterial infection. On the men's side, Raonic, the 25-year-old Canadian who lost in the semifinals to Andy Murray, was expected to be biggest mover among the top 15 on the ATP Tour, improving three places to No. 11.

It was Raonic's second major semifinal after losing to Roger Federer in the final four at Wimbledon in 2014. Quarterfinalist David Ferrer

moved to sixth place in a straight switch with Tomas Berdych, who slips down to eighth.

The top five remained unchanged. Six-time champion Novak Djokovic and five-time losing finalist Murray would have remained 1-2 regardless of the result of their Sunday night final, which Djokovic won in straight sets.

Federer, who lost to Djokovic in the semifinals, remains at No. 3, Stan Wawrinka at 4 and Rafael Nadal, a first-round loser to Fernando Verdasco in Melbourne, rounds out the top 5.

Following Ferrer is Japan's Kei Nishikori, unchanged at 7 after losing to Djokovic in the quarterfinals.

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga moves to No. 9, replacing fellow Frenchman Richard Gasquet, who drops to 10. Following Raonic is No. 12 John Isner of the United States. —AP



MELBOURNE: Andy Murray of Britain gestures as he speaks during a press conference following his loss to Novak Djokovic of Serbia in their men's singles final match on day 14 of the 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne. — AFP

SOARES WINS TWO GRAND SLAM TITLES ON SAME DAY

MELBOURNE: Brazil's Bruno Soares lifted the Australian Open mixed doubles trophy yesterday—the same day he also won the men's doubles, in the early hours of the morning.

Soares and Russia's Elena Vesnina, seeded five, beat the unseeded pairing of American Coco Vandeweghe and her Romanian partner Horia Tecau 6-4, 4-6, 10-5 on Rod Laver Arena. The win comes after Soares and Jamie Murray, the brother

of singles finalist Andy, beat Czech veteran Radek Stepanek and Canadian Daniel Nestor in three sets for the men's title in a 1:00 am finish.

"I feel like I've been on this court for the last 24 hours," said Soares, who now has 22 men's doubles titles and also won the US Open mixed doubles in 2012 and 2014. "But it's a good feeling. Elena carried me the whole week. She was awesome." —AFP



MELBOURNE: Elena Vesnina of Russia (R) and partner Bruno Soares of Brazil (L) kiss the winner's trophy at the awards ceremony following their victory over Coco Vandeweghe of the US and Horia Tecau of Romania in the mixed doubles final on day 14 of the 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

NO REST AS BUSY KERBER JETS OFF FOR FED CUP

BERLIN: There was no rest for newly-crowned Australian Open champion Angelique Kerber after a whirlwind of partying and engagements before jetting home yesterday to prepare for the Fed Cup. The 28-year-old German earned her first Grand Slam title by shocking world number one Serena Williams 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 in Saturday's final in Melbourne. After countless interviews, posing for pictures and undergoing a drugs test, Kerber eventually got back to her hotel around 3:00 am local time on Sunday morning, then went straight out partying. The new champion was sleepless in Melbourne, but brushed off any tiredness to celebrate on Sunday by swimming in the Yarra river next to the Rod Laver Arena, in echoes of the dip American Jim Courier took after his 1992 championship win on the same court.

The new world number two made the plunge along with her team, including coach Torben Beltz and physiotherapist Simon Iden, plus a German Eurosport commentator, who made a bet with Kerber to jump in the river if she won. "It was cold, but it was worth it," said Kerber after her dip. "I haven't slept for a minute. I only had appointments to get to," she told broadcaster ZDF, having become the first German since Steffi Graf in 1999 to win a Grand Slam title.

"I managed to eat a banana after the final and then it was the next day. 'I had never been so tired as in that moment,' she said after a night of partying as, despite only leaving the stadium in the early hours, "we still managed to go for a drink," Kerber added with a grin. "I still can't believe it. I've made history. A dream has come true. 'I'm ready for anything now—even the wedding with 'Petko,'" she joked after her Fed Cup team-mate Andrea Petkovic wrote: "Angelique, you're crazy! I want to marry you!" on Twitter.

After posing for her official winner's photo in Melbourne's Botanical Gardens, Kerber flew back to Europe on Sunday night and had the chance to catch up on sleep on the long flight via Bangkok to Frankfurt, Germany, then onto Posen in Poland.

From there, she will drive to Puszczykowo, where she lives near to her grandparents.

"We'll celebrate there with some sparkling wine. I am really looking forward to getting home," she said. "My family have always stood by me and given me strength, even in moments when I didn't believe in myself."

There will be little time to enjoy her success, because on Tuesday she will join up with her Germany team-mates to prepare for next weekend's Fed Cup first-round match against Switzerland in Leipzig.

There promises to be some fun for Kerber's team later in the year as she will make good on a bet with her coach Beltz to skydive together, take a dancing class with her support staff and her physio will mark her victory in ink by getting a tattoo. "It will be the trophy from Melbourne," he admitted. —AFP



MELBOURNE: Germany's Angelique Kerber poses with The Daphne Akhurst Memorial Trophy as she celebrates her victory in the women's singles final on day fourteen of the 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

N ZEALAND BEAT S AFRICA TO WIN WELLINGTON SEVENS

WELLINGTON: Joe Webber scored a try after the siren to lift New Zealand over South Africa 24-21 in yesterday's final of the Wellington leg of the World Rugby Sevens Series, defending the title won on home soil last year.

Webber also scored in extra time to give New Zealand a win over South Africa in pool play. New Zealand beat Kenya 33-0 in Sunday's quarterfinals and England 22-5 in the semifinals while South Africa defeated Australia 26-14 and World Series leader Fiji 31-0.

South Africa was on course for victory

when it led 21-7 just after halftime but Reiko Ioane scored twice in the second half and Webber crossed with the last play of the match.

"We talked about it the whole week, we needed a lot of heart and a lot of ticker," New Zealand captain Tim Mikkelsen said. "We talked about putting the mana (pride) back in the jersey after the last couple of tournaments and that's really what we wanted to do this weekend."

Things weren't going New Zealand's way in the final from the moment All

Blacks superstar Sonny Bill Williams fumbled the opening kickoff, giving South Africa a long early possession. That led to tries by Philip Snyman and Rosco Speckman which gave South Africa a 14-0 lead after five minutes.

New Zealand appeared over-anxious with its few scraps of possession but it managed to compose itself and to score a vital try through Akira Ioane just before halftime. South Africa extended the lead to 21-7 when Seabelo Senatla scored the opening try of the second half. New Zealand continued to play

erratically but the match turned in its favor when Speckman was sin-binned in the seventh minute of the second half. Ioane scored twice in his absence and New Zealand dragged itself back into the match at 21-19.

Regan Ware then made two vital plays in the dying moments of the match, first making a tackle deep in his own half to stop a seemingly certain South African try, then kept the ball alive near the South Africa goal line to create the last chance for Webber.

New Zealand came into its home

tournament in seventh place in the World Series standings after being ravaged by injuries in the first two tournaments at Dubai and Cape Town. Yesterday's win thrust it back into Series contention but, more importantly, restated its challenge to South Africa and Fiji for the gold medal at this year's Olympics. South Africa leads the Series standings by two points from Fiji which beat England 24-12 in the playoff for third place. New Zealand moved up to third ahead of next weekend's leg in Sydney. — AP

SCOREBOARD

SYDNEY: Scoreboard yesterday from the third and final Twenty20 international between Australia and India at the Sydney Cricket Ground:

Australia Innings

Usman Khawaja c Dhoni b Nehra	14
Shane Watson not out	124
Shaun Marsh b Ashwin	9
Glenn Maxwell c Raina b Yuvraj	3
Travis Head b Jadeja	26
Chris Lynn c Jadeja b Bumrah	13
Cameron Bancroft not out	0
Extras: (2lb, 4w, 2nb)	8
TOTAL: (for five wickets)	197

Overs: 20

Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-69, 3-175, 4-168, 5-193.

Did not bat: Andrew Tye, Cameron Boyce, Scott Boland, Shaun Tait.

Bowling: Ashish Nehra 4-0-32-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-43-1 (2nb), Ravichandran Ashwin 4-0-36-1 (1w), Ravindra Jadeja 4-0-41-1, Yuvraj Singh 2-0-19-1, Hardik Pandya 2-0-24-0 (3w).

India Innings

Rohit Sharma c Watson b Boyce	52
Shikhar Dhawan c Bancroft b Watson	26
Virat Kohli b Boyce	50
Suresh Raina 49 not out	
Yuvraj Singh 15 not out	
Extras: (1b, 7w)	8
TOTAL: (for three wickets)	200

Overs: 20

Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-124, 3-147.

Did not bat: Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Ashish Nehra.

Bowling: Shaun Tait 4-0-46-0 (4w), Scott Boland 3-0-34-0 (2w), Shane Watson 4-0-30-1 (1w), Andrew Tye 4-0-51-0, Cameron Boyce 4-0-28-2, Glenn Maxwell 1-0-10-0.

Result: India won by seven wickets to take series 3-0.



SYDNEY: India Cricket team celebrates winning the T20 International cricket series against Australia in Sydney, Australia, yesterday. — AP

INDIA CLINCH THRILLER TO COMPLETE SWEEP OVER AUSSIES

SYDNEY: Shane Watson's unbeaten hundred could not prevent Australia falling to a seven-wicket defeat to India in the third and final Twenty20 match yesterday as Suresh Raina hit a four on the last ball to complete a 3-0 clean sweep in the series.

India were chasing 198 to win and needed 17 runs in the final over as Yuvraj Singh hit a four and a six off the first two balls from paceman Andrew Tye and Raina hit the final ball through point with his team

needing two.

All-rounder Watson, leading Australia in the absence of the injured Aaron Finch, powered the hosts to 197-5 with an unbeaten 124 after winning the toss and opting to bat.

Australia made five changes to the side that lost the last match in Melbourne to concede an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series, handing debuts to batsman Usman Khawaja and part-time wicketkeeper

Cameron Bancroft.

Watson, named player of the match, was the fulcrum around which the hosts' batting revolved and it was due to his 71-ball knock, which was studded with 10 fours and six sixes, that Australia posted a strong total.

India replied with half-centuries from in-form opener Rohit Sharma (52) and Virat Kohli (50), who was named the player of the series, and then Raina's 25-ball 49 to

chase down the steep target.

Rohit and Shikhar Dhawan got India off to a rollicking start, scoring 46 in just 3.2 overs, with fast bowler Shaun Tait going for 24 runs in the third over.

Rohit and Kohli then added 78 for the second wicket to keep India strongly on course, before both batsmen fell to leg spinner Cameron Boyce.

Yuvraj, who did not get an opportunity to bat in the last two matches, was sent in

ahead of captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni at number five and though the left-hander struggled initially to put bat on ball, he produced the goods when his team needed.

Raina and Yuvraj added 53 for the unbroken fourth wicket.

The 3-0 sweep in Australia took India to the top of the T20 rankings in a timely boost ahead of the World Twenty20 at home from March 8-April 3. —Reuters

MICHAEL CLARKE COMES OUT OF RETIREMENT

SYDNEY: Former Test captain Michael Clarke yesterday said he was returning to cricket six months after he retired, telling Australian media he had "unfinished business" in the shorter form of the game.

The 34-year-old, who bowled out in August after the disastrous Ashes series in England, said his first game would be with his grade club Western Suburbs against Randwick-Petersham in Sydney on February 20-21.

"To step away from cricket for four months has been great, and I have found my body has enjoyed it and my mind has really enjoyed it too," Clarke told News Corp newspapers.

"At the same time I've realised the game of cricket is in my blood. I've been looking for an outlet to replace what I've chosen to walk away from." One of the outstanding batsmen of his generation, Clarke said he "missed the game" and would "never say never to anything".

"All I know is, I'll never say never to anything. I'll start with Western Suburbs and we will see where it takes me. For now, my focus is definitely the shorter format of the game."

The batsman, who became Australian Test captain in 2011, last year pulled out of his Big Bash League deal with the Melbourne Stars but said Sunday he was interested in returning to Australia's domestic Twenty20 league.

"I still believe I have some unfinished business in the Twenty20 department of cricket. We've got BBL, IPL, a number of tournaments around the world that allow you the opportunity to go and play that," he told commercial broadcaster Channel Nine.

"When I was playing for Australia I was focused on Test and one-day cricket. I walked away from that, now I have the opportunity to focus on the shorter form of the game if I enjoy this game."

Australia's coach Darren Lehmann welcomed Clarke's return. "He's a pretty good player, his record speaks for that," Lehmann told reporters in Sydney.

"As far as I know and I spoke to him this morning, it's just about playing that first grade game in February and see where it takes him from there." —AFP



AUCKLAND: New Zealand players celebrate winning the series 2-0 after the third one-day international cricket match between New Zealand and Pakistan at Eden Park in Auckland yesterday. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

AUCKLAND: Completed scoreboard in the third ODI between New Zealand and Pakistan in Auckland yesterday:

Pakistan	
Azhar Ali c Guptill b Henry	3
Ahmed Shehzad c Guptill b Boult	12
Mohammad Hafeez c Milne b Santner	76
Babar Azam c Guptill b Henry	83
Shoaib Malik c Ronchi b Boult	32
Sarfraz Ahmed c Ronchi b Milne	41
Mohammad Rizwan run out (Elliott)	16
Wahab Riaz c Guptill b Anderson	11
Mohammad Amir c Ronchi b Milne	1
Rahat Ali c Ronchi b Milne	0
Mohammad Irfan not out	0
Extras (w14, nb1)	15
Total (10 wickets; 47.3 overs)	290

Fall of wickets: 1-16 (Shehzad), 2-20 (Azhar Ali), 3-154 (Hafeez), 4-215 (Malik), 5-227 (Babar), 6-256 (Rizwan), 7-279 (Riaz), 8-284 (Amir), 9-284 (Rahat Ali), 10-290 (Ahmed)

Bowling: Boult 9-0-60-2 (w3, nb1), Henry 10-0-44-2 (w3), Anderson 4-0-26-1 (w1), Santner 5-0-56-1 (w1), Milne 9.3-0-49-3 (w2), Elliott 10-0-55-0

New Zealand	
Martin Guptill c Hafeez b Azhar	82
Brendon McCullum c Irfan b Amir	0
Kane Williamson st Sarfraz Ahmed b Azhar	84
Henry Nicholls lbw Amir	5
Grant Elliott c Babar b Malik	10
Corey Anderson c Babar b Irfan	35
Luke Ronchi b Riaz	20
Mitchell Santner not out	10
Adam Milne not out	0
Extras (lb5, w14)	19
Total (7 wickets; 42.4 overs)	265

Fall of wickets: 1-6 (McCullum), 2-165 (Guptill), 3-180 (Williamson), 4-188 (Nicholls), 5-210 (Elliott), 6-253 (Ronchi), 7-256 (Anderson)

Did not bat: Matt Henry, Trent Boult

Bowling: Irfan 8-0-60-1 (w5), Amir 9-0-39-2 (w2), Rahat Ali 7-0-54-0 (w2), Wahab Riaz 8.4-0-51-1 (w3), Shoaib Malik 3-0-19-1, Azhar Ali 7-0-37-2 (w2)

Toss: Pakistan
Result: New Zealand by three wickets (D/L method).

GUPTILL, WILLIAMSON SET UP N ZEALAND TWO-BALL WIN

AUCKLAND: A record partnership by Martin Guptill and Kane Williamson gave New Zealand victory with two balls to spare in a tense third one-dayer against Pakistan in Auckland yesterday. The three-wicket win in the rain-abridged match also wrapped up the series for New Zealand 2-0.

Initially set a target of 291 to win, New Zealand made a disastrous start with Brendon McCullum out for a first-ball duck. But Guptill and Williamson restored order with a 159-run stand, a New Zealand ODI record for the second wicket, to set the side up before a lengthy rain delay shortened the match by seven overs.

When play resumed, New Zealand were set a revised target of 53 off 45 balls, which they reached with two balls to spare and with the help of a contentious umpire's call.

With 27 balls remaining and New Zealand still 38 runs short of their target, Corey Anderson appeared to have been caught

behind but was given not out and Pakistan had used up their review. The ODI series win added to New Zealand's golden summer after they also beat Pakistan 2-1 in the Twenty20s and beat Sri Lanka in Tests, ODIs and Twenty20s.

In the decider against Pakistan, Azhar Ali won the toss and opted to bat first which initially proved productive.

While Babar Azam and Mohammad Hafeez were together it looked like they would threaten the Eden Park ODI innings record of 340. Even with Hafeez back in the pavilion, Pakistan were 207-3 with 20 overs remaining.

But they were soon to run out of steam with their last six wickets falling for 63 runs and they were all out for 290 with 15 balls remaining. McCullum's comeback was very brief after being sidelined for five weeks by a back complaint.

The first ball he faced from Mohammad Amir was hooked to long leg where Mohammad Irfan took a smart catch on the run.

Enter Williamson to partner Guptill in a record stand, two better than the previous best 157 which Guptill had set with McCullum four years ago against Zimbabwe.

Azhar removed the pair in the space of eight deliveries. Guptill was first to go for 82 caught at point by Hafeez, and Williamson was stumped for 84.

Azhar may consider himself a part-time bowler but showed all the guile of a career leg-spinner when he outwitted Williamson charging down the wicket by getting the ball through to wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed. Henry Nicholls, who set up the first ODI win, and Grant Elliott both fell cheaply as New Zealand slipped from 165-1 to 210-5.

Lusty hitting from Anderson with 35 off 29 narrowed the gap and with six required off the last over, Mitchell Santner hit boundaries off the first and fourth deliveries to get New Zealand home. — AFP

SHEIKH SALMAN SAYS FIFA RACE IS DUEL WITH INFANTINO

DOHA: FIFA presidential frontrunner Sheikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa told AFP yesterday that only he or Europe's Gianni Infantino can win the race to become leader of world football. The Asian Football Confederation president also said any candidate who does not have "a minimum number" of votes should not stay in the contest for the February 26 vote, piling pressure on the other three campaign contenders. South African media are already speculating that the only African candidate Tokyo Sexwale could withdraw this week, though he denied this to AFP. Asked who how many candidates had a chance of winning the presidency of the scandal-tainted FIFA, the Bahraini sheikh said: "Realistically for the five, I think two."

Pressed on who they are, he added: "I think Gianni has the support of the (UEFA) confederation and I think Asia has its candidate. From what I hear, from what I feel, I think it's between me and him."

Infantino is the UEFA general secretary. The other three candidates are Sexwale from South Africa, Jordan's Prince Ali bin Hussein, a former FIFA vice president, and Jerome Champagne from France, a former FIFA official.

Speaking in English and Arabic, Sheikh Salman said he was increasingly confident of victory. "When I took the decision to run in the election, I thought I had a good chance."

FIFA DEAL LOOMS

"And now we are approaching the election date and after all the last contacts with the confederations and the national federations, I am confident and optimistic and I can see that things are improving day by day." He added: "From my point of view things are more than good." All 209 FIFA member associations will vote at a special congress in Zurich for a successor for Sepp Blatter, who stepped down and was subsequently banned from FIFA, following cor-

ruption allegations engulfing football's governing body. The sheikh and Infantino are seen as the frontrunners and he hinted that a deal between the two could be possible ahead of the vote. "You have to leave the door always open, you cannot shut the door on any candidate."

He was speaking in Doha after attending the finals of the AFC Under 23 championship, which finished on Saturday.

Infantino was also in Qatar over the weekend, as well as Sexwale. Sheikh Salman added that anyone who had no chance of winning should now consider dropping out of the race.

"Well, I think that, you know, any candidate who feels that he cannot bring, let's say, a minimum number (of votes), I don't think he should continue."

In his election manifesto, he has argued for more than 32 national sides to play at each World Cup and said on Sunday that no more than 40 teams should contest the tournament.

He also reiterated his support for Qatar's controversial hosting of the tournament in 2022. During his campaign the sheikh has been criticised by human rights groups who accuse him of involvement in the oppression of pro-democratic demonstrations in 2011 in Bahrain and the use of torture, claims which he denies.

The rival candidates have been on a globetrotting campaign seeking support for their bids to take over FIFA. The world football body is reeling from US corruption charges against 39 football officials, marketing executives and two companies. Swiss investigators are looking into the attribution of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups to Russia and Qatar respectively.

Blatter is separately under formal investigation in Switzerland for criminal mismanagement over a "disloyal" \$2 million payment made to UEFA president Michel Platini. Blatter and Platini were banned from all football activity for eight years by FIFA's ethics tribunal in December. — AFP



PHILADELPHIA: Ish Smith #1 of the Philadelphia 76ers passes an alley-oop to Nerlens Noel #4 against the Golden State Warriors on Saturday at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Warriors defeated the 76ers 108-105. — AFP

BARNES' LATE 3-POINTER LIFTS WARRIORS OVER 76ERS, 108-105

PHILADELPHIA: Harrison Barnes hit a 3-pointer with 0.2 seconds remaining and the Golden State Warriors escaped with a 108-105 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on Saturday. Klay Thompson had 32 points and Stephen Curry scored 23 points for the Warriors, who nearly blew a 24-point second-half lead. Draymond Green added 10 points and 13 rebounds for Golden State, which opened a three-game road trip with their sixth straight victory while matching the NBA's best start through 47 games. They tied the 1966-67 76ers, who also won 43 of their first 47. Isaiah Canaan had 18 points to lead the 76ers, who dropped to 7-41.

Sessions had 17 points off the bench, Jared Dudley had 16 points and Marcin Gortat had 13 points and 11 rebounds. The Wizards shot 52 percent. James Harden had 40 points, 11 assists and seven rebounds, but Houston lost its third straight. Dwight Howard had 20 points and seven rebounds for the Rockets but was ejected for the second straight game.

GRIZZLIES 121, KINGS 117

Jeff Green scored 29 points, Marc Gasol had 22 points, six rebounds and five assists,

and the Memphis Grizzlies thwarted a fourth-quarter rally to defeat the Sacramento Kings. The Kings, who lost their fourth straight, pulled within 118-117 on a 3-pointer from Darren Collison with 18.7 seconds left. Courtney Lee converted two free throws for a 120-117 lead. On the next possession, Collison lost the ball, the Kings' 19th turnover, and Memphis held on for its third straight win and ninth in the last 11. Rudy Gay led the Kings with 21 points, including 13 in the fourth. — AP

NBA Results/Standings

Cleveland 117, San Antonio 103; Houston 122, Washington 123; Memphis 121, Sacramento 117; Indiana 109, Denver 105 (OT); Toronto 111, Detroit 107; New Orleans 105, Brooklyn 103; Philadelphia 105, Golden State 108.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB					
Toronto	32	15	.681	—	Oklahoma City	36	13	.735
Boston	27	21	.563	5.5	Portland	22	26	.458
New York	23	26	.469	10	Utah	21	25	.457
Brooklyn	12	36	.250	20.5	Denver	18	30	.375
Philadelphia	7	41	.146	25.5	Minnesota	14	34	.292
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	34	12	.739	—	Golden State	43	4	.915
Chicago	26	19	.578	7.5	LA Clippers	31	16	.660
Indiana	25	22	.532	9.5	Sacramento	20	27	.426
Detroit	25	23	.521	10	Phoenix	14	34	.292
Milwaukee	20	29	.408	15.5	LA Lakers	9	40	.184
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Atlanta	27	21	.563	—	San Antonio	39	8	.830
Miami	26	21	.553	0.5	Memphis	28	20	.583
Charlotte	22	25	.468	4.5	Dallas	27	22	.551
Washington	21	24	.467	4.5	Houston	25	25	.500
Orlando	20	25	.444	5.5	New Orleans	18	28	.391



DOHA: The head of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA presidential candidate, Bahraini Sheikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa answers AFP journalists' questions during an interview yesterday in the Qatari capital Doha. FIFA presidential frontrunner Sheikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa told AFP that only he or Europe's Gianni Infantino can win the race to become FIFA's next president. — AFP

EX-FIFA OFFICIAL FACES COURT OVER QATAR SLUR

BERLIN: Former German FA (DFB) president and ex-FIFA official Theo Zwanziger is due in court tomorrow over comments he made last year, claiming Qatar is "the cancer of world football". The 70-year-old trained lawyer will appear in Duesseldorf's regional court when his case starts after the Qatar Football Association (QFA) filed a civil lawsuit for damages over his comments concerning the Arab States' hosting of the 2022 World Cup.

The case highlights the sensitivity surrounding the decision in December 2010 by world football's governing body FIFA to award the tiny Arab state the right to stage a World Cup finals. The QFA is suing after Zwanziger told public broadcaster Hessischer Rundfunk: "I have always said that Qatar was a cancerous growth on world football. It all started with that decision." Switzerland's prosecutor is investigating both FIFA's decision to award the 2018 World Cup finals to Russia and the 2022 tournament to Qatar amidst accusations of bribery and corruption.

The Qataris want to prevent any repetition of the comments from Zwanziger, who was elected to FIFA's executive committee from 2011-2015, and was DFB president

from 2006 until 2012.

Zwanziger is confident about his chance of winning his case, while the Qataris view the Germans' words as "unacceptable slander and vilification" of the Arab state and it's citizens, according to court documents. "The case is quite simple. In Qatar, I probably wouldn't be allowed to say that. But here I can," Zwanziger told SID, an AFP subsidiary. "It comes down to sharply criticising something that is incompatible with my social ideas. Of course, I'll be in court."

Zwanziger's lawyer has submitted a 22-page response to the civil lawsuit, which contains a biological clarification of the word "cancer". He has repeatedly criticised the awarding of the World Cup to Qatar, but insists his words were directed against FIFA's system of awarding the 2022 World Cup and the choosing of Qatar, not at the country itself or it's citizens. Zwanziger is being sued for the nominal sum of 100,000 euros (\$108,305).

Frankfurt authorities are currently investigating Zwanziger and two other former DFB officials for suspected tax fraud over an irregular 6.7 million euros payment to FIFA relating to the 2006 World Cup, which was held in Germany. — AFP

PACERS 109, NUGGETS 105, OT

Monta Ellis scored a season-high 32 points and grabbed nine rebounds to lead the Indiana Pacers past the Denver Nuggets. Ellis missed a 3-pointer with the game tied at 99 as regulation ended, but he converted a three-point play with 20.4 seconds left in overtime to seal it and send the Pacers to a second straight victory. Danilo Gallinari led Denver with 23 points, and Kenneth Faried added 16 points and 12 rebounds. Pacers starting center Ian Mahinmi sat out with sore lower back.

RAPTORS 111, PISTONS 107

DeMar DeRozan had 29 points and the Toronto Raptors beat the Detroit Pistons to push the team's franchise-best win streak to 11 consecutive games. Kyle Lowry had 18 points and backup center Bismack Biyombo added 12 points and 13 assists. Cory Joseph also had 16 points off the bench. Reserve guard Brandon Jennings led the way for Detroit with 22 points, with starter Kentavious Caldwell-Pope contributing 15. Andre Drummond had 11 points and 12 rebounds for his NBA-leading 39th double-double.

PELICANS 105, NETS 103

Jrue Holiday hit a 15-foot shot with 1.3 seconds remaining and the New Orleans Pelicans held off the Brooklyn Nets. New Orleans' Anthony Davis scored 20 points and grabbed 16 rebounds in his first game back after sitting out with a concussion. Davis started 0 for 10 from the floor before finding his rhythm. The Pelicans (18-28) and Davis were helped by Ryan Anderson's 24 points off the bench. Holiday's final shot gave him a team-best 26 points. Brook Lopez scored 33 points and had 10 rebounds to lead the Nets, who lost for the third straight game and allowed an opponent to shoot 44 percent or better for the 12th consecutive game.

SPURS 117, CAVALIERS 103

LeBron James scored 29 points and Kevin Love and Kyrie Irving added 21 apiece as the Cleveland Cavaliers finally took down one of the NBA's elite teams, beating the San Antonio Spurs. The Cavs won their fourth straight under coach Tyronn Lue, who was promoted after David Blatt was fired on Jan. 22. Cleveland came in 0-5 against San Antonio, Golden State and Chicago, three top-tier teams who figure to contend with them for a title this season. Kawhi Leonard scored 24 and LaMarcus Aldridge 15 for the Spurs.

WIZARDS 123, ROCKETS 122

John Wall had 19 points, 13 assists and eight rebounds and the Washington Wizards rallied for a win over the Houston Rockets to snap a three-game losing streak. Ramon



WOLFSBURG: Wolfsburg's Viegirinha, left, and Cologne's Matthias Lehmann, right, challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between VfL Wolfsburg and 1. FC Cologne in Wolfsburg, Germany, yesterday. — AP

ROSS COUNTY STUN CELTIC TO REACH SCOTTISH LEAGUE FINAL

GLASGOW: Ross County came from behind to shock 10-man Celtic 3-1 at Hampden Park yesterday to reach the Scottish League Cup final.

Celtic had made a dream start with Gary Mackay-Steven opening the scoring after just 25 seconds but Martin Woods levelled matters from the penalty spot in the 15th minute after Efe Ambrose was sent off for bringing down Alex Schalk.

County moved ahead in the 48th minute courtesy of a Paul Quinn header before Schalk made it 3-1 15 minutes later with a shot into the roof of the net from a tight angle. Leigh Griffiths then saw his 76th minute penalty saved as County, who famously knocked Celtic out of the Scottish Cup at the same stage in 2010 while they were a First Division side, held on to send the holders out and end the Glasgow giants' hopes of a domestic treble.

Celtic's start couldn't have been better as Callum McGregor threaded a ball between two Ross County players for Griffiths who rolled the ball across the box for Mackay-Steven to tap in.

Ambrose then had a header cleared off the line from Richard Foster as Celtic came close to adding another. County didn't take long to settle and soon had a chance of their own as Schalk forced Craig Gordon into a superb save with a rasping strike from the edge of the box.

A moment of madness from Ambrose then allowed County to level the match. Jackson Irvine's clever flick released Schalk and the striker was sent tumbling to the

ground following contact with Ambrose. Referee Craig Thomson didn't hesitate in showing the Celtic defender a straight red card and Woods expertly despatched the resultant penalty as he sent Gordon the wrong way.

Celtic manager Ronny Deila brought on new signing Erik Sviatchenko for his debut as he reorganised his side and it was the Hoops who continued to press despite being down to 10 men.

Stuart Armstrong came close with a curling effort that landed on the roof of the net before County 'keeper Scott Fox parried a Mikel Lustig header before bravely saving at the feet of Nir Bitton and Sviatchenko.

Ross County soon made their extra man advantage count with a goal just over two minutes after the restart.

Captain Andrew Davies did well to stretch and head a corner to the back post back into the centre of the six-yard box where Quinn bulleted a header past Gordon.

County then exploited the gaps in Celtic's defence to move further ahead in the 63rd minute. Irvine threaded a pass to Schalk down the inside left-channel and the Dutch striker unleashed a powerful strike from a tight angle that flew into the roof of the net.

Celtic were presented with a golden chance in the 76th minute when referee Thomson awarded a penalty when substitute Brian Graham handled in the box but Griffiths, normally deadly from the spot, saw his effort kept out by the legs of Fox. Ross County will play Hibernian in the final. — AFP

THAI OWNERS CHASE GOLD AND GLORY AFTER LEICESTER'S REMARKABLE RUN

BANGKOK: It took just 30 minutes for Leicester City's Thai billionaire owner to decide to buy the English soccer club in 2010. It now looks like an inspired investment. The club was struggling in English soccer's second tier at the time. It has since won promotion to the premiership, and, remarkably, sits at the very top of the world's richest league with over half the season gone.

Manchester United, Manchester City and Arsenal are all chasing hard, but in one of the sport's biggest surprises of recent years, the giants of the national game can't catch a team that many had expected to be dragged into a relegation scrap.

For the owner, duty free magnate Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha, the priority is to ensure the club from central England and its supporters do not get carried away. And while his son and club vice chairman, Aiyawatt, prefers to keep discussions on soccer and money separate, Leicester's ascent brings with it plenty of business opportunities.

"Anything can happen, so we need to keep our feet on the ground," said Aiyawatt, who runs the club from "behind the scenes" while his father makes strategic decisions.

"It doesn't just depend on us," he told Reuters in Bangkok. "The big teams are not doing well ... That's why middle or small teams can make some difference. This season is a bit unusual, but it's quite good for football in England."

It could also be good for King Power,

the travel retail company Vichai founded in 1989 that employs more than 10,000 people, dominates major airports in Thailand and has branched into restaurants, hotels and solar power.

Vichai, a self-made businessman whose personal fortune is estimated by Forbes at \$3 billion, wants to use Leicester's growing international appeal to boost Thai brands abroad via a new online business under development.

"People around the world know this website through Leicester City Football Club which several billion people watch closely already," Vichai told reporters recently. "We will use this channel to make our website known."

King Power is aiming for revenues of 85 billion baht (\$2.4 billion) in 2016, a 25 percent increase from 68 billion baht last year, although the www.kingpoweronline.com website is still only a small part of that.

WHERE DID IT ALL GO RIGHT?

Leicester's performance means the 100 million pounds or so (\$140 million) that Vichai and his family have poured into the club so far will reap dividends more quickly.

With premiership survival all but guaranteed, Leicester can plan ahead on surer footing.

Next season will bring the biggest payday yet for Premier League clubs thanks to a record-breaking 5.1 billion pound television deal with Sky and BT that runs from 2016 to 2019.

Champions Chelsea received 99 million pounds last season while even fourth-placed Manchester United secured a payout of 96.8 million.

A finish in the top four means a tilt at the Champions League, qualification for which is estimated to be worth another 40 million pounds.

"We are getting a significant amount of international attention and are on the radar of more international companies," said Ian Flanagan, Leicester City's commercial director. "We are the good news story of the Premier League this year."

Aiyawatt, nicknamed "Top", puts the success down to old-fashioned family values. "It's the culture that we brought to the team," he said, when asked to explain Leicester's improvement.

"It's the Thai culture. We give our time to the staff, the players, and to the manager. We try to manage it like a family, try to listen to the problems of every single member of staff."

The owners have avoided supporters' animosity that marked some foreign forays into English soccer, including the purchase of Manchester United by the Glazers from the United States.

Another wealthy Thai, ousted prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, took over Manchester City between 2007 and 2008. Although he reportedly sold it at a profit, his involvement was cut short and he was sentenced to prison for graft. Thaksin lives in self-imposed exile and maintains his innocence.

There have also been canny player

signings and managerial appointments at Leicester, whose success has helped it make up ground on traditional soccer powerhouses in Thailand.

On the rooftop of a Bangkok shopping complex during Leicester's recent match against Liverpool, about 200 people gathered to follow the game.

"I'm very proud to see them grow to this level," said 39-year-old Tanaporn Meesrisom, who was in the crowd.

"The fan base will definitely grow. I used to be a Liverpool fan, but now I'm rooting for Leicester to win the championship."

SELF-MADE MAN

According to an interview last year in a local luxury magazine, Vichai, one of Thailand's top 10 richest men, studied in Taiwan and the United States as a child.

His interest in the duty free business began during his school days in Taiwan, because flights back to Thailand stopped over in Hong Kong.

"As I grew up I saw duty free businesses from all over the world. I found it an interesting business ... so I said to myself I might be able to do it," Vichai told Praew Magazine.

He began as an agent for luxury brands before investing in a duty free business in Hong Kong that he eventually acquired.

According to Praew, he developed contacts at home and won lucrative concessions to run duty free shops from Airports of Thailand, the mainstay of his

private company.

The country's king bestowed on Vichai and his family a new surname, an act seen as a great honour in the Southeast Asian country where the monarch is highly revered.

Vichai's passion for sport, particularly polo and soccer, led him to England and a shirt sponsorship with Leicester City. He came then to acquire the club for a reported 39 million pounds.

"The day that we bought the team, I can say that we made a 30-minute decision," said Aiyawatt. "It's something that we love. We went to the stadium, and we loved the crowd."

The first big leap for the club and its owners came in 2014, with promotion to the top division after a 10-year absence.

"Money-wise, that would only come when we were in the Premier League so we pushed a lot of money, time and effort to make it happen," Aiyawatt recalled.

An equally tough test will be to turn this season's early form into more lasting success for Leicester and rivals who have sprung surprises and added to the League's appeal.

"The nature of this season's Premier League has led to a number of international companies taking greater interest in clubs outside the established elite, which I'm sure will present opportunities those clubs can seek to maximise," said commercial director Flanagan. "Whether this trend continues in future seasons remains to be seen." — Reuters

HIGUAIN HITS 22ND GOAL AS NAPOLI RECLAIM TOP SPOT

MILAN: Gonzalo Higuain hit his 22nd goal in as many Serie A games to keep his record-chasing quest intact yesterday as Napoli reclaimed top spot with a 5-1 drubbing of Empoli. Champions Juventus had earlier gone top with a 4-0 rout of Chievo in Verona where Alvaro Morata hit a brace to take his goals tally to four this week after netting twice in a 3-0 Cup semi-final win over Inter Milan. But Napoli, bidding for their first league crown since Diego Maradona's heyday at the club in 1990, restored their two-point advantage to further underline their 'scudetto' credentials.

Napoli now sit top on 50 points, two ahead of Juventus and eight in front of Fiorentina after La Viola failed to break down Genoa in a scoreless stalemate at the Luigi Ferraris.

It means Inter Milan, one point behind Paulo Sousa's men in fourth, can move up to third place with a win away to AC Milan in the city derby at the San Siro in yesterday's late fixture.

"We started well, but it wasn't easy to come back from their opener because from their last seven away games Empoli have won four times," Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri told media afterwards.

"We went on to fix things in the end because the lads had the right attitude. But now we have to look to Wednesday when we play Lazio, and hopefully we'll get it right again." As Napoli target a first title in 26 years, Higuain is chasing Serie A's all-time record of 35 goals scored in a single, 20-team league season, set by AC Milan forward Gunnar Nordahl in 1950.

With 16 games remaining, the Argentinian international is not slowing down although he was replaced halfway during the second half when he received treatment after landing heavily from a mid-air clash. After Empoli keeper Lukasz Skorupski parried an early chance from Higuain, the San Paolo was stunned into silence when Leandro Paredes's

free kick took a wicked deflection to leave Reina wrong-footed in the Napoli net on the half hour. But the goal served only to spur Napoli into life and when Insigne burst down the left minutes later, the diminutive playmaker had time to pick out Higuain, who nodded past Skorupski from close range. Napoli won a free kick four minutes later and Insigne stepped up to curl the ball past Skorupski to give the hosts a 37th minute lead, taking his own personal tally in the league to 10.

The half ended on a sour note after Elseid Hysaj and Allan were both cautioned for fouls, ruling them out of the midweek clash with Lazio. But Napoli were unstoppable after the interval, Jose Callejon playing a role in all three goals on his way to a personal double. Napoli stretched their lead to 3-1 seven minutes after the restart when Michele Camporese deflected Callejon's delivery past Skorupski at the keeper's near post.

The two-goal cushion was enough for Sarri, who spent two years at Empoli prior to succeeding Rafael Benitez at Napoli, to replace Higuain with Manolo Gabbiadini 20 minutes from the end, with Dries Mertens replacing Insigne three minutes later.

It proved a judicious move, Mertens turning provider with a great curling delivery for Callejon to poke the ball past Skorupski at his back post seven minutes from time.

With two minutes on the clock, Callejon struck his second when the ball fell kindly and his angled strike sneaked inside the near post. Earlier, Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri was quick to play down his side's title hopes despite equalling a club record of 12 consecutive wins. "There are still 16 games left and lots of points to play for so it's far from over," Allegri told Sky Sport.

"It's the players who go out there and play, they win the games and I'm only there to lend a hand. To me, records don't matter. What's the point of winning 20 in a row if it doesn't win you the title." — AFP



NAPLES: Napoli's Argentinian-French forward Gonzalo Higuain kicks the ball during the Italian Serie A football match SSC Napoli vs Empoli FC yesterday at the San Paolo stadium in Naples. — AFP

SPORTING GIJON PILE MISERY ON VALENCIA

MADRID: Gary Neville's terrible La Liga run since taking charge of Valencia continued as Los Che lost 1-0 to Sporting Gijon yesterday, the team's first home defeat since November 2014.

Antonio Sanabria's penalty five minutes into the second-half handed Sporting their first away win since October as Valencia paid for missing a host of clear-cut chances, most notably through captain Alvaro Negredo.

Neville has now not won in eight league games since taking charge last month.

Victory moves Sporting out of the relegation zone up to 16th with Valencia now just

six points off the drop zone in 12th.

Boosted by their progression to the semi-finals of the Copa del Rey in midweek, Valencia had started brightly as Sofiane Feghouli blasted over from a good position before Andre Gomes's powerful drive was parried by Ivan Cuellar.

However, they were made to pay for one moment of rash indiscipline as Danilo clipped Jony as he broke into the box and Sanabria converted the resulting penalty for his 10th goal of the season. Australian international Matt Ryan then made a fine save from Jony's free-kick to keep Valencia in the game. — AFP



CARLISLE: Everton's Argentinian defender Ramiro Funes Mori (R) challenges Carlisle United's English striker Alex Gilliead (L) during the English FA Cup fourth round football match between Carlisle United and Everton at Brunton Park, in Carlisle, north west England, yesterday. — AFP

EVERTON SPOIL CARLISLE'S BIG DAY IN THE FA CUP

CARLISLE: Carlisle United had dreamed of an FA Cup fairytale back at their Brunton Park home that had been so heavily damaged in December's floods, but Everton ruined the fourth tier side's big day with a comprehensive 3-0 win in the fourth round yesterday.

It was an emotional occasion for Carlisle following the devastation wrought by Storm Desmond which had left much of the Cumbrian city deluged, including the football stadium, where water rose as high as the crossbars.

Following a major relief effort, with players, management and staff helping with the clean-up as the club were forced to play away from home, Carlisle had returned to League Two action at a newly-rebuilt Brunton Park last week. Still, everyone's thoughts remained on their money-spinning, glamour Cup tie against five-time winners Everton, seeking their first final success in the old competition since 1995. Yet their hopes of achieving an upset befitting of the occasion in front of a sold-out crowd were doused within two minutes as Aaron Lennon swept down the right wing and crossed low for Arouna Kone to tap home the simplest of goals. When the rampant Lennon cut past a static defender to fire home a second after 14 minutes, a long afternoon looked in prospect for the home side but Carlisle held out until a brilliant 65th minute Ross Barkley strike from the edge of the penalty area made it 3-0.

Everton manager Roberto Martinez told BT Sport afterwards: "We knew that you can allow these games to be very complicated. I thought we dealt with it with an incredible professionalism."

The start of the game allowed us to control the rest of it. "The fourth round of the FA Cup always brings excitement. I thought we played well and controlled the threat that Carlisle can bring."

Everton missed out on the chance of a Wembley final in the League Cup when they lost the second leg of their semi-final to Manchester City on Wednesday, going out 4-3 on aggregate, but Lennon is eyeing some FA Cup glory.

"We knew we had to get back to winning ways and fast. We had to get over Wednesday's disappointment and we are in the draw later today," he said.

The fourth round was being completed later with Chelsea playing at Championship side (second tier) Milton Keynes Dons ahead of the fifth round draw yesterday evening. — Reuters

JUVE THUMP CHIEVO FOR 12TH LEAGUE WIN IN A ROW

MILAN: Juventus clocked up their 12th successive Serie A win yesterday when they swept aside Chievo 4-0 away in a hopelessly one-sided encounter. Alvaro Morata set Juventus on their way with two first-half goals before Alex Sandro and inspirational midfielder Paul Pogba added two more in the second half. The win left Juventus, who are aiming for a fifth successive title, with 48 points from 22 games, one ahead of Napoli who began the weekend as leaders and are at home to Empoli later on Sunday (1400 GMT).

It also equalled their record number of consecutive league wins in a single season. Juventus needed only six minutes to take the lead when Stephan Lichtsteiner's low cross found Morata at the far post and the Spaniard tapped in from close range. Morata, who scored twice in the Wednesday's 3-0 Italian Cup win over Inter Milan, took his tally to four

in a week with another tap-in six minutes before the break after Paulo Dybala and Sami Khedira combined to carve open the Chievo defence. Juve's spluttering start to the season, which included a 1-1 draw at home to Chievo, was a distant memory as they continued to dominate the game after the break.

They added a third in the 61st minute when Lichtsteiner played a one-two with Dybala and fed the ball to Pogba who in turn played it into the path of Alex Sandro, who rifled it home emphatically.

Pogba completed the rout when he collected the ball just outside the area, weaved his way past two defenders and side-footed a low shot past exasperated Chievo goalkeeper Albano Bizzarri. The Frenchman was denied a second goal by the crossbar in stoppage time after a stunning piece of control to bring down a long pass out of defence. — Reuters



VERONA: Juventus' team jump to celebrate at the end of the Serie A football match between Chievo Verona and Juventus at Bentegodi Stadium in Verona yesterday. — AFP

Sports

Brit Kennagh wins Australian road race

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India clinch thriller to complete sweep over Aussies



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THAI OWNERS CHASE GLORY AFTER LEICESTER'S REMARKABLE RUN Page 19



MELBOURNE: This combo of file photos shows Serbia's Novak Djokovic kissing the Norman Brookes Trophy after his six victories — (top L to R) 2008, 2011, 2012 and (bottom L to R) 2013, 2015 and yesterday — in the men's singles finals at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne. Djokovic beat Andy Murray in straight sets to win his sixth Australian Open title yesterday. — AFP

DJOKOVIC THRASHES MURRAY FOR SIXTH AUSSIE OPEN TITLE

MELBOURNE: World number one Novak Djokovic hammered a misfiring Andy Murray in straight sets to win a record-equalling sixth Australian Open title and strengthen his grip on men's tennis yesterday.

The Serbian world number one swept to a 6-1, 7-5, 7-6 (7/3) victory in two hours, 53 minutes to hand Murray his fifth defeat in the Melbourne Park final.

Djokovic equalled the tally of Australia's Roy Emerson, who won the tournament six times between 1961 and 1967, an achievement that had gone unmatched in the 49 years since. It was also Djokovic's 11th Grand Slam title, putting him in equal fifth place on the all-time list alongside Rod Laver and Bjorn Borg, behind leader Roger Federer's 17.

"It's an incredible feeling, especially because of the fact that I managed to make history tonight and equal Roy Emerson's record of six Australian Opens," Djokovic said. "This trophy is even more unique for me tonight and when you have an opportunity to make history it adds to the motivation and incentive before you come out on the court."

Djokovic underlined his status as the dominant force in Melbourne, after downing Jo-Wilfried Tsonga to win his first major title in 2008 and beating Rafael Nadal in an epic final in 2012, along with his four wins over Murray in 2011, 2013, 2015 and now 2016.

Djokovic also extended his Grand Slam winning streak to 21 matches. He has not lost a match at the majors since he was defeated by Stan Wawrinka in last year's French Open final at Roland Garros.

While Djokovic was further enhancing his reputation, Murray has the unwanted statistic of becoming only the second man in the post-1968 Open era to lose five Grand Slam finals at any one major.

Ivan Lendl, Murray's former coach, lost five finals at the US Open in 1982-1984 and 1988-1989, before winning at Flushing Meadows in 1985-1987.

MAKING A STATEMENT

Murray had tears in his eyes at the presentation when he thanked his pregnant wife Kim Sears, who is due to give birth to their first child in the coming weeks.

"You've been a legend for the last two weeks. Thank you so much for all of your support and I'll be on the next plane home," he said in a faltering voice.

Djokovic won 24 more points than Murray, 123-99, in the final, while Murray made a total of 65 unforced errors-including 28 off his forehand and 29 off his backhand.

Djokovic faced a break point in his opening service game but then went on a blazing run, breaking Murray's serve twice to claim the opening set in 30 minutes.

Murray survived four break points to hold serve in a marathon 12-minute third game as he tried to stay in the second set against the pressing Serb.

But Djokovic gained another psychological breakthrough with a service break in the seventh game after Murray overhit a forehand to trail 4-3.

Fighting Murray broke back in the following game with his backhand clipping the baseline, which was confirmed by Djokovic's challenge.

Murray fought off two break points in a fiercely con-

tested ninth game in a war of the attrition between the two long-time rivals, who have known each other since their junior days.

But Djokovic fought back from 0-40 down to break Murray's serve for a fourth time, in a game featuring one exhausting 36-shot rally, to lead 6-5 and serve for the second set.

The Serb claimed a two sets to love lead after winning an 80-minute battle for the second set, leaving Murray with it all to do.

Djokovic tightened the noose with another service break in the first game of the final set, with Murray's task looking Herculean to take the final to five sets.

Murray broke back in the sixth game but in the tiebreaker the Scot served two double-faults as Djokovic steamed to five match points, and belted an ace on the third match point to seal the championship.

It was yet another big statement from the peerless Serb against a major rival, after he swamped Rafael Nadal 6-1, 6-2 at Doha and convincingly beat Federer in the Melbourne semi-finals. — AFP

CHELSEA CRUISE IN FA CUP

MILTON KEYNES: A first-half Oscar hat-trick together with Eden Hazard's first goal of the season gave Chelsea a comfortable 5-1 victory at Milton Keynes Dons in the FA Cup yesterday. Chelsea remain undefeated in eight games under interim manager Guus Hiddink and this impressive fourth-round display confirmed the progress that they have made under the Dutchman.

The win ensures that Chelsea remain in contention to repeat the FA Cup success they enjoyed when Hiddink was last in interim charge of the club in 2009.

And the manager had every reason to be satisfied with the way his side eased their way to victory at Stadium MK, albeit against second-tier opposition. Oscar's goals grabbed the attention, but Hazard's penalty, his first goal in 30 appearances for his club, came as a huge relief. Burkina Faso international Bertrand Traore was also on target with his first Chelsea goal. Hiddink signalled his intentions by fielding a strong side, although he did take the opportunity to hand rare starts to left-back Baba Rahman and young midfielder Ruben Loftus-Cheek.

With loan signing Alexandre Pato not eligible to play and both Loic Remy and Radamel Falcao injured, Diego Costa led the line and his work alongside Oscar quickly nixed any chance of an upset.

After a dominant start, Chelsea took a 15th-minute lead courtesy of a defensive mistake. An underhit back-pass by Kyle McFadzean allowed Costa to advance on goal and the striker unselfishly squared the ball for Oscar to finish into an empty net.

It was to MK Dons' credit that they responded positively and drew level six minutes later when Darren Potter's shot took a deflection off Nemanja Matic and looped over the leaping Thibaut Courtois.

However, the gulf in quality between the teams meant it was only a matter of time before Chelsea asserted their superiority, although



MILTON KEYNES: Milton Keynes Dons' Jordan Sponse, left, competes for the ball with Chelsea's Pedro during the English FA Cup fourth round soccer match between Milton Keynes Dons and Chelsea at Stadium mk in Milton Keynes, England, yesterday. — AP

goalkeeper David Martin did his best to hold them at bay, saving well from Hazard before Costa nicked the ball off the toe of Oscar in front of goal. Another chance quickly came Oscar's way and this time the Brazilian made no mistake with a well-placed finish in the 32nd minute. The playmaker, operating on the right on this occasion with Loftus-Cheek filling the central role, completed his hat-trick when he cut in from the left and found the corner of the goal with a well-placed right-foot shot. The home side had offered little resistance and the pattern of the game was maintained after the break when Hazard was tripped by Potter in the 55th minute. Chelsea skipper John Terry intervened to ensure Hazard took the penalty and the Belgium rolled the ball home to his obvious relief. Substitute Traore then completed a routine victory for the visitors when he finished

with a first-time shot after Hazard had chased Cesc Fabregas's pass out to the byline before setting up the Burkina Faso youngster. In the day's other tie, Everton got over their mid-week League Cup elimination against Manchester City by winning 3-0 at fourth-tier Carlisle United courtesy of goals from Arouna Kone, Aaron Lennon and Ross Barkley. But the match was marred by racist abuse directed at Everton's players after Kone's second-minute opener, which prompted referee Lee Mason to ask for a warning message to be read out over the public address system. "I thought it was dealt with in a very good manner," Everton manager Roberto Martinez told BT Sport.

"We agreed to make an announcement. I thought the referee was very good in how he dealt with that. It was just a reaction, something that we don't want to see." —AFP

LEWANDOWSKI NETS TWICE AS BAYERN DOWN HOFFENHEIM

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski netted both goals as leaders Bayern Munich earned a 2-0 win over Hoffenheim yesterday to stay eight points clear in the Bundesliga.

After the league's top scorer Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang had scored twice for Borussia Dortmund to reach 20 league goals on Saturday, Lewandowski is now just behind with 19.

The Poland striker gave Bayern the lead at Munich's Allianz Arena after blasting home Douglas Costa's low cross on 32 minutes.

He doubled his tally with some clinical finishing after a superb through ball from Bayern captain Philipp Lahm on 64 minutes. It could have been three as Chile midfielder Arturo Vidal hit the post. Hoffenheim remain second from bottom as they failed to secure their maiden win over Bayern at the 16th attempt.

There was bad news for Bayern coach Pep Guardiola before kick-off as Javi Martinez dropped out with a knee injury. It forced Guardiola into playing a three-man defence leaving Holger Badstuber as their only fit centre-back with Jerome Boateng and Medhi Benatia currently sidelined.

Their Champions League last 16, first-leg clash at Juventus is just three weeks away with the return leg in Munich on March 16.

Meanwhile, Wolfsburg remain winless in their four games since beating Manchester United in the Champions League after being held to a 1-1 draw at home to Cologne.

Wolfsburg face Belgian side Gent in the away leg of their last-16 tie in Europe on February 17. But Dieter Hecking's side have now lost two and drawn two in their last four games since knocking United out of the Champions League with a 3-2 win last December.

The hosts went ahead when right-winger Vieirinha fired in a cross, which found Julian Draxler unmarked for the Germany international to fire home on 67 minutes. Cologne equalised eight minutes later when Anthony Modeste curled his shot around Wolves' keeper Diego Benaglio. The result left Wolfsburg seventh-outside the European places for next season and Cologne ninth.

On Saturday, Dortmund enjoyed a 2-0 win over Ingolstadt to go ten points clear of third-placed Hertha Berlin. Dortmund could consider themselves fortunate though as captain Mats Hummels escaped a red card for a foul in the area.

He then scored a second-half own-goal, which the referee refused to award to Ingolstadt after a foul in the build-up, before Aubameyang struck twice.

Hertha threw away a 2-0 lead as hosts Werder Bremen roared back with three goals in ten second-half minutes to claim a point in a 3-3 draw.

Ivory Coast veteran Salomon Kalou struck Berlin's third goal to leave Hertha 3-1 up in Bremen with 20 minutes left. Then Bremen veteran Claudio Pizarro netted a penalty before defender Santiago Garcia fired in a shot which was later credited to Pizarro, who nudged the ball over the line to level the scores.

Bayer Leverkusen climbed to fourth with a 3-0 win at Hanover 96, who dropped to the bottom, with Javier Hernandez scoring twice in the romp. — AFP

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Innovative technology driving Nissan's growth in Middle East

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Al-Nahedh outlines KFH policy in an interview

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NBK 'THE MOST VALUABLE BANKING BRAND IN KUWAIT'

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TOKYO: People walk on a pedestrian crossing at a shopping street of Ginza area in Tokyo. Japan's core inflation rate slipped to 0.5 percent in 2015, as low oil prices hindered efforts by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to spur growth by pushing prices higher, according to data released on Friday. — AP

GULF BANK NET PROFIT RISES 10% TO KD 39M 4 FILS PER SHARE CASH DIVIDEND RECOMMENDED

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank yesterday announced an operating profit before provisions of KD 108 million for the year ended, 31 December 2015, and a net profit at KD 39 million, which is a 10 percent increase over 2014. At the end of December 2015, the Bank's total assets were KD 5,438 million. The growth in deposits was 5 percent, increasing the total deposits at the bank to KD 4,563 million. Total shareholders' equity increased by 5 percent to KD 538 million.

Loan quality remains strong, reflecting the Bank's prudent underwriting policies and procedures. Non-performing loans (NPLs) declined from 3.2 percent at the end of 2014 to 2.7 percent at the end of 2015 and coverage (collaterals and provisions) on NPLs improved to 348 percent.

Commenting on the results, Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Gulf Bank's Chairman said: "These past several years have marked the culmination of the journey to transform Gulf Bank with 2015 decisively demonstrating the Bank has moved onto a different path of growth and innovation. We have seen a 10 percent growth in profits; strengthened our balance sheet; diversified our portfolio to reduce concentrations in risk sectors; recorded net double digit growth in net profit for two straight years; coverage (collateral and provisions) on NPLs reached 348 percent; and our retail sector continues to achieve strong growth. Furthermore, the Bank closes the year with an "A" rating from the three leading credit agencies, having received upgrades from both Moody's and Standard & Poor's. All of these indicators are positive and we will be proposing cash dividends for our shareholders, of 4 fils per share, at our upcoming Annual General Meeting."

Alghanim continued: "I am excited by the transformation of the bank and looking forward to continuing to innovate and grow in new areas, particularly with new technologies. Furthermore, our qualitative indicators on client satisfaction are up, which is a leading marker for even better future results. During 2016, we are reinforcing our commitment to attract, develop, and retain the best talent; to that end, our methods, systems and practices will be revamped to world-class standards. I would like to thank the Board of Directors, our Shareholders, the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority, and our staff for their support throughout the year."

César Gonzalez-Bueno, Gulf Bank's CEO said: "The Bank's strategic direction, set by the Chairman and the Board, was successfully implemented during 2015. There was net growth in Wholesale, despite the purposeful



Omar Alghanim, Chairman



Gulf Bank CEO César Gonzalez-Bueno

decrease in high-risk sectors and clients. In Retail, we had double-digit growth in consumer loans and a 4 percent growth in our current and savings accounts, both of which have been faster than market growth. Following the revamp of two of our customer segments, the Kuwaiti salary proposition increased by 12 percent and the youth/student focused Red increased by 52 percent. In terms of new products, we launched our new loyalty program Gulf Rewards which is the fastest and most rewarding loyalty program in Kuwait. It includes Gulf Points for flights and hotels redemptions and 'Entertainer', Kuwait's first geo-locator mobile application that gives customers exclusive offers in Kuwait, UAE, and London. I am encouraged by our results and product launches in 2015, we will carry this momentum of transformation and healthy growth into 2016. In Wholesale, new products and enhanced services will soon hit the market and in Retail, major improvements in products and channels are about to be launched."

Gulf Bank now rated "A" by leading rating agencies

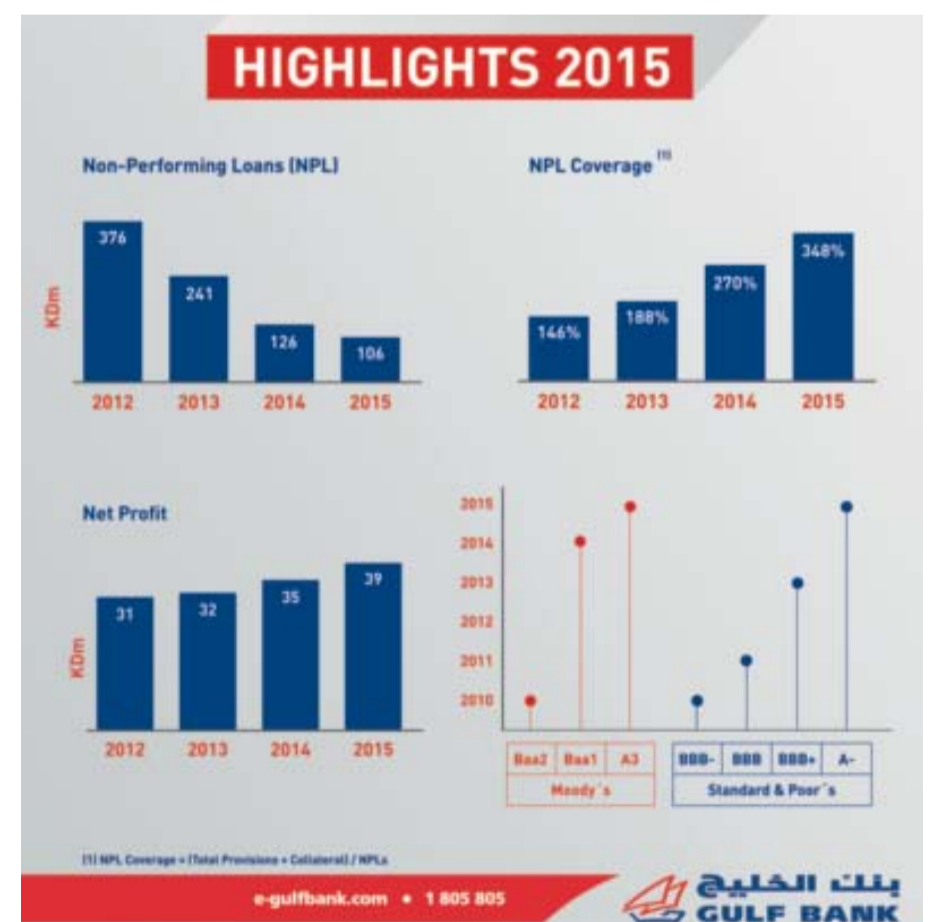
The Bank closes the year with three "A" ratings from the leading international credit rating agencies. These upgrades in ratings are significant as they come in an era of declining oil prices and a weakening global economy. In June 2015, the Bank received a rating upgrade from Standard & Poor's to A- from BBB+. In November, the Bank received a rating upgrade

from Moody's to A3 from Baa1. Throughout 2015, the Bank maintained its A+ rating from Fitch Ratings. These agencies have noted the work the Bank has completed a wide restructuring of its portfolio and working out significant volumes of impaired loans. These ratings also reflect the Bank's strict risk standards, along with its resilient core profitability, and adequacy of its capital buffers. The agencies also affirmed the Bank's asset quality, capitalization, solid-revenue-generating capacity, and sound risk-management systems and practices.

Social responsibility focuses on health/fitness and youth

The Bank continues to dedicate itself to sponsorships and events that benefit the community at-large. The Bank successfully concluded the first Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, Kuwait's first and only full road race to be internationally accredited by the world's governing body for the sport of track and field athletics. The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon was a walking and running event (5km, 10km, 21km, and 42km) and the three longer distance categories now appear in the international calendar of races and serve as qualifying races for other world marathons. The event was well received as they were 2,400 participants who came from over 74 countries.

The Bank was a lead sponsor of INJAZ-Kuwait, and will continue its strategic partnership to help deliver Arabic and English lan-



guage education programs on entrepreneurial and leaderships skills to help youth build successful careers. The Bank was also a platinum sponsor of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students conference in the USA (NUKS-USA), where it held several skills and career workshops. Additionally, it also sponsored the Tmkeen Youth Empowerment Symposium, a Kuwaiti initiative delivered by youth to the youth in Kuwait. Furthermore, the Bank also sponsored the Jahazeen 2 training and development program in cooperation with Kuwait's Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP).

Awards

During 2015, the bank growth and soundness was strongly acknowledged by the financial services and banking industry with numerous prestigious awards. In 2015, the Bank won over 20 awards spread over different sectors of its work. These awards provide a benchmark

for the financial sector, recognizing the most successful and innovative banking solutions. With certain awards they are global market comparisons, and in other instances the awards are country specific, so that the competition is within the same market and regulatory framework.

The awards include "Best Retail Bank in Kuwait" by The Asian Banker; "Best Retail Bank in Kuwait" and "Best Retail Customer Service Bank in Kuwait" from International Finance Magazine (IFM); "Best Commercial Bank" and "Best Innovation in Retail Banking" from International Banker; and "Best Customer Experience Overall Branch" and "Best Branch Experience" from Ethos Integrated Solutions; "Best Car Loan" and "Best Customer Service (Retail)" from Banker Middle East; "Best Cash Management Bank in Kuwait" by The Asian Banker; and "Best Customer Service (Retail)", "Best Car Loan", as well as 'Best Cash Management' awards from Banker Middle East Kuwait Product Awards 2015.

OIL PRICES MAY RISE UP TO \$50PB IN Q1: ANALYST

UNSTABLE OIL PRICES HAUNTED KSE IN JANUARY

LONDON: Oil prices could rise between \$40-50 per barrel by the end of the first quarter of this year, Kamel Al-Harami, an oil analyst said. He attributed the rise in oil prices that reached \$34.15 pb on Friday to Russia's positive stance seeking to consult with key oil producers across the globe including OPEC member states in this regard. Russian Minister of Energy announced on Thursday that his country is ready for participating in the coming OPEC meeting due in February, welcoming consultations on the possibility of cutting output by five percent in order to address the decline in oil prices.

Understanding between Russia and Saudi Arabia, which is expected to be developed clearly in the coming period, will have a positive impact on oil prices, Al-Harami told KUNA in an interview, expecting that oil prices will rise by the end of first quarter of this year to \$40pb.

Al-Harami defended the decision taken by Saudi Arabia and all GCC member states for not

cutting oil production, saying "the Gulf stance was clear since November, 2014, which called for coordination among OPEC and non-OPEC producers to decrease production so as to stop the continued low prices." He noted that surplus production of all oil producing countries, in particular non-OPEC countries like Russia, led to a decline in oil prices.

Oil markets need coordination between OPEC and non-OPEC producers, mainly Russia, to maintain prices between \$40-50 pb, he said.

He stressed the necessity of cooperation among all oil producing countries to address cheap oil, including shale oil, offshore oil and oil from Siberia, which are excavated at high prices.

He affirmed that oil prices will not rise to \$100 pb during the next decade for many causes, mainly a slowdown in global growth and economic problems facing Europe. He urged Russia, as a major oil producer, to work with Saudi Arabia so as to find a possibility to cut production to help all producers obtain satis-

factory prices. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will visit UAE and Oman in the beginning of February to discuss some issues, including the situation of oil markets.

Market impacted

Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) in January was drastically affected with control of companies with cheap shares over performance, fluctuation in oil prices and expectation of data of companies in the last quarter of 2015, said two Kuwaiti analysts. Selling pressures were present in all sessions during January, negatively affecting the sectors' indicators, the analysts told KUNA on Sunday, in two separate interviews. Pressures the market suffered from during January's trading were caused by reluctance of many dealers to get into selling orders so as to avoid losses, Mohammad Al-Tarrah said, adding as a result, the price index went down to 5,000 points in some sessions.

Many managers of financial portfolios turned to shares, below 50 fils, as they had

attractive prices and had become an opportunity for all that may not be provided next month, when companies would announce their financial results in the last quarter of last year, he said.

On his part, Hamad Al-Hajri, said small dealers will follow up in February on movement of major groups to imitate them in a bid to compensate some losses in the last quarter of last year, due to decline in oil prices. Phycology of many dealers controls their decisions in the market, he said, urging key investment groups to support performance, instead of helping their companies make gains.

KSE ended trading yesterday in the green zone. The price index was up by 104.13 points to reach 5,114.52 points, the weighted index also went up by 8.56 points to stand at 353.43 points, as well as the KXS 15 which increased by 20.12 points, to read 829.8 points. Trade value was KD 25.3 million while the volume was at 286 million shares, done through 6,433 deals. — KUNA

News

in brief

US dollar up against Kuwait dinar at 0.303

KUWAIT: The exchange rate of the US dollar against the Kuwaiti dinar rose yesterday exchanging at KD 0.303, the euro was at KD 0.328 compared to the exchange rates for last Thursday, said a statement by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). According to the CBK, the exchange rate of the Sterling pound was stable at KD 0.431 while the Swiss franc was at KD 0.296. Exchange rate of the Japanese Yen remained the same at KD 0.002.

Al-Anwar board approves Falcon Insurance stake sale

DUBAI: Oman's Al Anwar Holding said yesterday its board had approved a proposal to sell a stake in its affiliate Falcon Insurance for 1.2 times book value. The transaction, which the diversified holding company said on Jan. 13 had been proposed by an "interested party" through Oman Arab Bank, is subject to the completion of due diligence and regulatory approvals, according to a source filing. Al Anwar, which holds 51 percent of Falcon Insurance, had said in June that it was planning an initial public offer of shares in the insurer. Yesterday's statement did not make clear whether Al Anwar would sell its entire stake or only part of it, or who the buyer would be. Falcon Insurance was one of five companies due to list on the Oman stock exchange in 2016, the head of the market regulator was quoted as saying by a local newspaper earlier this month.

Dana Gas pipeline rupture hits Khor Mor plant

DUBAI: United Arab Emirates-based Dana Gas said on Sunday that a gas pipeline between power plants in the Kurdistan region of Iraq had ruptured, interrupting supply from its Khor Mor gas plant. The Jan 29 rupture between the Chemchemal and Erbil power stations meant the Khor Mor plant was offline for a few hours, and Chemchemal was operating at around 50 percent of its production capacity, Dana Gas said in a filing to the Abu Dhabi stock market. No injuries were reported because of the incident and repair work was underway, with a target of restoring full production levels at Khor Mor within one week, the statement added. The pipeline, which supplies gas used to generate around half the electricity in Iraq's Kurdistan region, was blown up on Friday, knocking out power, a police chief and electricity official told Reuters at the time.

Egyptian pound stays steady at forex sale

CAIRO: The Egyptian pound held steady against the dollar at an official foreign currency auction yesterday but strengthened on the black market. Egypt, which depends on imports for its food and energy, is facing a foreign currency crisis and authorities are under increasing pressure to devalue the pound. But the central bank surprised markets when it strengthened the pound by 20 piasters in November and has held it steady ever since. The central bank sold \$39.1 million at a cut-off price of 7.7301 pounds to the dollar yesterday, unchanged from the previous auction. The official rate is still far stronger than the black market rate which, strengthened to around 8.75 from 8.78 on Thursday. To help relieve a dollar shortage that has seen imports of essential goods piling up at ports, the central bank on Tuesday raised the cap on foreign currency deposits at banks fivefold to \$250,000.

CHINA WORRIES PUSH JAPAN INTO NEGATIVE INTEREST RATES

By Hayder Tawfik

KUWAIT: The bank of Japan surprised the global financial markets by taking interest rates into negative territories. The official rate now stands at minus -0.1 percent. The surprise action was so powerful that it immediately led to a surge in global equity and bond markets and a weakness of 2 percent in the Japanese yen against the US dollar. It seems that most central banks around the world are worried about what is happening in China and mostly worried about the Chinese central bank devaluing the Yuan. Some are talking about a global economic slowdown in the coming months. Even the US economy is showing signs of fatigue. US gross domestic product for the last quarter of 2015 has slowed down sharply to an annualized rate of just 0.7 percent, as tumbling oil prices and weak exports mostly hit by surging dollar held back economic growth.

The surprise action by the bank of Japan proves the point that global inflation is no longer a threat and the risk of global deflation is a big risk. The main global deflationary risk could come from China. China is very good at exporting cheap goods and for them exporting deflation through even cheaper exports is not a problem. Also this action by the bank of Japan

could ignite global competitive currency devaluation.

Can Japan succeed in coming out of the deflationary spiral?

Japan will ultimately come out of the vicious deflationary slump only when the Yen is allowed to weaken a lot. One of the main external cause of Japanese deflation has been the continues foreign direct investment in China. Domestically Japan has an excess of domestic supply capacity that has been another cause of the internal deflation. A devaluation of the Yen is way over due and should lead to a reduction of both sources of deflation and unfortunately will lead to a much bigger problem and that is a global deflation. The Japanese old grave system of savings by the public and the private has to be dismantled if Japan ever needs to get out of the deflationary circles. A devalued Yen will temporarily create inflation and a boom in exports but a deflation will come back if the domestic savings carry on piling up.

Because of the staggering foreign direct investments in China over the past decades and Japanese direct investments throughout the world in particular Japanese producers of exportable goods whose direct investments, driven by the strong yen, are having the most deflationary impact on the

global economy. As long as the Yen stays strong this keeps their domestic operating costs prohibitively high relative to China and other countries in Asia such as Thailand that has attracted billions of dollars of Japanese direct investments. A more important source of a deflationary threat around the world is the overcapacity and excess supply of produced goods. Globally, every economy that relies on manufacturing industry is exporting its excess supply to one another. The global economy needs consumptions rather than productions or lets say inflation. The weakness of the Japanese Yen and the Chinese Yuan has already forced central banks around the world to cut interest rates in the hope of devaluing their currencies. — Rasameel



TOKYO: People walk past in front of Bank of Japan. The Bank of Japan on Friday introduced a negative interest policy for the first time, seeking to shore up a stumbling recovery in the world's third-largest economy. — AP

IRAN AIMS TO BOOST OIL OUTPUT CAPACITY BY 160,000 BPD

DUBAI: Iran aims to boost its crude oil production capacity by 160,000 barrels per day following the completion of expansion projects at its North Azadegan and Yadavaran oilfields, a senior Iranian oil official was quoted as saying. The two oilfields are both operational and ready to be officially inaugurated after the Feb. 26 parliamentary elections, Abdolreza Haji-Hosseinejad was cited as saying by Iran's oil ministry news agency Shana on Saturday. Haji-Hosseinejad is head of Iran's Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC).

North Azadegan can produce 75,000 bpd and Yadavaran 85,000 bpd, he said. The gas section of Yadavaran oil field is waiting for LNG facilities to become productive, he added. China's Sinopec and China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC)

started developing the two fields, both located in south-western Iran, but Iran completed the work due to international sanctions on Tehran, the official said. Iran terminated CNPC contract to develop the Azadegan oilfield in 2014 after the Chinese energy giant ignored repeated appeals to continue working on it. Yadavaran has reserves of 31 billion barrels of light and heavy crude oil while North Azadegan has a 5.7 billion barrels of crude reserves. Iran also expects crude production at its North Yaran oil field to reach 30,000 bpd by March 2017, the end of the next Iranian year, while South Azadegan will reach a production capacity of 60,000 bpd around the same date, Haji-Hosseinejad said, according to Shana. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.573
Indian Rupees	4.494
Pakistani Rupees	2.896
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.115
Nepali Rupees	2.815
Singapore Dollar	213.530
Hongkong Dollar	38.973
Bangladesh Taka	3.871
Philippine Peso	6.334
Thai Baht	8.469

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.070
Qatari Riyal	83.510
Omani Riyal	789.631
Bahraini Dinar	807.360
UAE Dirham	82.770

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	38.300
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.872
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.419
Tunisian Dinar	149.170
Jordanian Dinar	428.230
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.026
Syrian Lira	2.167
Morocco Dirham	31.005

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	303.850
Euro	331.500
Sterling Pound	434.050
Canadian dollar	213.080
Turkish lira	100.550
Swiss Franc	301.140
Australian Dollar	213.000
US Dollar Buying	302.650

GOLD	
20 Gram	224.370
10 Gram	115.110
5 Gram	58.400

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

CURRENCIES	TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000
Australian Dollar	202.30
Canadian Dollar	218.22
Swiss Franc	304.94
Euro	332.67
US Dollar	304.45
Sterling Pound	437.40
Japanese Yen	2.61
Bangladesh Taka	3.881
Indian Rupee	4.504
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.118
Nepali Rupee	2.813
Pakistani Rupee	2.898
UAE Dirhams	0.08285
Bahraini Dinar	0.8091
Egyptian Pound	0.03878
Jordanian Dinar	0.4330
Omani Riyal	0.7906
Qatari Riyal	0.08394
Saudi Riyal	0.08115

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.350
Canadian Dollar	217.315
Sterling Pound	436.095
Euro	330.075
Swiss Frank	310.175
Bahrain Dinar	805.175
UAE Dirhams	83.105
Qatari Riyals	84.320

Saudi Riyals	81.840
Jordanian Dinar	428.735
Egyptian Pound	38.757
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.119
Indian Rupees	4.495
Pakistani Rupees	2.897
Bangladesh Taka	3.871
Philippines Peso	6.361
Cyprus pound	579.695
Kenyan Shilling	3.555
Syrian Pound	2.380
Nepalese Rupees	3.805
Malaysian Ringgit	72.045
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.605
Thai Bhat	9.425
Turkish Lira	101.620

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.425443	0.434443
Czech Korune	0.004168	0.016168
Danish Krone	0.040063	0.045063
Euro	0.323887	0.331887
Norwegian Krone	0.030599	0.035799
Romanian Leu	0.072597	0.072597
Slovakia	0.009074	0.019074
Swedish Krona	0.031361	0.036361
Swiss Franc	0.293082	0.303282
Turkish Lira	0.095588	0.105888
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.202780	0.214280
New Zealand Dollar	0.189744	0.199244
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.207171	0.215671
US Dollars	0.299750	0.304250

US Dollars Mint	0.300250	0.304250
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003517	0.004117
Chinese Yuan	0.044712	0.048212
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036896	0.039646
Indian Rupee	0.004217	0.004607
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002487	0.002667
Kenyan Shilling	0.002963	0.002963
Korean Won	0.000242	0.000257
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067162	0.073162
Nepalese Rupee	0.002881	0.003051
Pakistan Rupee	0.002589	0.002869
Philippine Peso	0.006265	0.006545
Sierra Leone	0.000070	0.000076
Singapore Dollar	0.208993	0.214993
South African Rand	0.012275	0.020775
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001762	0.002342
Taiwan	0.008916	0.009096
Thai Baht	0.008134	0.008684

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.799079	0.807079
Egyptian Pound	0.035399	0.039735
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260
Jordanian Dinar	0.424564	0.432064
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021497	0.045497
Nigerian Naira	0.001255	0.001890
Omani Riyal	0.7828900	0.788480
Qatar Riyal	0.082749	0.083962
Saudi Riyal	0.080140	0.081090
Syrian Pound	0.001288	0.001508
Tunisian Dinar	0.146009	0.154009
Turkish Lira	0.095588	0.105888
UAE Dirhams	0.081746	0.082895
Yemeni Riyal	0.001373	0.001453



MIAMI: A Chevron sign in Miami. Chevron Corp reported financial earnings on Friday. —AP

NIGERIA FACES CURRENCY WOES IN WAKE OF OIL PRICE PLUNGE

Lagos: Onele Vincent and his colleagues are fed up with the rising cost of living. So they decided to do something about it and led a noisy protest at a top Lagos hotel where they work. "Things are more expensive, rent is high, food is high," Vincent told AFP last week in the lobby of the Southern Sun hotel, a favourite of the monied elite, politicians and expatriates. "Everything has increased and yet the staff salary has remained the same." Vincent and the other hotel workers are far from lone voices in Nigeria, where many are feeling the pain as Africa's biggest oil producer struggles to adapt to the record lows of global oil prices and its naira currency is under devaluation pressure.

Daily newspaper headlines warn of "Hard times ahead", while many billboards in the commercial hub of Lagos stand stark white, just blank signs, an indication that companies are trimming costs. Even high fliers are taking a hit. Importers of French wine complain that demand has dried up. Luxury car dealers and real estate agents say business has dwindled.

Africa's leading economy is projected to have grown by 3.0 percent in 2015, its slowest pace in over a decade, according to an International Monetary Fund report in January. Unlike Norway, which invested hundreds of billions of dollars of its oil money into stocks, bonds and real estate, Nigeria spent its riches when times were good. Now that crude prices have slumped more than two-thirds since \$100 per barrel in mid-2014, Nigeria is seised.

Dollar reserves currently stand at a low of \$28 billion — \$20 billion less than in April 2013. There is only enough for five months of imports for a country heavily dependent on foreign goods.

'Lack of direction'

While the huge drop in oil prices is a major headache for Nigeria, analysts say it is the government's response that is the biggest cause for concern. The central bank governor, Godwin Emefiele, on Tuesday dismissed calls to devalue the naira in his monetary policy committee statement.

Instead he chose to continue propping up the currency at 197-199 naira to the dollar and maintain foreign-exchange restrictions. As a result, the naira on the black market is hovering around a record low of 305, fuelling complaints from domestic and foreign businesses who can't access dollars needed for imports.

With little domestic manufacturing and years of under-investment, mismanagement and corruption in the oil sector, Nigeria depends on imports for almost everything, from milk and machinery to petroleum products. Jittery investors, fearing the inevitable devaluation of the naira, have held off doing business in the country until there is a clearer monetary policy.

"The situation right now is causing a lot of anxiety and uncertainty because no one knows how to plan for it," said Anna Rosenburg, emerging markets analyst at Frontier Strategy Group. "Everyone is complaining about the lack of direction from the government."

Investment limbo

Attempts to shore up the naira are designed to protect the nation's dollar reserves. But the tight forex controls have led to accusations growth is being strangled in Africa's most populous country. "At this stage, a weaker naira is less important for fostering the resumption of needed international investment flows than the lifting of the foreign exchange restriction," JF Ruhashyankiko, a Goldman Sachs economist, said in an investor note.

Now Nigeria is in limbo, badly needing foreign investment but unable to get any. "If you're not attracting those inflows and you're not generating a surplus from the export of oil, then it's going to be more difficult to sustain foreign exchange reserves where they are," added Razia Khan, an economist at Standard Chartered Bank.

"That could impact on its perceived credit worthiness, which isn't a good thing when Nigeria is thinking of borrowing externally to fund some of its more ambitious infrastructure programmes."

President Muhammadu Buhari last month announced a record six trillion naira (\$30 billion) budget to avoid a recession, planning to pour money into massive road and railway projects.

But the budget is based on an oil price of \$38 per barrel, above the current market price of around \$33, and relies heavily on borrowed money. After Buhari remarked in December that he would consider devaluing the naira, some investors took it as a sign the currency situation would be resolved early in the new year. Yet on Thursday Buhari put those hopes on the back burner, saying on a visit to Kenya he will not have the naira "killed" and is "optimistic" his policies will soon stabilise the economy. —AFP

UAE'S FIRST GULF BANK Q4 NET PROFIT UP 11%

ABU DHABI: First Gulf Bank, the largest lender by market value in the United Arab Emirates, beat estimates yesterday as it reported an 11 percent rise in fourth-quarter profit.

It is the second Abu Dhabi bank to report positive earnings yesterday after Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank posted a 16 percent quarterly profit gain. It had up until now been a broadly disappointing earnings season for the emirate's lenders, with National Bank of Abu Dhabi and Union National Bank reporting falling profits.

FGB made a net profit of 1.72 billion dirhams (\$468.4 million) in the three months ending Dec. 31 compared with 1.55 billion dirhams in the same period a year earlier, it said in a statement. Analysts polled by Reuters had forecast an average net profit for the quarter of 1.46 billion dirhams.

The earnings improvement was largely due

to 681 million dirhams of what the bank called "other operating income", although it did not specify what this derived from. This income helped offset writedowns that had more than doubled year on year to 507 million dirhams, as well as a 6 percent decline in fees and commission income.

Net interest income rose 2 percent to 1.66 billion dirhams. For 2015, the bank said net profit was 6.01 billion dirhams, up 6 percent from 2014, which Chief Executive Andre Sayegh said was achieved despite "a challenging operating environment".

In November, FGB cut close to 100 jobs, sources told Reuters, part of an increasing wave of redundancies at Emirati banks as they adjust to deteriorating market conditions caused by lower oil prices after a period of significant expansion. —Reuters

AL-TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF NAJMA ACCOUNT

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al Najma Account draw on 31st January, 2016. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Saqer Al Manaie.

The winners of the Al Najma daily draw are:

Mohammad Den Mohammad Sarwar — KD 7000, Romani Malak Ateyah Malak — KD

7000, Sadeqa Sayed Ibraheem Sayed Hasenny Fard — KD 7000, Abdulaziz Ali AbdulRedha Abbas — KD 7000, Saleh Ghloum Ali Mubarak — KD 7000.

Commercial Bank of Kuwait takes this opportunity to congratulate all lucky winners and also extends appreciation to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for their effective supervision of the draws which were conducted in an orderly and organized manner.

KFH FOCUSES ON INCREASING SUSTAINABLE PROFITABILITY, CORE BANKING BUSINESS

AL-NAHEDH OUTLINES POLICY IN AN INTERVIEW WITH CNBC

KUWAIT: "KFH's policy focuses on increasing sustainable profitability and the core banking business. This has been translated in the 2015 financial results where KFH posted a net profit of KD 145.8 million, an increase by 15.3 percent over last year. The finance portfolio increased by 8.1 percent to KD 8.127 billion, which is a healthy rate. KFH continues its efforts in expanding its banking business at the level of the Group while reducing the profits related to market volatility", said Kuwait Finance House - CEO Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh.

He added in an interview with CNBC Arabiya conducted at KFH headquarters, that KFH's exposure to stocks is minor, indicating that 92 percent of guarantees on offered financing are against monetary or real estate guarantees.

Al-Nahedh explained that KFH's provisions in 2015 reached KD 147 mln, noting that the total provisions of the Group as of the end of 2015 reached KD 668 million, an increase by 1.83 percent over the same period last year. These provisions are distributed as KD 492 million as financing provisions, and KD 176 million as investment provisions.



Al-Nahedh speaking to CNBC

He clarified that the non-performing loans NPLs dropped to 1.98 percent as of end 2015 from 2.46 percent in 2014. They dropped to 3 percent from 3.9 percent for the Group. The coverage of NPLs reached 114 percent. These num-

bers puts KFH on the right track. KFH is continuing its prudent policy in setting aside provisions against NPLs, noting that the bank had already set aside provisions against all its NPLs.

Furthermore, capital adequacy ratio (CAR) reached 16.67 percent after the distribution of profits to shareholders as 17 percent cash distributions and 10 percent bonus shares. KFH shrank its share in Alafco Aviation Lease and Finance Company to 47 percent from 53 percent, not to mention that the Gulf Investment Corporation entered as a major shareholder in the said company.

Al-Nahedh stated that the fluctuations in oil prices and viewing this commodity as the main source of the economy affect the budget, indicating that the government has taken several steps that contribute in boosting the economy. He calls on further government projects that are considered vital and energize the market. Al-Nahedh voiced hope for the government to issue sukuk or bonds especially that banks enjoy high levels of liquidity which is a chance for them to participate in bridging the budget deficit.

CHINA BANKS' 'SHADOW LOANS' ROSE BY THIRD IN H1 2015

BEIJING: Mid-tier Chinese banks are increasingly using complex instruments to make new loans and restructure existing loans that are then shown as low-risk investments on their balance sheets, masking the scale and risks of their lending to China's slowing economy.

The size of this 'shadow loan' book rose by a third in the first half of 2015 to an estimated \$1.8 trillion, equivalent to 16.5 percent of all commercial loans in China, a UBS analysis shows. For smaller banks, the rate is much faster. This growing practice, which involves financial structures known as Directional Asset Management Plans (DAMPs) or Trust Beneficiary Rights (TBRs), comes at a time when some mid-tier lenders, under pressure from China's slowest economic growth in 25 years, are already delaying the recognition of bad loans.

"These are now the fastest growing assets on the balance sheets of most listed banks, excluding the Big Five, not just in percentage terms but absolute terms," said UBS financial institutions analyst Jason Bedford, a former bank auditor in China who focuses on the issue.

"The concern is that the lack of transparency and mis-categorization of credit assets potentially hide considerable non-performing loans."

To provide a buffer against tough times, banks are required to set aside capital against their credit assets - the riskier the asset, the more capital must be set aside, earning them nothing.

Loans typically carry a 100 percent risk weighting, but these investment products often carry a quarter of that, so banks can keep less money in reserve and lend more.

Banks must also make provision of at least 2.5 percent for their loan books as a prudent estimate of potential defaults, while provisions for these products ranged between just 0.02 and 0.35 percent of the capital value at the main Chinese banks at the end of June, Moody's Investors Service said in a note last month.

At China's mid-tier lender Industrial Bank Co, for example, the volume of investment receivables doubled over the first nine months of 2015 to 1.76 trillion yuan (\$267 billion).

This is equivalent to its entire loan book - and to the total assets in the Philippine banking system, filings showed. Industrial Bank declined to comment for this story.

Investment receivables may include such benign assets as government bonds, but increasingly they include TBRs and DAMPs at

mid-tier lenders. At Evergrowing Bank, investment receivables reached 397 billion yuan in September, surpassing its loan book of 290 billion yuan. The bank said last year practically all of its investment receivables were DAMPs and TBRs.

REGULATOR ON ALERT

China Zhesang Bank, another smaller lender, also saw its investment receivables double over the same period, the bank's prospectus to sell shares in Hong Kong shows. Zhang Changgong, the bank's deputy governor, said banks were increasingly becoming return-seeking asset managers, not mere lenders.

"In the past banks (made loans and) held assets. Now banks manage assets," he said. The rapid growth of investment receivables, from less than \$300 billion in 2012, comes despite a decision in 2014 by China's banking regulator to restrict purchase of TBRs and DAMPs under repurchase agreements in the inter-bank market, in a move to restrict the growth of these assets.

But DAMPs and TBRs soon reappeared on bank balance sheets under the line 'investment receivables'. The China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) is paying close attention to investment receivables,

officials told Reuters.

China Guangfa Bank's Tianjin branch was fined last year for using its own funds to invest in a structured product that was providing \$1.5 billion yuan in financing to a real estate company to avoid loan recognition and proper provisioning, the CBRC said in a note on its website.

The listing of Bank of Jinzhou, another small Chinese lender, nearly derailed last year when it revealed in documents prepared for the share sale that it was exposed to troubled solar company Hanergy Group, primarily through such products.

The bank subsequently sold off the bulk of its risk. To structure these deals, a bank typically engages a friendly trust, securities, or asset management company to set up a financing arrangement for a bank client. The bank then buys the beneficiary rights to the investment product using a special purpose vehicle. Typically, the originating bank assumes all risk should the borrower default.

"If the originating bank does not promise to pay from its own pocket should any default happens, no trust company would agree to collaborate," said a senior executive at a Chinese mid-tier bank, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue. —Reuters

MIDEAST FUNDS SEE RISK OF FURTHER LOSSES IN MARKETS

DUBAI: Many Middle East fund managers expect to start rebuilding their regional equities holdings in the next few months and have become less bearish towards bonds, a monthly Reuters survey shows.

The survey of 14 leading fund managers, conducted over the past 10 days, does not suggest funds are heavily bullish on stocks; many see a risk of further losses as austerity policies, adopted by governments in response to low oil prices, weigh on economies. But the survey does suggest that funds have gone so far underweight on equities that they feel there is little room to continue cutting allocations, and that the next major change in allocations will be to increase them.

Forty-three percent of respondents expect to raise their Middle East equity allocations in the next three months, while 7 percent expect to cut them. That is little different from last month's survey, when 50 percent anticipated increasing equity exposure and 14 percent expected to reduce it.

"Volatility in the international markets increased pressure on oil prices, which dropped to levels below many of the Gulf countries' conservative average crude price assumptions used for their 2016 state budgets," said Mohammed Ali Yasin, managing director at Abu Dhabi's NBAD Securities.

But he added, "We believe the first quarter of 2016 is an opportunity to build a portfolio based on value stocks with low price-to-equity values and high dividend yields."

Sachin Mohindra, portfolio manager at Abu Dhabi's Invest AD, said that while he expected markets to remain weak and volatile over the next quarter, there would be bright spots in some companies that were resilient to the economic downturn.

The survey also shows managers becoming somewhat less bearish on fixed income, after January's global market volatility appeared likely to make the US Federal Reserve more cautious about tightening monetary policy. Fourteen percent of fund managers now expect to reduce their allocations to regional fixed income and 7 percent to increase them, compared to ratios of 36 percent and zero last month.

UAE, QATAR

The United Arab Emirates remains by far the favoured equity market among its peers in the region. Fifty-seven percent of managers expect to increase exposure there and 7 percent to reduce it, compared with 71 percent and zero in December.

Qatar also looks like a major beneficiary of any rebuilding of equities positions. Forty-three percent expect to increase their Qatari allocations, the highest level since February 2014, and 7 percent to reduce them; last month, the figures were 36 percent and 7 percent. —Reuters



CHINA GRAPPLES WITH YUAN CONTRADICTIONS

BEIJING: China is struggling to reconcile its push for economic reforms and a freely traded currency with curbing massive outflows of capital sparked by worries over its slowing economy and a lack of communication is fuelling fear. The thorny problem represents the so-called "impossible trinity", as China's ruling Communist Party seeks to control the exchange rate and monetary policy, while at the same time moving to freer capital flows, analysts said.

Around \$1.0 trillion left China last year, according to Bloomberg Intelligence. In December alone capital outflow from the country was nearly \$160 billion, it said.

The cash haemorrhage reflects growing concern about the economy against a backdrop of volatility in the stock and currency markets, which has led both investors and savers to shed their yuan, also known as the renminbi (RMB).

"The recent flood of capital leaving China has been driven primarily by increased scepticism that the People's Bank (the central bank) will hold to its pledge to keep the renminbi stable," said Mark Williams, chief Asia economist at Capital Economics.

At the recent World Economic Forum in Davos, billionaire investor George Soros told Bloomberg TV that the world's second largest economy, where growth has already slowed to a 25-year low, was heading for more trouble.

"A hard landing is practically unavoidable," he said, pointing to deflation and excessive debt as a reason for China's slowdown.

His remarks angered the Chinese media, which accused him of "declaring war" on the currency.

Soros-whose enormous trades are still blamed in some countries for contributing to the Asian financial crisis of 1997 — in the 1990s led speculators in bets against the Bank of England, which unsuccessfully sought to defend the pound's exchange rate peg.

No policy to devalue

The yuan has retreated against the dollar by 1.3 percent since the start of January, having already slid more than 4.5 percent against the greenback in 2015.

Beijing keeps a grip on currency flows and the yuan can only move up or down against the dollar by two percent daily from a mid-rate set by the People's Bank of China (PBoC), the central bank. But after a surprise devaluation last August—a move intended to bring it closer to its market value according to Beijing—the yuan is being dragged down by the vast outflows of capital.

Chinese citizens are allowed to convert the equivalent of \$50,000 from the domestic currency under an annual quota, though many seek ways to evade the barrier. A popular method is borrowing the quota of other people, such as family members.

When the PBoC in mid-December signalled a change in the way it manages the yuan's value by measuring the unit against a basket of currencies instead of pegging it to the dollar, the move increased the level of anxiety. —AFP

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD RECESSION?

GLOBAL ECONOMY WEEKAHEAD

LONDON: If there were any suggestion that the fears that have gripped stock markets since the start of 2016 were the isolated stuff of paranoid financial investors, that evaporated with Friday's shocking meeting of the Bank of Japan. Before the European Central Bank's own January meeting a week ago, the assumption of many watchers was that the world's big central banks would try their best to reestablish calm by doing little to tweak their current stances.

BoJ's Haruhiko Kuroda, stunning economists by cutting interest rates into negative territory on Friday, have sent the clearest of signals that the global economy is again nearing the brink.

Three of the big US banks - Morgan Stanley, Bank of America and Citi - all warned this week that the risks of a global recession before the end of 2016 were rising.

"We're only one month into the year and two of the major central banks have already surprised mar-

and, even with a recovery this week, oil has reached \$30 a barrel. Yet that all comes just weeks after the US Federal Reserve felt bullish enough about its domestic economy to raise interest rates for the first time in almost a decade. A raft of economic numbers in the first week of February, culminating in next Friday's US jobs numbers, should put more skin on those bones, as may the Bank of England's quarterly inflation report on Thursday.

"Both banks are reacting to economic reality. Growth and inflation are meaningfully undershooting targets and more stimulus is needed to get both higher."

This month trails only marginally behind the post-crisis mess of 2009 as the worst start to a year for US and global stocks in decades; hedge funds are beginning to bet on a large currency devaluation by China;

George Soros - have only added to bets it will move. Beijing has held the yuan steady against the dollar for two weeks and taken a series of steps to stop capital from leaving the country. But it still faces an essential conundrum of how to deflate a huge bubble of excess borrowing and money supply that consumers and companies want to send abroad.

"If the Chinese felt this situation was out of control, they would do more," said Mark Farrington, portfolio manager at hedge fund Macro Currency Group in London.

CRUDELY

The other big floating factor is oil. Oil prices have been helped by some signs that OPEC lynchpin Saudi Arabia and other mainstays of that group of producing countries may be ready to talk more on managing output.

But Russian Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich, sounded a more measured tone at a news briefing in Moscow on Friday. Barclays and other market analysts cast doubt on the chances of a swift rapprochement between producers, whose excess of output over supply has driven the value of some U.S. produced crude grades to near zero.

"There is a vast difference between a meeting to exchange views on the state of the markets and a meeting to agree on a cut," Barclays Head of Energy Commodities Research Michael Cohen wrote on Friday. "We see this as nothing more than an attempt to shift market sentiment, and we do not expect that it will change the physical market imbalance." —Reuters

CHINESE NEW YEAR

The week begins with a bang with PMI sentiment numbers out of China, a major leading indicator and the first one of substance from the world's second biggest economy in almost two weeks.

The turmoil on China's stock markets at the turn of the year was one trigger for the broader global sell-off and Shanghai shares have continued to slide in the past week in contrast to greater stability elsewhere. Beijing will look to the Lunar New Year at the end of the week for some breathing space in its efforts to head off more pressure on the yuan and with it the immediate threat of a round of corporate debt defaults that economists rate at the top of a pile of global financial risks.

A series of official communiques warned speculators off the yuan this week, although pricing suggests that hedge funds - whether or not they include Hungarian financier

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report							Global	
Sunday 31 January 2016								
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low		Volume	286,778,086
Price Index	▲ 104.13	5,114.52	5,010.39	5,115.75	5,010.72		Value (KWD)	25,420,982
Weighted Index	▲ 8.56	353.43	344.87	354.35	345.61		Number of Trades	6,460
KXS 15	▲ 20.12	829.80	809.68	834.93	812.51			

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	114	▲ 0.0
IKARIUS	71	70	25,100	1,757	3	71	▲ 1.0
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	315	▲ 0.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	▲ 0.0
ENERGYH	38.0	34.0	186,100	6,475	11	34.5	▼ -2.0
GPI	42.0	40.0	4,777,232	194,943	123	42.0	▲ 2.5
ABAR	120	100	5,400	545	9	100	▼ -10.0
Oil & Gas	4,993,832	203,719	146	746.49	▲	0.91	
KFOUC	218	218	15,000	3,270	3	218	▲ 0.0
BPOC	450	445	502,000	224,290	17	445	▲ 0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	610	▲ 0.0
ALQURAIN	158	156	250,961	40,365	34	164	▲ 6.0
Basic Materials	767,961	267,945	54	878.75	▲	11.39	
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	380	▲ 0.0
REFRI	310	310	59,920	18,575	7	310	▲ 5.0
CABLE	335	320	126,223	41,346	22	335	▲ 15.0
SHIP	144	140	174,357	24,749	11	142	▲ 2.0
PCEM	1,020	980	10,100	10,002	5	1,020	▲ 30.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	380	▲ 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	57	▲ 0.0
ACICD	280	275	40,000	11,105	11	275	▲ 10.0
GCMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450	▲ 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	132	▲ 0.0
KPAK	340	340	4,000	1,360	1	340	▲ 25.0
KBMMK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0.0
NICBM	222	220	5,011	1,112	2	222	▼ -8.0
EQUIPMENT	56	53	925,567	50,257	43	55	▲ 3.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	▲ 0.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0
SALBOOKH	73	69	332,467	23,680	37	72	▲ 3.0
ADLTY	440	425	5,247,398	2,259,363	163	430	▲ 10.0
EDU	208	208	491	102	1	208	▲ 20.0
CLEANING	38.0	37.0	435,963	16,340	14	38.0	▲ 1.0
CITYGROUP	385	385	7	3	1	385	▲ 5.0
KGL	39.0	38.5	238,000	9,237	12	39.0	▲ 0.5
KPCP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	▲ 0.0
HUMANSOFT	830	750	1,532	1,271	3	830	▲ 60.0
NAFAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	130	▲ 0.0
SAFWAN	310	310	59,890	18,566	4	310	▲ 0.0
GFC	28.5	24.0	502	12	3	28.5	▲ 2.5
MAYADEEN	20.0	18.5	8,983,014	172,619	99	18.5	▲ 1.5
CGC	800	790	7,500	5,975	2	790	▲ 0.0
MTCC	73	70	1,280,247	90,983	39	71	▲ 3.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	▲ 0.0
ALAFCC	190	188	169,436	32,054	8	188	▲ 0.0
MUBARRAD	68	65	1,997,100	132,684	71	65	▲ 1.0
LOGISTICS	53	51	1,247,023	64,628	42	53	▲ 3.0
SCEM	83	83	280,000	23,240	4	83	▲ 1.0
GCEM	71	71	79,277	5,629	3	71	▲ 0.0
QCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	▲ 0.0
FCEM	72	71	29,000	2,063	3	71	▼ -1.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	▲ 0.0
SPEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	88	▲ 0.0
Industrials	21,734,045	3,016,935	611	960.88	▲	21.81	
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	▲ 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	62	▲ 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0
CATTL	126	122	150,613	18,589	6	126	▲ 8.0
DANAH	74	70	407,853	29,080	25	71	▲ 1.0
POULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	▲ 0.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,760	▲ 0.0
Consumer Goods	588,466	47,689	31	1013.68	▲	15.55	
MHC	210	190	279,000	53,145	7	210	▲ 10
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	▲ 0.0
YIACO	138	134	24,650	3,323	2	138	▲ 10
Health Care	303,650	88,468	9	960.27	▲	22.59	
KCIN	980	980	8	8	1	980	▲ 40
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220	▲ 0.0
SULTAN	64	56	587,812	34,707	39	59	▼ -1
CABLETV	25.5	23.0	600	14	2	25.5	▲ 2
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	335	▲ 0
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	194	▲ 0
OLUFAJEL	110	108	10,367	1,126	12	108	▲ 0
MUNTAZAHAT	91	88	432,920	38,568	46	88	▲ 0
JAZEERA	770	760	102,770	78,254	20	770	▲ 10
SOOR	110	106	29,597	3,195	11	110	▲ 2
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	110	▲ 0
ALNAWADI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	▲ 0
ALRAI	138	130	109,500	14,857	15	138	▲ 2
ZIMAH	91	87	1,396,776	125,103	81	91	▲ 1
UFIO	96	96	1	1	1	96	▼ -36
KOUTFOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	560	▲ 0
Mezzan	1,020	970	121,424	122,670	33	1,020	▲ 60
Consumer Services	2,793,775	418,503	261	929.04	▼	-0.81	
ZAIN	355	345	2,101,837	735,451	100	350	▲ 5
DORODO	1,140	1,080	23,304	25,994	19	1,140	▲ 80
HITSTELEG	27.0	26.0	1,440,686	38,331	42	26.5	▲ 1
VVA	990	940	365,836	346,408	257	940	▼ -50
Telecommunications	3,931,665	1,146,164	418	580.95	▼	-6.46	
NBK	730	710	1,650,990	1,182,590	109	720	▲ 20
GBK	216	212	444,178	94,963	25	216	▲ 4
CBK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	520	▲ 0.0
ABK	360	350	229,081	80,579	7	360	▲ 15
ALMUTAHED	460	435	685,672	309,243	41	460	▲ 25
KIB	200	196	1,034,666	205,327	47	198	▲ 2
BURG	355	335	1,794,865	631,759	47	355	▲ 25
KFIN	500	490	15,648,660	7,786,376	420	500	▲ 25
BOUBRYAN	405	400	2,016,300	812,891	89	400	▲ 5
AUB	208	204	800,243	163,914	20	208	▲ 4
ITHMR	34.0	32.5	22,285,345	747,244	283	34.0	▲ 2
WARBANK	174	164	5,043,503	858,984	231	174	▲ 10
Banks	61,633,503	12,873,870	1,319	827.58	▲	27.75	
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	320	▲ 0.0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	780	▲ 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	435	▲ 0.0
WINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	98	▲ 0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	52	▲ 0.0
WETHAQ	31.5	30.0	14,900	453	6	30.0	▼ -1.5
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	▲ 0.0
Insurance	14,800	453	6	1043.28	▼	-5.55	

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOLK	38.0	35.5	883,902	322,625	170	36.0	▲ 0.5
KRE	46.5	45.5	2,019,247	92,934	52	46.5	▲ 2.5
URC	91	91	30	3	1	91	▼ -4.0
NRE	87	86	2,375,801	204,319	94	86	▲ 1.0
SRE	355	355	2,500	888	1	355	▲ 25.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	630	▲ 0.0
AREEC	132	128	70,486	9,262	4	132	▲ 10.0
MASALEH	60	58	1,640	95	2	60	▼ -1.0
ARABREC	25.5	24.5	1,225,572	30,518	34	25.0	▲ 0.0
ERESCO	58	54	507,181				

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY DRIVING NISSAN'S GROWTH IN MIDDLE EAST

Q&A WITH SAMIR CHERFAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NISSAN MIDDLE EAST

Kuwait Times: What are your views on the performance of the automotive sector in the GCC region?



Samir Cherfan, Managing Director of Nissan Middle East

Cherfan: If we look at the overall performance of the automotive sector on a calendar year basis then the GCC market is considered stable. However, we have seen a recent progressive market decline over the last couple of months. When operating in tough market conditions, we need to be more dynamic and make an effort to be closer to the needs of our customers.

At Nissan, we have continued to deliver against our Power 88 brand strategy into our financial year 2015, adding to our constant line-up of models available in the region. As proof of this we have launched the all new Nissan Maxima 2016 and also introduced the performance arm of Nissan in the region - known as NISMO. Alongside the launch of the NISMO brand in the Middle East, we also revealed a world premiere - the Nissan Patrol NISMO.

KT: With low oil prices, UAE fuel deregulation, expected cuts in fuel subsidies in other GCC countries, how do you see the auto sector behaving in 2016?

Cherfan: This year there has been added pressure on the Middle East's GDP due to fluctuations in oil price. However, reports show that GDP growth across GCC region in particular will remain positive with a slight downward trend compared to last year.

At this stage, it is still too early to see any effect of petrol price deregulation in the UAE on the automotive sector. However, this strategic decision should encourage people across the country to consider using more fuel efficient vehicles such as Hybrids.

At Nissan we are believers in supporting sustainable driving technology and offering greater fuel efficiency across all of our models. The All New Nissan Maxima 2016, which was launched recently in the Middle East, is a great example of how innovative technology can provide high performance teamed with being the most fuel efficient car in its segment. Its 3.5-liter VQ-series V6 has been redesigned with more than 60 percent new parts (compared to the previous generation 3.5-liter V6). This revised engine helps it achieve an anticipated 15 percent increase in highway fuel economy to an EPA estimated 30 miles per gallon.

We also recently launched the Pathfinder Hybrid in the UAE, which offers a best-in-class range of 785KM on a single tank and a further efficient fuel consumption of 9.1L/100km.

*Fuel economy based on 2016 EPA fuel economy estimates for 2016 Nissan Maxima. Actual mileage may vary with driving conditions - use for comparison only.

KT: How would you sum up performance of your auto brand in 9M 2015?

Cherfan: The first half of 2015 (April to September) was a successful period this year for Nissan on a global level. We saw net revenue of 5.93 trillion yen, an increase of 15.3 percent versus 5.14 trillion yen a year ago. In terms of operating profit, it was 395 billion yen, up from 261.9 billion yen, a 50.8 percent increase.

Nissan's net income was 485.0 billion yen, an increase of 37.4 percent versus 237 billion yen in the prior year, as for the unit sales count,

we witnessed an increase of 9.5 percent to 7,222,000. To sum it up, the company sold 2.62 million vehicles globally during the period, a 1.3 percent rise year-on-year, and that is something that we are very proud about.

In 2015 Nissan was also named as one of the world's most valuable brands, according to Interbrand, the world-leading brand consultancy. In its Best Global Brands Study 2015, which also named Nissan as the fastest-rising automotive brand, Nissan ranked 49, up from 56 in 2014. The study also valued Nissan's brand at \$9.082 billion, up 19 percent from 2014.

KT: Which was the biggest market in GCC/Middle East, what were the best performing models, and where did you see maximum growth?

Cherfan: Earlier in May 2015, we announced our financial results for our 2014 fiscal year (April 1st to 31st March), which demonstrated that in the UAE, Nissan maintained its strong No 2 position in the sales charts, selling 63,036 units - up by 10 percent versus 2013 and achieving 15.3 percent market share. Nissan's purchase consideration in the UAE has also increased by 46 percent in the past two years, closing the gap with the market leader.

In KSA, after the first full year of operation of its revival plan, Nissan with its Kingdom wide dealer Alissa Auto has reached the 3rd position in sales with 61,806 units, reaching 7.2 percent market share, which represents 141.7 percent growth year on year vs FY13. Furthermore Nissan Brand Purchase Consideration has strengthened by 27 percent reaching the second position in the market.

In our last financial year, the Nissan line-up has performed extremely well across the spectrum but sales of the famed Patrol, dubbed the

step - is to secure both the regulatory framework and consumer adoption to make autonomous driving a reality.

At Nissan we are already working with industry leaders to seek workable regulatory standards. We have shown, in road tests, how new technologies such as automatic lane-changing and automated parking can enhance the driving experience, and make it safer.

There is a big difference between autonomous drive technology championed by Nissan, and self-driving cars. Autonomous Drive is about relieving motorists of everyday tasks, particularly in congested or long-distance situations. The driver remains in control, at the wheel, of a car that is capable of doing more things automatically. Self-driving cars, by comparison, don't require any human intervention - and remain a long-way from commercial reality. They are suitable only for tightly-controlled road-environments, at slow speeds, and face a regulatory minefield.

That is why Nissan is focused on autonomous drive technologies that we know will work, and can be introduced over the next 4 to 5 years. We aim to be ready with revolutionary, commercially viable autonomous driving technology by 2020, with a goal of bringing the next two autonomous-drive technologies to market by 2016.

An example of this technology is our "Safety Shield" - a system of cameras, sensors and actuators that monitors risk all around the car and can help to avert an accident. This includes fully-automated parking systems and a traffic-jam pilot, in which cars will have the capability to drive autonomously and safely on congested highways. This will be followed in 2018 by the introduction of multiple-lane controls, allowing cars to autonomously negotiate hazards and change lanes. Before the end of

car is involved in a collision.

Nissan has already started pre-installing a small device within the car, which will be connected via an Etisalat M2M SIM card. Nissan's partnership with Etisalat on this strategic project ensures the smart application will run successfully on any smartphone, operating system or service network.

All this shows that Nissan is pioneering a more intuitive partnership between car and driver, relieving the motorists of tasks that can be safely automated.

KT: What are the new technologies that your brand has adopted in terms of improving vehicle performance, efficiency, safety etc.?

Cherfan: As a customer centric company, we try and understand what is important to our perspective buyers and then ensure that we can offer models that offer the features that people need.

Performance with the All New NISMO Line-Up

In terms of offering new models with improved performance, Nissan just launched our motorsport brand, NISMO in the Middle East. By bringing the 'NISMO' Brand to the Middle East, we are proving our passion for performance, as well as heralding the next step in 'Innovation that Excites' for regional motorsports enthusiasts.

As part of our performance road car line-up, we showcased three NISMO models - the 370Z NISMO, the GT-R NISMO, and the Patrol NISMO. The Patrol NISMO was a world-premiere for Nissan as we could not have launched NISMO in the region without including our most iconic model - the Nissan Patrol - in the range of NISMO vehicles.

We Recognized that off-roading and motorsports form the life-blood of regional drive enthusiasts, therefore we believe the time

is steady is one of the leading features of our all-new Nissan Maxima 2016. Nissan's safety rating and commitment to keep total cost of maintenance very competitive across the Middle East will bolster sales substantially over the coming years. Additionally a host of factors contribute to the Nissan Maxima's lower running costs such as greater fuel efficiency, new technologies, build quality, durability and safety.

In terms of its safety features, the all new Nissan Maxima's next-generation premium-level technology features includes a standard 7.0-inch Advanced Drive Assist Display (ADAD) within the instrument cluster. The vehicle boasts an extensive range of safety, security and driving aids, including Predictive Forward Collision Warning (PFCW), Intelligent Cruise Control (ICC), Forward Emergency Braking (FEB), Rear Cross Traffic Alert (CTA) and Blind Spot Warning (BSW).

The all new Nissan Maxima 2016 also offers an available Driver Attention Alert (DAA) system which monitors steering input patterns to establish a baseline and helps alert the driver when drowsy or inattentive driving is detected (only on Nissan Maxima SR grade).

In addition, the all new Nissan Maxima 2016 showcases 'Safety Shield', which is a system of cameras, sensors and actuators that monitors risk all around the car and can help to avert an accident. This includes fully-automated parking systems and a traffic-jam pilot, in which cars will have the capability to drive autonomously and safely on congested highways.

KT: What are the major challenges for the auto sector/your brand in the GCC?

Cherfan: In addition to the oil price and currency fluctuation challenges which we highlighted earlier, it is about constantly listen-

whatever the terrain.

KT: Do you think the auto sector's growth in the GCC will slow down as the market is over-served?

Cherfan: Our regional strategy for success is based on the well-known Nissan global growth strategy 'Power 88', which our CEO Carlos Ghosn announced we would achieve by 2016. Under the Power 88 Mid Term plan we have announced Nissan Middle East targeting to sell over 300K units by FY16 and reach 10 percent Market Share in the whole region and 14.5 percent Market Share in the GCC.

Under the Power 88 Mid Term plan, Nissan Middle East is focusing on Brand Power with the constant renewal of our Line-up. This includes engagement with our audiences, in particular the youth, through unique and differentiating platforms such as GT Academy, which takes virtual gamers and transforms them into racers. In addition to this, we are focusing on Sales Power with quality and quantity of the network, and a strong emphasis on customer experience excellence.

As an example and as a proof to our constant line up renewal over the last months we have launched the all new Nissan Maxima 2016 and introduced the performance arm of Nissan in the region known as NISMO with the announcement of a world premiere - the Nissan Patrol NISMO. In addition, we also launched the Nissan Patrol Desert Edition in collaboration with the Middle East's most famous and influential motorsports personality, Dr Mohammed Ben Sulayem. To continue keeping our consumers at core and providing with best auto experience, we launched the 'Nissan SmartCar' mobile app in collaboration with Etisalat.

At Nissan, we strive to create unique experiences to engage with our audiences. Our 'Nissan Patrol: The Movie' activation at the recent Dubai International Motor Show is an example of reaching out to our direct and indirect consumers. 'Nissan Patrol: The Movie' uses the latest in green screen technology and blockbuster cinema camera equipment so that people can have the chance to star in an action-packed movie trailer, featuring the 2016 Nissan Patrol.

KT: How is Nissan contributing to the global efforts being made around the climate change?

Cherfan: At Nissan, we are big believers in supporting sustainable driving as a contribution to all the global efforts that are being made by governments and industry leaders around climate change. As a testament to that, the Renault-Nissan alliance provided 200 electric vehicles to the International Conference at COP21 that took place in Paris earlier in November. The fleet covered around 400 km during the event and emitted zero emissions while driving.

The fleet was the world's largest electric vehicle fleet ever provided to an international conference, and further strengthened the alliance's position as the official passenger-car provider for the United Nations' COP21 climate conference.

At Nissan, we continuously listen to our customers' needs through which we recognized that off-roading and motorsports form the life-blood of regional drive enthusiasts. As proof of our commitment to making thrilling driving experiences accessible to all our customers, we recently added the Patrol NISMO and the Patrol Desert Edition to the Patrol family.

Nissan Patrol NISMO, a race-inspired version of Nissan's legendary SUV-Patrol powered with a Takumi tuned engine that produces 428 HP for exhilarating performance. The model comes with a torque improvement of over 70 percent rev-range, NISMO 22" RAYS forged-alloy wheels and NISMO tuned suspension using 'Bilstein' shock absorbers for improved handling and ride comfort.

These features are all also included in our Nissan Pathfinder Hybrid. We believe this model appeals to a wide consumer base. With its impressive power and space as an SUV, it is a great choice for the outgoing explorer. Its fuel efficiency credentials also make it a desirable choice for families that do a lot of driving and are more conscious about running costs.

Safety & Security in the All New Nissan Maxima 2016

Nissan's commitment to the highest standards and best value in total cost of maintenance is one of the leading features of our all-new Nissan Maxima 2016. Nissan's safety rating and commitment to keep total cost of maintenance very competitive across the Middle East will bolster sales substantially over the coming years. Additionally a host of factors contribute to the Nissan Maxima's lower running costs such as greater fuel efficiency, new technologies, build quality, durability and safety.



'Hero of all Terrains in Life', the facelifted Juke, the Nissan Sunny, Pathfinder and X-Trail have been exceptional.

The Nissan Juke, over the past year, has forged ahead with highly impressive sales results. The vehicle now has a six per cent share of the SUV-5 market segment - jumping from five per cent a year ago. In the UAE, the Juke's share has jumped from eight to 11 per cent and, in March 2015, it was the best-selling car in its segment in the entire country. It's a success story repeated throughout the region and, as Nissan Middle East looks forward to 2016, it does so from a position of enormous strength through 'Innovation that Excites'.

The Nissan Sunny also attributed to the record breaking results, by achieving 29,688 units in 2014 with 30 percent sales growth from last year. Nissan Pathfinder recorded 15 per cent growth with 6,800 units and the Nissan X-Trail recorded a significant growth increase of 300 per cent with 4,400 units. We have also witnessed a significant rise in fleet sales in the recent results within our LCV segment, with the Nissan Urvan recording a 24 percent growth in GCC compared to last year.

Our growth strategy is to focus on establishing the highest levels of quality and expanding our network in Saudi Arabia, which currently represents a significant market share of our business model.

KT: What do connected cars mean for the industry? When will we have such vehicles in the region?

Cherfan: Consumers nowadays want technologies and automated systems that enable them to drive safely, for longer. While zero-emission vehicles are one solution to mega-city pollution, another will be greater vehicle autonomy. Autonomous technology already exists in our industry. Motorists don't think twice about using automatic transmissions or cruise control. The next step - and it's a big



the decade, we will introduce intersection-autonomy, enabling vehicles to negotiate city cross-roads without driver intervention.

Today cars like the new Qashqai and new X-Trail have advanced park-assist systems. By 2017, we expect parking to be fully automated, and by 2019 increasingly remote - so that cars can be parked in a controlled setting without a driver at the wheel.

In addition, we have already started deploying the idea of connected cars in the region with our latest announcement of the 'Nissan SmartCar' mobile app in partnership with Etisalat. The 'Nissan SmartCar' mobile app is the region's first connected car deployment, which is the coming together of communications and auto technologies, information systems and safety devices for increased levels of sophistication and automation in vehicles.

Through the recently launched mobile app, powered by Etisalat's network and M2M Control Center platform, the all-new Nissan Maxima 2016 and the Nissan Patrol MY16 will provide customers with convenience, control and security. It will allow drivers to remotely lock or unlock their vehicles, control cooling and even instantly message the owner if the

is right to introduce the Patrol NISMO in the Middle East as proof of our commitment to making thrilling driving experiences accessible to all our customers.

Efficiency & Sustainability in the All New Maxima 2016

In recent years we have noticed that there has been a peak in the interest of more fuel efficient vehicles that also come with a host of safety and technology features. We are big believers in supporting sustainable driving technology and offering greater fuel efficiency across all our models.

These features are all also included in our Nissan Pathfinder Hybrid. We believe this model appeals to a wide consumer base. With its impressive power and space as an SUV, it is a great choice for the outgoing explorer. Its fuel efficiency credentials also make it a desirable choice for families that do a lot of driving and are more conscious about running costs.

Safety & Security in the All New Nissan Maxima 2016

Nissan's commitment to the highest standards and best value in total cost of maintenance

ing to the market needs and deliver on our strategy.

Under the Power 88 Mid Term plan, Nissan Middle East is focusing on Brand Power with the constant renewal of our Line-up. This includes engagement with our audiences, in particular the youth, through unique and differentiating platforms such as GT Academy, which takes virtual gamers and transforms them into racers. In addition to this, we are focusing on Sales Power with quality and quantity of the network, and a strong emphasis on customer experience excellence.

At Nissan, we continuously listen to our customers' needs through which we recognized that off-roading and motorsports form the life-blood of regional drive enthusiasts. As proof of our commitment to making thrilling driving experiences accessible to all our customers, we recently added the Patrol NISMO and the Patrol Desert Edition to the Patrol family.

Nissan Patrol NISMO, a race-inspired version of Nissan's legendary SUV-Patrol powered with a Takumi tuned engine that produces 428 HP for exhilarating performance. The model comes with a torque improvement of over 70 percent rev-range, NISMO 22" RAYS forged-alloy wheels and NISMO tuned suspension using 'Bilstein' shock absorbers for improved handling and ride comfort.

These features are all also included in our Nissan Pathfinder Hybrid. We believe this model appeals to a wide consumer base. With its impressive power and space as an SUV, it is a great choice for the outgoing explorer. Its fuel efficiency credentials also make it a desirable choice for families that do a lot of driving and are more conscious about running costs.

JAPAN ADOPTS NEGATIVE INTEREST RATES

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

Another bomb dropped on investors this Friday, with the Bank of Japan adopting a negative interest-rate strategy in the face of a weakening economy and a global slowdown. The move to penalize banks' reserves will be added to the BOJ's asset-purchase program already in place. With a 5 to 4 vote, Kuroda introduced a negative rate of 0.1 percent on certain excess holdings of cash.

The decision came after year on year inflation came at -0.3 percent where expectations were for a flat number. Industrial production and household spending also weakened, which prompted the BOJ to intervene on Friday.

Last week, BOJ governor Kuroda said there were no signs that the global economic slowdown had damaged Japan corporates plans; however the move clearly proves policy makers have acted in an attempt to avoid Japan entering in a major slowdown.

In summary, the BOJ adopted the same strategy as the ECB in an attempt to tackle inflation and the Yen reacted instantaneously tumbling after the

announcement. The negative rate interest rates policy takes effect on February 16 and will operate similar to programs in Europe.

In addition to the move, the BOJ delayed its target date of reaching its 2 percent inflation goal by six months, aiming for the first half of fiscal 2017, while also downgrading current year forecasts. The Yen initially plummeted over 2 percent, rallied back, and closed the extremely volatile Friday at 121.14 against the dollar. Japanese equity markets also reacted violently to the move with the Nikkei up over +3 percent initially, then tumbled to losses of -1 percent, but bounced back to end the week adding 2.8 percent.

Clearly, the measures taken by the BOJ are aimed at cheapening the currency. Similarly to the Euro, the negative rates should encourage investors to choose the Yen as a funding currency. With its latest measures, the Bank of Japan entered again into a currency war on the back of China trying to devalue its Renminbi in the ongoing persistent commodity price disinflation. The BOJ will allow Japan to borrow more growth from its trading partners and limit the

severity of the imported disinflation. The BOJ's move should ultimately result in more currency wars and continuing slowdown in global trade and growth.

In this whole chaos, the Euro traded in a narrow range the whole week between 1.07090 and the 1.0960 level. As mentioned earlier, the Yen was the major loser closing the week dropping 4 percent against the dollar. Growth currencies behaved well this week helped by a dovish Fed and the BOJ trying to reful a risk taking environment. Canadian Dollar closed the week up 2 percent against the dollar while the Australian Dollar closed 1.7 percent.

For now, we remain in a binary scenario. Either Chinese worries abate with oil stabilizes at around these levels as we had witnessed in August-September 2015, or China continues to devalue its currency, the US slows down, and the volatility environment we have witnessed in the beginning of the year returns back.

On the commodities side, oil once again dominated the news this week as headlines which ended up just being rumors suggested that Russia and

OPEC were looking at setting up talks to discuss production cuts. Crude peaked at \$34.82 following the news before settling down to close the week at \$33.62. Brent followed suit at \$35.99, however ended the week at \$35.80.

Bleak US data

This week, very soft durable and capital goods order numbers in the US raised the prospects of further downside risk to activity levels in Q1 2016.

Headline durable goods orders for December came at -5.1 percent much below expectations for a more modest -0.7 percent drop. The data excluding transportation was also weak at -1.2 percent against expectations of -0.1 percent. Core capital goods orders fell -4.3 percent against expectations of -0.2 percent, which was the largest monthly decline since October 2014.

The data showed a significant downward momentum in private domestic demand. In addition, the ongoing weakness in oil prices has put a lot of pressure on corporate activities in the US implying a

significant pullback in capital spending in 2016.

Another weak data was the Dallas Fed January manufacturing activity index coming at -34.6, its lowest level since April 2009 against consensus of -14.0. One respondent said that "We expect the continued depression in the oil and gas industry to negatively impact our customer base and result in significant demand reduction."

On the employment front, initial jobless claims decline 16k last week to 278k which was slightly better than the 281k expected. In addition, the latest housing market data was less supportive with pending home sales only up +0.1 percent against expectation of 0.9 percent increase last month. The only positive other release was the Kansas City Fed manufacturing activity index which was unchanged at -9 with expectations of -10.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30310
The USDKWD opened at 0.30310 yesterday morning.

AL-MAZAYA REPORTS KD 9.32M NET PROFIT FOR 2015

OPERATING REVENUE JUMPS 258.9% TO KD 59.82M

KUWAIT: Al-Mazaya Holding has announced its financial results for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2015. The announcement was made following a meeting of the board of directors that was held January 28, 2016. The meeting was chaired by Chairman Rashid Al-Nafisi and attended by members of the board and the group's CEO.

Addressing the meeting, Rashid Al-Nafisi said: "The Company has continued to achieve positive leaps in its financial results and reported a net profit of KD 9.32 million by end of 2015, with a growth of 15.2 percent, compared to KD 8.09 million at the end of 2014. Earnings per share (EPS) was calculated at 15.04 fils for 2015, compared to 13.05 fils for 2014," said Al Nafisi.

"This achievement was made by increasing sales on available projects and increasing the occupancy rate of its income generating projects, which ultimately led to a 258.9 percent growth in the operating revenues to KD 59.82 million, for 2015 - up from KD 16.66 million for 2014," he added.

Stressing that this significant leap in revenue was a direct result of its comprehensive marketing plan, Al-Nafisi furthered that the huge demand for the units available for sale and investor confidence in the company brand has resulted in a 385.6 percent growth in sales revenue. Revenue went from KD 10.97 million, in 2014, to KD 53.27 million in 2015. Total rental revenues jumped by 16.4 percent, from KD 5.30 million to KD 6.17 million over the same period.

Al-Nafisi added that Al-Mazaya's board of directors has recommended 7 percent cash dividend - a clear sign of its commitment to share the company's excellent results with shareholders and a proof of the company's current financial strength and solvency, as well as the company's balanced future plans. The

recommendation will be submitted to the annual general assembly for approval and will comply with all the requirements of the Capital Markets Authority and the governmental regulators.

Financial statements
With regard to Al-Mazaya's financial



Chairman Rashid Al-Nafisi

2015 accomplishments
Al-Soqabi said that Al-Mazaya's major achievements in 2015 included:
* The acquisition of a commercial tower in Riyadh, KSA, through a subsidiary company. The tower is situated in the Al-Olia area and was acquired for SR130m (KD10.5 million). The tower has an annual investment yield of up to 9



Eng Ibrahim Al-Soqabi

position in 2015, Al-Nafisi said that the company was able to maintain a steady growth in balance sheet and financial solvency and showed a keenness to fulfill its obligations to third parties, while taking care of the growth in shareholders' equity by entering new projects, as well as completing and handing over existing projects.

Al-Nafisi presented the other details of financial results for the period ended December 31, 2015, disclosing that the total assets of the company stood at KD 251.04 million, while the total equity is KD 111.45 million, as of December 2015.

From his side, Eng Ibrahim Al-Soqabi, Group CEO of Al-Mazaya Holding, said: Al-Mazaya Holding is immune to economic and geopolitical fluctuations in the surrounding region and internationally.

percent.
* Through one of its subsidiaries (Al-Mazaya Real Estate Development), Al-Mazaya purchased a plot of land, located in the Sharq area of Kuwait City, which worth KD 8 million. Master plan and concept design of the project is currently being developed and an engineering firm will be appointed to commence the design and licensing works.

* Al-Mazaya had awarded the construction contract for its 17-storey medical facility in Sabah Al-Salem, Kuwait to a leading contractor. Drilling and piling works on the 2,000 square metre project commenced in preparation for the structural works, which will take 20 months to completion.

* Al-Mazaya had achieved 35 percent completion on the first phase of Queue Line residential project, which consists of

four new buildings in Dubailand, Dubai. Construction works are progressing by leaps and bounds with handover of the first phase of this project expected by the end of 2016.

* As a result of its strategic alliance for the Ritim Istanbul development (a joint venture project with Dumankaya Real Estate - Turkey), over 70 percent of units were sold. The project is 85 percent completed and the project's full completion is expected next April 2016.

* Al-Mazaya continued its extensive promotional campaigns to sell Queue Point project, in Dubai. The project is 85 percent completed and 80 percent sold out, which is positively reflected on the operating revenue generated from sales in the company's financial results in 2015.

* The completion of the Logistics Services Project in Bahrain, culminated in a spectacular ceremony attended by press, media and businessmen. Which witnessed also the launch of the marketing campaign to lease the project, which provides storage solutions, the current occupancy rate is 45 percent.

* Al-Mazaya is about to award construction contract for the Al Mazaya Residence project in Al-Mawaleh, Al-Seeb Governorate, in Muscat to a leading contractor. Al-Mazaya has launched the off-plan sale.

* Al-Mazaya boosted income, generated from existing fully occupied projects, by renewing lease contracts and increasing rates to reflect the current market prices and the quality services provided by the Property Management Department. This step helped to increase the operating revenue generated from lease operations.

* Al-Mazaya participated in seven real estate exhibitions in 2015, establishing its visibility and status as a leading real estate company and a regional brand

that offers the very best real estate products.

* NBK Capital estimated the fair value of Al-Mazaya stock at KD 0.165, after taking all the precautionary measures of the valuation standards into consideration and following an in-depth study of the company's projects and financial position.

Al-Soqabi also elaborated on the company's five-year borrowing plan, saying: "Al-Mazaya has successfully accomplished one of its key objectives for 2015; converting all its loans into Islamic financing, these facilities will be used in new investment opportunities that will drive growth in accordance with the corporate strategic plan. Al-Mazaya has managed to convert all of its loans into Sharia-compliant financing."

Besides, Al-Soqabi added that the company's success in getting these facilities reflects its strong financial position compared to its peers. Borrowing in Al-Mazaya Holding is less costly than the average rate for the Kuwaiti market.

The company has structured its facilities' maturities into medium and long-term maturities and has cut finance cost, which boosted the company revenues and reduced its periodic financial obligations. In conclusion, Al-Soqabi said that Al-Mazaya is currently studying many investment opportunities in the markets in which it operates, particularly in the GCC and Turkey, which are the most appropriate to the company's expansion strategy.

Al-Mazaya has gained great confidence in these markets following the completion of many real estate projects. He further underlined that the company's growth in these markets will result in additional strategic partnerships with elite investors who are set to achieve the highest returns, while serving the interest of the company and investors alike.

NBK THE MOST VALUABLE BANKING BRAND IN KUWAIT: BRAND FINANCE

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) was recognized as the most valuable banking brand in Kuwait in 2016 according to Brand Finance, the renowned brand valuation agency. NBK ranks among the Top Tier of the Most 500 Valuable Banking Brands in the world. According to Brand Finance, NBK's Brand value reached \$1.39 billion, up 33 percent year-on-year. Also, NBK's brand rating is ranked AA, among the top in the region.

This recognition reflects customers and shareholders' trust in NBK as well as the bank's strong reputation locally and regionally.

David Haigh, Brand Finance CEO, said: "NBK has performed exceptionally well again this year. Brand value is up 33 percent, the fastest growth of any of the larger GCC banks. At the global level, its performance is equally impressive, rising 26 places up the international rankings to 127th. After joining the 'billion dollar brands club', NBK has the potential to become one of the world's top 100 banking brands too. In its home country, NBK is unrivalled. It has overtaken its competitors to become the nation's premier banking brand."

Brand Finance's valuation assesses the dol-

lar value of the reputation, image and intellectual property of the brand. It considers a number of relevant attributes such as financial performance, revenue forecasts, growth rates, brand strength index, sustainability and analysts' insights, amongst others.

NBK continues to collectively enjoy the highest ratings from the three international rating agencies; Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, and its disciplined approach to risk management, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team. NBK was also named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for the tenth consecutive time.

NBK enjoys the widest banking presence with a local and international network reaching 4 continents. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including London, Paris, Geneva, New York and Singapore, as well as China (Shanghai). Meanwhile, regional coverage extends to Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Turkey.



LINCOLN ADDS PREMIUM SOUND OF REVEL AUDIO SYSTEMS TO ITS LUXURY VEHICLES

DUBAI: A listening experience comparable to what's offered only through very high-end home audio systems is now available in the all-new Lincoln MKX midsize utility.

Revel, HARMAN International's most exclusive loudspeaker brand, worked with Lincoln engineers and designers to craft a 13-speaker Revel audio system and a 19-speaker Revel Ultima system for the all-new Lincoln MKX.

Since 1996, Revel has served its audiophile customer base with exceptional, award-winning home-audio equipment. Emphasising science-based speaker architecture and acoustic precision, Revel systems are designed to re-create a musical performance as precisely and purely as it was recorded.

"The Revel audio system available in the all-new Lincoln MKX represents a new approach to ensure all occupants - not just the driver - enjoy the best listening experience," said Kevin Voecks, Revel product development manager. "Over the course of three years and hundreds of hours of tuning and refining, our collaboration with Lincoln has created the most authentic audio experience possible."

Lincoln and Revel designers worked closely to establish a speaker grille design that complements luxurious Lincoln interiors while passing rigorous acoustical testing for optimal performance. Vehicles equipped with a Revel Ultima sound system will include upgraded aluminium speaker grilles for an elegant experience.

Lincoln MKX

The exterior of the MKX luxury midsize SUV embodies elegance in motion, complemented by a dramatic design with a modern, contemporary silhouette and well-balanced proportions. The interior design blends functionality with fluid, flowing forms to inspire a sense of luxurious adventure. Powered by the 2.7-litre twin-turbocharged Ti-VCT EcoBoost V6, the MKX also comes with a line-up of innovative features including a revolutionary 360 degree camera.



BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES NAMES OF WINNERS OF YAWMI ACCOUNT

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

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

1. **Mohammad Abdullah Ali**
2. **Anita Bukharey**
3. **Alaweyah Hazaa Sari Al Enzi**
4. **Omar Ali Fahad Al Zumai**
5. **Jasem Issa Ahmad Al Yaqoub**

To further add to the anticipation of Yawmi account customers, Burgan Bank now offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, entitling one lucky customer to

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

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances to becoming a winner.

The more customers deposit, the higher the chances they receive of winning.

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

QALAA HOLDINGS MENA GLASS LTD CLOSES SALE OF MGM AND UGC

KUWAIT: Qalaa Holdings (CCAP.CA on the Egyptian Exchange), an African leader in energy and infrastructure, announced yesterday that its subsidiary MENA Glass Ltd. has reached financial close on the sale of the entirety of its stake in Misr Glass Manufacturing Company (MGM), a leading regional producer and exporter of glass containers, and the entirety of its stake in United Glass Company (UGC) to Middle East Glass Manufacturing Company, a combined equity value for 100 percent of both MGM and UGC of c. EGP 828 million.

Qalaa Holdings had maintained an effective ownership of 15.2 per-

cent in MGM and UGC.

"Our exit from MGM and UGC marks the year ahead of us as one where Qalaa will continue to push forward in the delivery of its strategy and the execution of our asset divestment program," said Qalaa Co-Founder and Managing Director Hisham El-Khazindar. "We are confident that MGM will continue its growth trajectory under the stewardship of Middle East Glass as we ourselves devote maximum attention to high-growth business - buoyed by Qalaa's now more liquid and increasingly deleveraged balance sheet - in the sectors deemed vital for the region's development

such as refining, energy distribution and transportation and logistics."

The exit is helping accelerate the delivery of Qalaa's strategy, with its key elements being deleveraging at the holding and platform company levels; acquisition of additional stakes in key platform companies; selective investments within existing platform companies; and share buybacks so long as the company's shares trade at a significant discount to their fair market value.

Pharos Holding acted as financial advisers, and Zaki Hashem Law Office acted as legal counsel, to the sellers on the transaction.

IBM NAMES WEATHER CO CHIEF AS WATSON'S NEW BOSS

SAN FRANCISCO: IBM says former Weather Co. CEO David Kenny will be the new boss for Watson, the Jeopardy-winning "cognitive computing" service that's a central element of CEO Virginia Rometty's campaign to find new revenue for the struggling tech giant.

Watson is a computing system that uses machine-learning and natural-language skills to analyze and find trends in data from a wide variety of sources. IBM

has been promoting Watson and related technology as a powerful tool for use in health care, retailing and other industries.

The Armonk, New York, company announced last year that it was buying The Weather Co., including its websites, apps and data platform, for an undisclosed sum. The cable-TV Weather Channel was not part of the deal and is continuing to operate independently.

Analysts say IBM Corp. is hoping to leverage The Weather Co.'s vast trove of climate data as well as its Internet platform, which delivers weather forecasts via free consumer apps along with more extensive services sold to airlines, insurance companies and other businesses.

IBM said Kenny will oversee the Watson business and related partnerships with outside developers who can build software that uses Watson's tech-

nology. Michael Rhodin, who previously led the Watson unit, will move to a job developing new business uses for Watson.

The Weather Co. and its current services will become part of IBM's Data and Analytics unit. Rometty has vowed to increase IBM's revenue from new types of commercial technology, including cloud computing and data analytics, because its mainstay hardware and serv-

ices businesses are no longer growing. The company reported earlier this month that its overall revenue for the last three months of 2015 was down for the 15th consecutive quarter. IBM's board has backed Rometty's efforts. The company disclosed late Thursday that she will receive a \$4.5 million performance bonus in addition to her \$1.6 million salary for 2015. She received a \$3.6 million bonus in 2014. — AP

TECHNOLOGY SECTOR TACKLES AMERICA'S CONCUSSION EPIDEMIC

WASHINGTON: A number technology startups are devising creative new ways of detecting concussions in pro and amateur athletes, using apps, tablets and sensors to monitor the often debilitating brain injury.

Sports organizations increasingly are looking for better concussion detection methods, and a sense of urgency has grown with the release of the 2015 film "Concussion" starring Will Smith on the problem of chronic brain injury suffered by American football players.

Although some concussions may be unavoidable in contact sports, an important concern is getting a rapid diagnosis to keep an injured player off the field, to avoid potentially severe secondary impacts. Also key is followup, to determine when a player is ready to return.

When players take a hit, "they will always say they are fine," said Adam Gross, chief executive of Bethesda, Maryland-based startup RightEye, which has developed a one-minute eye-tracking test that helps reveal the extent of trauma to the brain.

"This is a tool that could keep parents from sending their kids (with concussions) back on the field," RightEye says its test with a specially configured computer that monitors how quickly the eyes follow moving objects can be useful for monitoring someone recovering from a concussion.

Eye movement offers insight into brain health and brain trauma, and can also help detect other disorders such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease, according to the company.

The service, being marketed to sports teams and eye professionals, can be used to help improve performance of athletes and others such as military marksmen. "This can be used in the locker room, but it is more valuable in helping people recover from a concussion," said RightEye president Barbara Barclay.

Another system designed to be used on the sidelines in sports is the King-Devick test, a tablet-based system which can be easily administered after an impact. Steve Devick, an optometrist who helped develop the test in the 1970s as a tool to diagnose learning disabilities and later helped adapt it to diagnose concussion, calls it a "proven" detection system which can be simply administered in less than two minutes.

PLAYERS' OBVIOUSLY CONCUSSED

Devick said many professional sports teams including the National Football League, America's most popular sport still use "seat of the pants" methods for concussion diagnosis such as asking questions or requiring a player to follow finger movements.

"All NFL games will have four or five doctors on the sidelines but you can still sometimes see a player go back on the field who is obviously concussed," he said.

Such concerns were raised at last year's Super Bowl, when Patriots' star Julian Edelman returned to action even after he appeared disoriented.

The NFL, which has implemented a "concussion protocol" for suspected brain trauma, announced at the start of the season it would be evaluating new technologies including from the Illinois-based King-Devick group as part of player safety efforts.

The King-Devick test requires an athlete to read single-digit numbers displayed on cards or on a tablet to test "saccadic" eye movement—very fast, almost imperceptible movements from one eye to the other—which according to research can be used to diagnose concussion and other neurological disorders.

Other systems are also being explored by tech startups. Arizona-based startup Saccadous is developing a tablet-based system which, unlike those of RightEye and King-Devick, tracks involuntary "micro" eye movements.

"We measure 100 micro-movements to make a determination about what is going on in the brain," said Saccadous co-founder and chief executive Craig Cafarelli. He added that using this system measuring involuntary "micro-saccades" is better than a cognitive test which can be gamed by athletes who want to return to action.

"Our goal would be to have a baseline of every player in a healthy state, so we know if we scan them again, we could compare it against the baseline," he said.

COLLEGIATE SOLUTIONS

NCAA, the governing body for US collegiate sports, in January reached a settlement with athletes to provide \$70 million for research in concussion testing.

A handful of universities have agreed to equip their American football players with helmet sensors that measure the speed, intensity and location of hits to the head as part of its concussion research. Some high school football programs also use helmet sensors.

Data collected will help improve detection and provide a foundation to improve helmet design and ratings, according to Stefan Duma, head of Virginia Tech University's department of biomedical engineering and mechanics, which is working on the research.

The University of California at Los Angeles meanwhile is using a grant from the NCAA and the Department of Defense to use "big data" to assess concussion injuries and recovery.

The goal "is to develop scientific, evidence-based tools that will enable doctors to more accurately gauge when it is safe for an athlete to return to play," UCLA neuroscientist Christopher Giza said in announcing the program last year. — AFP



BEIJING: In this Oct. 17, 2015 photo, a drone-flying aficionado prepares his model aircrafts for flight on the outskirts of Beijing. Even as drones offer law enforcement sharply expanded capabilities, authorities in China, as in many other countries, are scrambling to regulate their use. The country is now beginning to set nationwide regulations, which are applauded by many in the Chinese industry. — AP

DRONE SCHOOLS SPREAD IN CHINA TO FIELD PILOTS FOR NEW SECTOR

BEIJING: Joysticks at their fingertips, the mostly male students packing the classroom lift their virtual helicopters into the air, part of a new cottage industry that's sprung up in China: Drone pilot schools.

China is already the world's biggest drone manufacturer, churning out remote-controlled flying machines that range from 3-D urban mappers to tear-gas spraying models for police. But it lacks qualified pilots to fly them.

Young men in particular are flocking to drone schools such as TT Aviation Technology Co., one of more than 40 in China, hoping to land a potentially lucrative job in an exciting new field.

TT Aviation offers a two-week intensive course for 8,000 yuan (\$1,200) where students learn regulations and how to pilot using simulators and real drones. At the end of the course, they can try to earn the license required by China's Civil Aviation Administration to operate drones that are heavier than 7 kilograms (15 pounds) and fly higher than 120 meters (400 feet).

Xu Honggang, 24, believes the license will open doors to piloting jobs that make at least 5,000 Chinese yuan per month (\$780), higher than average. Some experienced pilots bring in double that amount, he said.

"I want to build my own company with drone services," Xu said one recent afternoon next to a grassy field where his instructor demonstrated basic moves with a small radio-controlled helicopter. "I like to work for myself. This is a new and popular line of work."

The opportunities appear promising. More than 10,000 new pilots are needed this year across all industries in China, but only 1,000 pilots now hold licenses, said Yang Yi, the general manager of TT Aviation, which also manufactures and sells drones to private and public sector customers.

"The drone pilot and the car driver are the same: They both need systematic skill training and regulated studying to make sure everyone knows the rules before the real operation," she said.

Drones are touted as game-changers in a range of industries, including agriculture, logistics, film production and law enforcement.

HIGH DEMAND

The sector has gotten support from the central government, which is keen on promoting robotics and automation to sustain economic growth as labor costs rise. Chinese firms are making inroads producing unmanned machines beyond industrial use as well. Baidu, the Beijing-based search engine, is developing a self-driving car while DJI, a Shenzhen-based drone maker valued by US investors at \$8 billion, has



BEIJING: In this Oct. 17, 2015 photo, an instructor explains the operation of a drone to students at a school run by TT Aviation Technology in Beijing. — AP

cornered more than half the world consumer drone market.

So far, more than half of TT Aviation's products are used in agriculture. China has vast farmlands, and there is a high demand for drones to be used in pesticide spraying because the labor force is shrinking even as labor costs rise, said Yang.

The company said police will use drones for patrols, while utilities use them for maintaining electricity infrastructure or mapping pipelines.

The Shandong Qihang Surveying and Mapping Technology Company has used photographs taken by its drones to build vast urban databases and 3-D models of cities. Every building can be catalogued, with information about the people and businesses behind every window stored in a database - a valuable technology for government bodies like the census bureau, urban planners and public security agencies, said company vice president Wu Haining.

"With oblique photograph technology and through cooperation with the government, people will be able to check any uploaded personal information in a room from any building in our 3-D map," said Wu, whose company also produces surveillance drones with five cameras.

The rapid development of new types of drones requires a pool of trained and specialized drone

operators, Wu said.

Even as drones offer law enforcement sharply expanded capabilities, authorities in China, as in many other countries, are scrambling to regulate their use. The country is now beginning to set nationwide regulations on where they can fly, which are applauded by many in the Chinese industry.

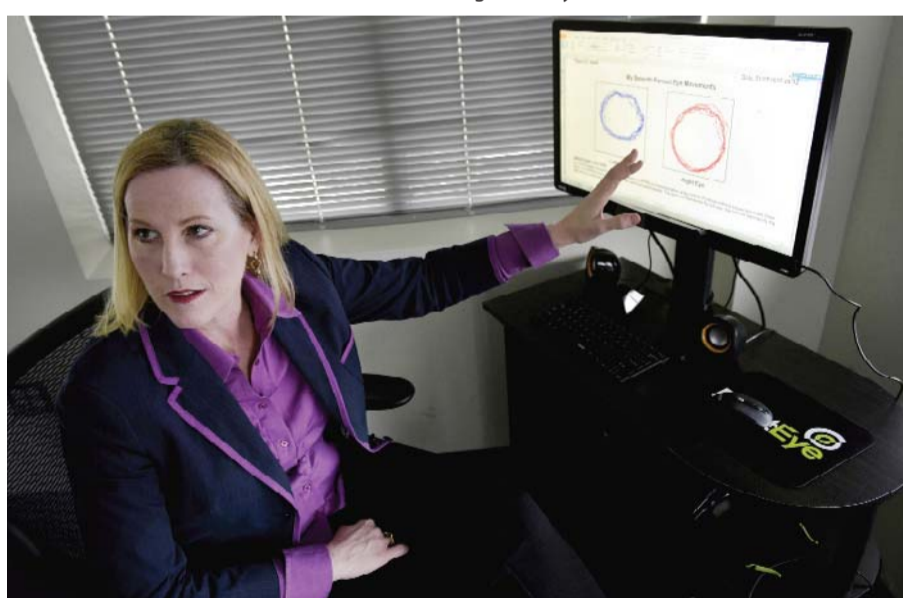
NATIONWIDE REGULATIONS

"We need pilots with licenses, because safety is the biggest concern in the operation of drones. Although we have insurance, we still need strict regulations for studying and training to avoid any incidents," Wu said.

On a recent afternoon, a group of drone-flying aficionados tried out their models in the outskirts of Beijing near the city's 6th Ring Road, a highway around the city about 15 to 20 kilometers (8-12 miles) from the city center. The capital requires permission to fly a drone inside that ring.

"This is only a toy for entertainment, I won't use this for any other purpose," said Sun Xiaoqiang, a Beijing resident who has been flying drones for two years, when asked about the regulations.

"I have no bad intentions, it's only for entertainment, so I think they should open a certain airspace for us." — AP



BETHESDA: Tech sector tackles America's concussion epidemic RightEye President demonstrates her company's eye-tracking technology at offices in Bethesda, Maryland on January 27, 2016. A number technology startups are devising creative new ways of detecting concussions in pro and amateur athletes, using apps, tablets and sensors to monitor the often debilitating brain injury. — AFP

MIT WINS DESIGN COMPETITION FOR ELON MUSK'S HYPERLOOP

COLLEGE STATION: MIT student engineers won a competition to transform SpaceX and Tesla Motors co-founder Elon Musk's idea into a design for a Hyperloop to move pods of people at high speed.

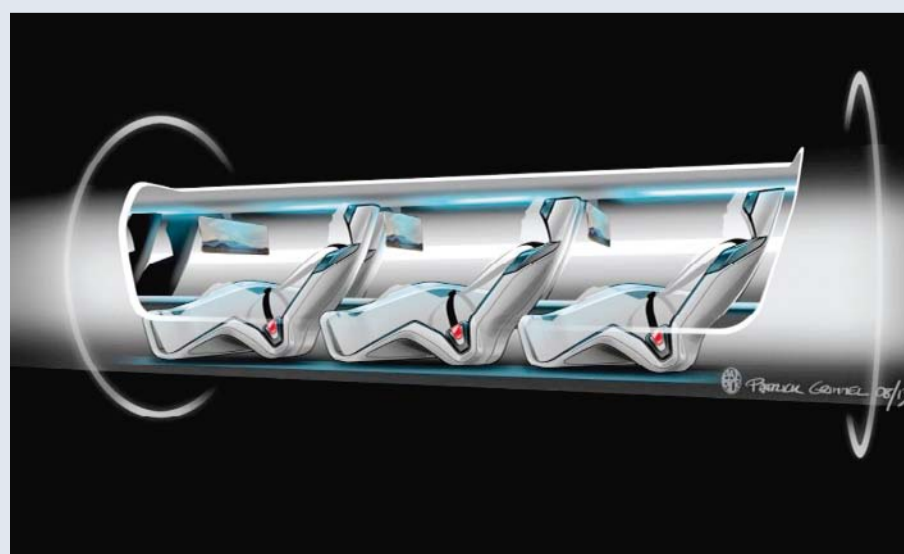
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was named the winner Saturday after a competition among more than 1,000 college students at Texas A&M University in College Station.

The Hyperloop is a high-speed ground transport concept proposed by Musk to transport "pods" of 20 to 30 people through a 12-foot diameter tube at speeds of roughly 700 mph.

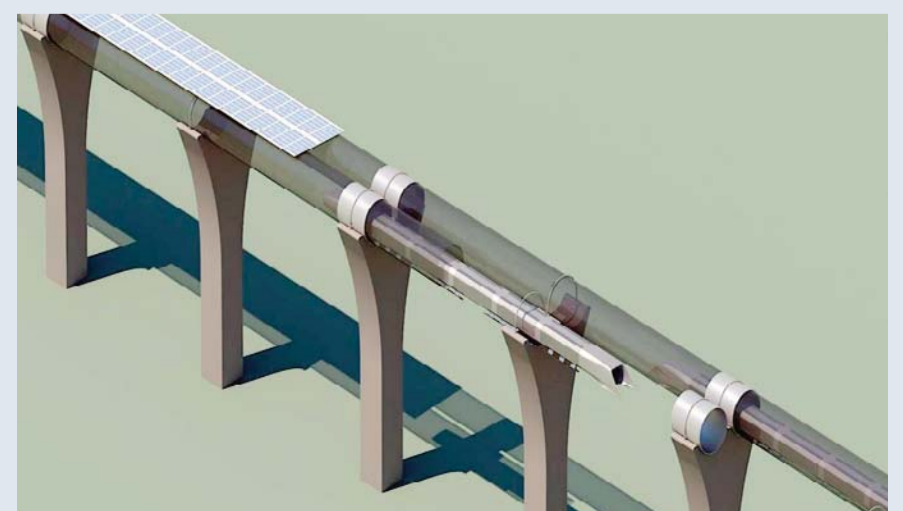
More than 100 university teams presented design concepts to a panel of judges in an event that began Friday.

Delft University of Technology from The Netherlands finished second, the University of Wisconsin third, Virginia Tech fourth and the University of California, Irvine, fifth.

The top teams will build their pods and test them at the world's first Hyperloop Test Track, being built adjacent to SpaceX's Hawthorne, California, headquarters. — AP



In this undated file conceptual design file rendering provided by SpaceX shows a Hyperloop passenger transport capsule within a tube, that would zoom passenger capsules through elevated tubes. — AP



This conceptual design file rendering provided by SpaceX shows a Hyperloop passenger transport capsule within a tube that would zoom passenger capsules through elevated tubes. Three Southern California companies plan to build tracks to test how well the speed-of-sound transportation concept known as the "hyperloop" works in the real world. — AP

SURGERY FOR BANGLADESH'S 'TREE MAN' TO REMOVE WARTS

DHAKA: A Bangladeshi father dubbed "Tree Man" for massive bark-like warts on his hands and feet will finally have surgery to remove the growths that first began appearing 10 years ago, a hospital said yesterday. Abul Bajandar, from the southern district of Khulna, was undergoing preparations for the surgery to cut out the growths weighing at least five kilograms (11 pounds) that have smothered his hands and feet. "Initially, I thought that they're harmless," the 26-year-old told AFP at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). "But slowly I lost all my ability to work. There are now dozens of two to three inch roots in both my hands. And there are some small ones in my legs," said Bajandar who was forced to quit working as a bicycle puller.

A team of doctors has been formed

to perform the operation at DMCH, Bangladesh's largest state-run hospital, which has decided to waive costs of the treatment. Tests are underway to ensure Bajandar's root-like warts can be removed surgically without damaging major nerves or causing any other health problems. The massive warts, which first started appearing when he was a teenager but began spreading rapidly four years ago, have been diagnosed as epidermodysplasia verruciformis, an extremely rare genetic skin disease that makes the person susceptible to skin growths. "Popularly it is known as tree-man disease," DMCH director Samanta Lal Sen told AFP.

"As far as we know there are three such cases in the world including Abul Bajandar. It is the first time we

have found such a rare case in Bangladesh," he said. An Indonesian villager with massive warts all over his body underwent a string of operations in 2008 to remove them. Bajandar's elder sister, Adhuri Bibi, said hundreds of people have visited their home in Khulna over the years to see the "Tree Man". "Even here at the hospital, hundreds have already gathered," she told AFP. Bajandar, a father of one, said he tried cutting the warts when they first appeared, but it was extremely painful. "After that I went to a village homeopath and herbal specialist. But those medicines only worsened my condition." He also consulted doctors in neighboring India, but he and his family could not afford the cost of the operation there. — AFP



DHAKA: Abul Bajandar (left), 26, dubbed "Tree Man" for massive bark-like warts on his hands and feet, sits at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. — AFP

INTO ZIKA'S HEART: THE UGANDAN FOREST WHERE VIRUS WAS FOUND

'WE HAVE NOT RECORDED A CASE IN UGANDA'

ZIKA, Uganda: Down winding paths through dense jungles, Gerald Mukisa kicks up the dry leaves noisily with his feet to provide warning sounds, noting that the late afternoon heat is "snake time". The forest is calm. Only the sound of insects, bird-song and the rustle of monkeys in the jungle canopy above disturb the air. It was here in the thick woodland of Zika forest, some 25 kilometers (15 miles) from Uganda's capital Kampala, that the mosquito-borne Zika virus was first discovered in 1947. The virus, linked to a surge in birth defects, is "spreading explosively", World Health Organization chief Margaret Chan said this week. An emergency meeting on the outbreak is due today.

Mukisa, who has worked to guard the forest for the past seven years, only found out about the virus that takes its name two weeks ago. "A few people who live nearby the forest and have heard about it are getting worried," he said. "Many others don't know about it." Days ago, the tropical Zika forest was a little-known reserve visited only by bird watchers and scientists. "Students come every week, coming from all over the world," said Mukisa, 50, proudly showing off a guest book with signatures and comments from the US, Canada, France and Germany, among other countries. "There are so many types of trees, and all sorts of birds."



Entebbe, Uganda: A tour guide walks in the Zika forest in Uganda, near Entebbe. — AFP photos

Jimmy Carter came to birdwatch

Most local cases of the virus were mild, resulting in rash, fever, and red eyes in a small fraction of cases. Global health authorities barely took notice until an outbreak on the Micronesian island of Yap in 2007. An outbreak that began last year in

Brazil has been blamed for a surge in birth defects with thousands of babies born with small heads, an incurable and sometimes fatal condition known as microcephaly. Uganda's health ministry is keen to point out it has no known cases of the virus, and that the current Americas' outbreak did not originate in East Africa. "We have not recorded a case in Uganda in several years and we don't have such an outbreak," the ministry said in a statement.

"As a country, our disease and epidemic response systems are strong as evidenced in the way we have handled past viral hemorrhagic fever outbreaks," Uganda has suffered outbreaks of Ebola in the past, as well as a mysterious illness known as "nodding disease". Today the forest, close to the main highway from Uganda's international airport at Entebbe to the nearby capital Kampala, remains a research site for the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI), an environmental health and protection agency founded in 1936, which is headquartered some 15 kilometers (nine miles)

away. "Warning! Uganda Virus Research Institute Land. Don't Trespass", reads one metal sign amid the thick vegetation, the red paint peeling in the sun. Ruth Mirembe, 24, who lives beside the forest, learnt about the virus on Facebook. "I'm not worried," she said.

Virus changes over time

Also spelt Ziika, the 12 hectare (30 acre) site with over 60 different types of mosquito, means "overgrown" in the local language, Luganda.

UVRI notes proudly the "most prominent visitor" to Zika was the former US President Jimmy Carter "who came on a bird watching tour". The details of the virus' discovery, written up in a 1952 paper by Britain's Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, described the "forested area called Zika", where scientists were researching yellow fever among small rhesus macaque monkeys. "This area of forest consists of a narrow, dense belt of high but broken canopy growth with clumps of large trees," the 1952 paper read. — AFP



Entebbe, Uganda: A picture shows a sign post in the Zika forest in Uganda.

YOUNGEST EVER CONJOINED TWINS SEPARATED IN SWITZERLAND

GENEVA: Swiss doctors have separated eight-day-old conjoined twin sisters fused at the liver and chest—the youngest ever successfully separated, a Swiss paper reported yesterday. Five surgeons, assisted by two nurses and six anaesthesiologists, carried out the successful, five-hour operation last month to separate the tiny identical twins, the Le Matin Dimanche weekly reported. Maya and Lydia were born at Bern hospital two months prematurely along with their triplet sister Kamilla on December 2.

The two were joined by the liver and the chest. The conjoined twins were initially stable and doctors had planned to allow them to settle after birth and separate them after a few months. But after a week, their situation deteriorated dramatically: one suffering from hypertension and the other suffering from the opposite condition, known as hypotension. Both conditions were life-threatening to the frail twins, who weighed just 1.1 kilo (2.4 pounds) each, and the doctors decided their only chance was attempting surgery never before performed on such young infants. Separating the babies' liver put both

under massive pressure, said Barbara Wildhaber, head of the paediatric surgery unit at the Geneva University Hospital, who headed the team that carried out the surgery on December 10.

"We were prepared for the death of both babies, it was so extreme," she told Le Matin Dimanche. But the surgery succeeded. "It was magnificent! I will remember it my entire career," Wildhaber said. Since their surgery, Maya and Lydia have been recovering well, they have put on weight and have begun breast feeding, the paper reported. The pair is among only about 200 separated conjoined twins currently living around the globe, it said. Also known as Siamese twins, conjoined siblings are identical twins who in rare cases, about one in 200,000 live births, are born with their skin and internal organs fused together, according to the University of Maryland Medical Centre website. About half are stillborn, and the survival rate is between five and 25 percent. They develop from a single egg, which splits in the case of healthy twins, but not fully in the case of conjoined siblings. — AFP

RESEARCHERS SAY ZIKA CASE FOUND IN INDONESIA

JAKARTA: An Indonesian research institute said yesterday it had found one positive Zika case on Sumatra island, adding that the virus has been circulating in the country "for a while". Indonesia's health ministry could not immediately comment on the report by the Eijkman Institute for Molecular Biology. The mosquito-borne virus has sparked widespread alarm in parts of the Americas. It is suspected of causing grave brain damage in newborns and has similar symptoms to dengue fever.

The institute said a 27-year-old man living in Jambi province on Sumatra island who had never travelled overseas had been found to be infected. It said it stumbled on the case while studying a dengue outbreak in the province. Researchers set aside specimens which produced dengue symptoms such as rashes and fever but which tested negative for dengue, and researched them further. "Out of the 103 (dengue-negative) specimens that we checked, we found one positive for Zika," the institute's

deputy director, Herawati Sudoyo, told AFP.

Zika is transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito, which also spreads dengue fever and the chikungunya virus. It produces flu-like symptoms including a low-grade fever, headaches, joint pain and rashes. Sudoyo said the specimens were taken during a dengue outbreak in Jambi between December 2014 and April 2015. It was not known how and when the man, who never travelled overseas, contracted the virus. "We concluded that the virus has been circulating in Indonesia for a while," Sudoyo said. The World Health Organization warned in the past week the virus is "spreading explosively" in the Americas, with three million to four million cases expected this year. Hardest-hit so far has been Brazil, with more than 1.5 million cases since April. Health authorities there are investigating the possible linkage between Zika and more than 3,400 suspected cases of microcephaly—abnormally small skulls and brains—in babies born to infected mothers. — AFP

AN ETHICAL WAY TO CHOOSE WHICH KIDS GET CHEMO DURING A SHORTAGE?

NEW YORK: When chemotherapy is in short supply, doctors should choose kids to receive treatment based on which patients have the best odds of being cured by the drugs, argues a group of oncologists. Shortages of life-saving cancer medicines for children are frequent and can complicate typical treatment protocols, creating substantial ethical challenges, the doctors write in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute. "Curability, prognosis, and the incremental importance of a particular drug to a given patient's outcome are the critical factors to consider when deciding how to allocate scarce life-saving drugs," Dr Yoram Unguru of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and colleagues write in the commentary.

While shortages may occur for a variety of reasons, they are particularly common for generic injected medicines and happen frequently in the US, the authors note. There are about 265 drugs currently in short supply in the US, down from a peak of 320 as of September 2014. The first response to a shortage should be to maximize efficiency and minimize waste in using available supplies, the authors argue. After that, when there is no longer enough medicine to go around, clinicians should consider curability based on evidence that points to survival odds, taking into account how well a medicine works for a particular tumor type as well as individual patient characteristics.

Doctors might, for example, consider skipping one drug in short supply when there is another widely available medicine

that could produce similar survival odds, even if the alternative drug doesn't necessarily offer children as much time before symptoms worsen. When the chances of survival are widely different, it may be clear-cut to give the child with better odds the medicine. But when survival odds are similar, for instance the difference between 70 percent and 80 percent, this is no longer an ideal way to ration scarce chemotherapy, argue the authors, who declined to be interviewed. Tumor type also matters.

Larger quantities

For example, if injectable methotrexate is in short supply, it makes more sense to prioritize children with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) over kids with bone malignancies known as osteosarcoma because more evidence points to the effectiveness of this drug for ALL, the authors argue. Phase of treatment is important, too. A child recently diagnosed with ALL, for example, may have a larger disease burden and a greater need for chemotherapy than another kid who has already been in treatment for a while and is taking medicine to help prevent tumors from returning. In addition, kids who need only a small amount of medicine for a course of treatment might get priority over children who would need larger quantities, the authors suggest. Clinicians should consider this ethical framework for rationing scarce cancer drugs in the absence of a nationwide policy spelling out the best way to dole out chemotherapy during a shortage, the authors conclude. — Reuters

COFFEE DIET WOOS AMERICANS WITH 'BULLETPROOF' PLEDGE

LOS ANGELES: A new coffee diet claiming to help lose weight and improve IQ is gaining a major following in the United States—and raising eyebrows among doctors skeptical of its benefits. Dave Asprey, the founder and CEO of the "Bulletproof Diet," pulls no punches when making claims for his radical health recipe, cup of coffee in hand. "You become a better employee, better parent, better friend, better person," said the former Silicon Valley entrepreneur now living in Canada. "My energy changes, my brain changes. I can pay attention, I can follow through."

The cornerstone of Asprey's diet is a drink called Bulletproof Coffee, a modified version of the caffeinated beverage which uses beans stripped of mycotoxins—essentially mold that forms during the fermentation process. Add to that butter from grass-fed cows and medium-chain triglycerides (MCT) oil. The ingredients are blended together to produce a creamy, naturally sweet beverage a bit like a milkshake, taken at breakfast in lieu of a meal. "So you drink a couple of these and all of a sudden you don't care about food for a very long time," said Asprey. "Your brain has energy that doesn't come from sugar, you didn't want sugar in your coffee and you lose the craving and you sort of have freedom."

Asprey used to weigh 300 pounds,

and spent much of his life battling to lose weight. The coffee diet idea came to him during a trip to Tibet in 2004. He was weak with altitude sickness while traveling in the mountainous region—until he drank yak butter tea. Asprey was so impressed by the energetic effect of the drink that he tried to reproduce it at home. After years of trying all kinds of ingredients and combinations, he unveiled a patented formula in 2009 through his blog and on social media, claiming the coffee and an associated health regimen helped him attain a "bodybuilder" physique.

'Better our body'

Asprey's diet is now one of the most popular in the United States, where a third of the population of some 320 million is obese. And his modified coffee has become the first link in an empire that includes the New York Times bestselling book "The Bulletproof Diet." In addition to people looking to lose weight, it attracts athletes and supporters of "biohacking," a movement that combines biology and food technology to improve physical and mental capacity. "Me and my wife are in the fitness industry, so we are trying to do things that better our body," said Justin Lovato, a burly personal trainer.

Past the hit of morning coffee, the method advocates a diet free of gluten



NEW YORK: The British Dietetic Association listed the "Bulletproof" method among its top 10 celebrity diets to avoid for 2016. — AFP

and sugar that draws around half of its calories from "healthy fats" such as MCT oil, 20 percent from protein—preferably grass-fed meat and dairy or wild caught seafood—and the rest from organic fruit and vegetables. Other foods are classified as "bulletproof," "suspect" or "kryptonite" according to how they fit into the diet's categories and meals are taken on a set schedule.

A young athlete who gave his name

as Ray said drinking the coffee every morning "increases your energy levels for sure." "You don't feel sleepy anymore, you don't have the crash I would say after 20 minutes. Its effects are longer" than any of the products he has tested before, Ray added. Asprey also advocates brief bursts of high-intensity exercise, with a focus on allowing the body to recuperate with food and sleep. — AFP

DIABETES DOCTORS WELCOME NOVEL ONCE WEEKLY DIABETES TREATMENT TO KUWAIT MOH

KUWAIT: An innovative new class of medicines for type 2 diabetes (T2D) will soon be available to patients in Kuwait MoH and provides a much-needed alternative treatment option for people with the disease. T2D is a common disease on the increase. Recent figures from the International Diabetes Federation show that almost 37 million people in the MENA region have diabetes, which if left unchecked is predicted to nearly double by 2035. Kuwait has the second highest comparative prevalence in the region, with an estimated 20% of the population affected.

Dr Waleed Al-Dahi (Consultant Endocrine & Diabetes, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital), Prof Dr Nabila Abdella (Professor of Medicine & Consultant Diabetologist, Mubarak Hospital) and Dr Thaier Almuaili (Consultant Internist & Diabetologist, Al-Amiri hospital and Dasman Diabetes Institute), three experts in the field, said that in the early stages T2D is often managed with oral treatments combined with lifestyle modifications that include increasing

physical activity and following a healthy diet.

Best control

"Unfortunately diabetes is a progressive disease and despite a person's best efforts, the reality is that most people will reach a stage when it is appropriate to consider an injectable therapy to get the best control of their disease," Prof Dr Nabila Abdella said.

"Until now this usually meant starting insulin therapy, which is a big step for many people," Prof Dr Nabila Abdella said. "A lot of different anxieties come up, including a fear of hypoglycaemia, which is when your blood sugar becomes dangerously low," she said. "People are also concerned about putting on weight," Prof Dr Nabila Abdella said.

Dr Waleed Al-Dahi welcomed the availability of the new injectable medicines - called glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RA) - as an effective alternative to basal insulin therapy for those failing on oral therapy. "Each year brings new advances and

we can now offer our patients an effective treatment with a very low risk of hypoglycaemia and unwanted side effects like weight gain," he said. "And this is with a weekly injection so the needle burden is much lower compared with insulin," he added.

Extensive experience

Following the MoH approval AstraZeneca, one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, will launch its Bydureon Pen, which is a unique pre-filled, single-use pen injector containing Exenatide, a medicine with extensive experience globally. In studies Bydureon has shown to significantly reduce HbA1c levels - a marker of how much sugar a person has in their blood - by up to 2% from an average starting level of 8.3%. Weight loss, as an additional benefit to diabetic patients, was also seen in the studies.

Dr Thaier Almuaili said if all the global experience with Bydureon was added



KUWAIT: (From left) Dr Waleed Al-Dahi, Consultant Endocrine & Diabetes, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, Prof Dr Nabila Abdella, Professor of Medicine & Consultant Diabetologist, Mubarak Hospital, Dr Thaier Almuaili, Consultant Internist & Diabetologist, Al-Amiri hospital and Dasman Diabetes Institute and representative from AstraZeneca.

together, it would equal around 3.8 million patient years of treatment since the medicine was first introduced. "Patient years" is a representation of the total person-time on

Bydureon in clinical trials, and is calculated by adding the number of patients in a group and multiplying that number with the number of years that patients are in a study.



FOUR YEARS OF POSTGRADUATE DIABETES EDUCATION MARKED

KUWAIT: Diabetes is a significant problem in Kuwait where it has been estimated that up to 1 in 4 of the adult population suffers from the disease. Since 2011 the University of Dundee, a world leader in clinical diabetes care and diabetes research, in partnership with the Dasman Diabetes Institute (which was established by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences "KFAS"), with its mission to prevent, control and mitigate the impact of diabetes in Kuwait have created and delivered a

Postgraduate Masters program in Diabetes Care, Education and Management. This program is available to a wide range of Kuwait based healthcare professionals who study part time while working.

Through face-to-face and innovative blended, interactive teaching, the program enables healthcare professionals to provide more effective care for their patients. They gain specialized knowledge of diabetes along with the educational and management training that

supports them in effective communication with colleagues and patients.

The program is flexible, allowing students to choose modules from a range of clinical, management or education based topics that are most relevant to their professional requirements. Throughout their studies students undertake multiple work-based development projects as assignments with the aim of immediately improving and developing diabetes healthcare provision and reflective practice throughout



Dr Qais Al-Duwairi

healthcare practices in Kuwait. So far, over 260 students have enrolled in the program and collectively they have achieved over 1000 work-based projects, directly impacting diabetes care in Kuwait.

The second Graduation Ceremony yesterday marked the successful achievements of over 40 post-graduate students giving the program a total of almost 100 graduates. For all students the Graduation at the Dasman Diabetes Institute is the pinnacle of three years of hard work and dedication and Sunday's celebration brings together dignitaries from across Kuwait and Scotland to celebrate their considerable achievements.



A PLEA FOR HELP IN BRAZIL CITY WHERE ZIKA FIRST CONFIRMED

CAMAARI, Brazil: Camacari was in chaos, its hospitals overflowing with sick people desperate to know what was happening to them, never suspecting theirs would be the first confirmed cases of Zika in Brazil. In the city where the virus made its explosive debut in early 2015, anxious residents asked themselves: Was it dengue? An allergic reaction to contaminated water? The "mysterious" disease, people called it, while medical reports referred to it as "undetermined exzematous syndrome," noting the skin irritation associated with it.

"My two children and I got sick. In my neighborhood, nearly everybody became infected," said Vanessa Machado dos Santos, who makes a living selling coconut water in this torrid city, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Salvador in the northeastern state of Bahia. "Our skin began to itch, we had fever, headaches and body aches, a lot of pain in our joints," she told AFP. Sometime later, the 35-year-old was told that what she was feeling was caused by the Zika virus, but she still had her doubts. "Nobody knew much about it that it was like dengue, that it was carried by mosquitoes, that it came from another country. We heard a lot of stories about the famous Zika," she said. "Was I scared? Of course! We didn't know what was coming next. You are always afraid of the unknown."

Plea for help

It was April 2015 and the hospitals were inundated in this city of 200,000. Antonio Carlos Bandeira, a doctor at the Santa Helena hospital, thought the syndrome had to be identified with urgency, so he contacted Gubio Soares, a virologist he knew at the Federal University of Bahia. There were so many cases at the time, that the call to Soares was "truly a plea for help," Bandeira recalled. Judging by the symptoms and explosive contagion—"there were entire buildings full of sick people," Bandeira said—they

assumed it was an arbovirus, the generic name for viruses transmitted by insects or other animals, like dengue or chikungunya.

In his laboratory at the university's Institute of Health Sciences, Soares and his colleague Silvia Sardi focused on 20 samples from patients in Camacari. They hit upon the villain: Zika, which was first identified in 1947 in Africa, and had surfaced in the Pacific islands in 2007 and 2013, but with limited impact. "I had read interesting studies on Zika. Parallel to that, I saw pictures of people infected with the virus. I discussed it with Silvia Sardi, we did the tests and they were conclusive," he said.

"And that's how we identified it for the first time in Brazil." That was on April 28, 2015. The next day, Brazilian health officials made the finding public.

Self-diagnosis via TV

At around the same time, Lucienne Ferrera was feeling sick. She had rashes on her skin, some fever and little energy to work at her poultry store in Candeias, 30 kilometers from Camacari. "I had itching, fever and discomfort all day. But at night, watching the news on television, they said there was a new virus, Zika. That's how I found out," she said with a laugh. "Later when I went to the doctor, he told me he didn't know about it. So even for them it was a mystery."

From Brazil, the virus has spread rapidly through the Americas. It is believed to have arrived in the country during the World Cup in mid-2014, with the first cases, only confirmed later, occurring in the state of Rio Grande do Norte. Still to be determined is whether the virus, as researchers suspect, is responsible for a surge in cases of microcephaly, an untreatable condition in which babies are born with small heads and brains. A year after the outbreak in Brazil, Zika remains a mystery, with no known vaccine, and many other countries now feeling its effect. — AFP

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AL MULLA EXCHANGE WIDENS ITS NETWORK WITH THE 67TH BRANCH IN KUWAIT

Al Mulla Exchange, Kuwait's leading exchange company, opened its 67th branch in Kuwait on 27th January 2016, adding to its wide network to serve customers all across Kuwait. The new branch, located in

Mangaf, is the third outlet in the area, and like all the other branches of Al Mulla Exchange, it is well located with ample parking space to enable customers with fast and easy service. In his statement after the launch of the

branch, Al Mulla Exchange's General Manager, Rakesh Joshi, said that Mangaf is a strategic location for the exchange company, "as there are very few companies providing similar services in the area. This is our third branch in

Mangaf, and we are expanding in the area because we are aware of the demand for our services. Our aim is to get as close to our customers as possible, so our services become easily accessible to all."

Moreover, he noted that this year will see further expansion of Al Mulla Exchange, taking the company's leading position in the market even higher. The exact address of the new branch is block 4, street 30, building 34, Mangaf.



RANI RAAD APPOINTED PRESIDENT, CNN INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL

Rani R Raad has been appointed to the new role of President, CNN International Commercial. In this role, Raad will continue to be responsible for CNN's commercial functions outside the US. In addition, the development of Turner International's programmatic trading strategy will be facilitated under his leadership. Previously as Executive Vice-President and Chief Commercial Officer, CNN

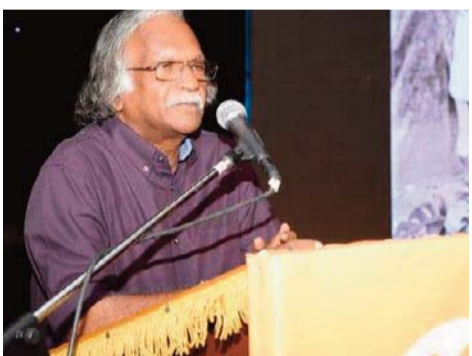
International, Raad has led the CNN International Commercial group since it was created in 2013 to directly align all of CNN's international commercial activity into one organization. This activity spans core business activities such as advertising sales, content sales and partnerships, business development, marketing and research. Gerhard Zeiler, President, Turner International, to whom Raad reports, said: "Rani has a remarkable track record in

leading a diverse portfolio of commercial initiatives across international markets. He has built a new digital team that is the authority in this space and has transformed the commercial operation for CNN internationally, bringing in a new leadership team to deliver best-in-class and award-winning ad sales solutions as well as re-setting the licensing and content sales businesses to yield a suite of new branded initiatives around the globe."

Rani Raad said: "I'm excited and passionate about the role that CNN continues to play in today's fast-changing news and media landscape. As the world's news leader, our commitment to innovation underpins our commercial activities as well as the brand's editorial output. I look forward to being part of this change as we bring to market even more sophisticated, data-driven and creative solutions for our wide range of commercial partners."



NSS KUWAIT CELEBRATES MANNAM JAYANTHI 2016



The 139th birth anniversary of Bharath Kesari Mannathu Padmanabhan was celebrated by Nair Service Society (NSS) Kuwait on January 22 at Marina Hall, Touristic Park, Abbasiya from 5.30 pm onwards. The function was presided by NSS vice president Sreeekumar and was inaugurated by A K Sreevastava, Second Secretary, Indian Embassy, Kuwait by lighting the lamp. Renowned South Indian film director, producer, lyricist and music director Sreeekumar Thampi was the chief guest.

S Vijayakumar, General Secretary in his speech remembered the great efforts of Mannath Padmanabhan in the formation of NSS and welcomed everyone to the function. Vice President Sreeekumar gave his presidential address. Sunil Menon, NSS Patron and Deepa Pillai, Vanitha Samajam convener gave felicitation speeches. Sreeekumar Thampi was honored with a ponnada and a memento by NSS Kuwait. He delivered an inspirational speech about the life of Mannath Padmanabhan and urged everyone to stay together and work

hard to achieve their goals. Guna Prasad, Treasurer expressed vote of thanks. There were documentary shows on the life of Mannath Padmanabhan, Sreeekumar Thampi and the welfare activities of NSS Kuwait. The academic achievers awards were given by Sreeekumar Thampi to the children of NSS members for their outstanding performance in the 10th and 12th standard CBSE examinations. The cultural program was a great success and a memorable one. The main attraction of the evening was the

Bharathanatyam performance by Paris Laxmi. She won the hearts of all by her graceful movements, expressions and the ease of performance. Pallippuram Sunil performed "Poothanamoksham" and delighted everyone with his Kathakali skills. The musical entertainment by the trio Sachin Warriar, Malavika Anilkumar with Asianet fame Aneesh at keyboard mesmerized the audience with melodies and fast numbers. Kalabhavan Sathesheer entertained all with his comedy and mimicry skills.

MMF, KUWAIT HOLDS MEDIA CONFERENCE



The media has become a critically influential force in the contemporary society as it has the power even to determine the fortunes of political parties today, said C. Gouridasan Nair, a well-known Indian journalist and Associate Editor of The Hindu,

Trivandrum edition. Delivering a keynote speech on 'Media and Society' at the Malayali Media Forum, Kuwait's annual conference on January 28th at the Indian Community School, Khaitan, Nair said, in India, the media has demolished the conventional structures of



several political organizations by swaying the public opinion in favor or against them. With the mushrooming of television channels and social media, political decision-making has become virtually impossible without taking into account the views of the media be it posi-

tive or negative. Indian Embassy second secretary A K Srivastava inaugurated the three-day conference while MMF General Convener Abdulfattah Thayyil presided over the meeting. A souvenir, edited by Muhammad Riyaz, was released on the occasion. Convener

Muneer Ahamed welcomed the gathering while Anwar Sadath Thalassery proposed a vote of thanks. A cross section of the Indian community attended the conference which concluded yesterday. MMF, Kuwait is a forum of Malayali journalists working in Kuwait.



MILLENNIUM HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTRE CELEBRATES HALA FEBRUARY IN STYLE

In line with the Hala February Festival and the Kuwait Liberation and National Day Celebrations, Millennium Hotel and Convention Centre Kuwait is pleased to announce its exclusive packages for the month of February.

Dani Saleh, Area General Manager of Millennium & Copthorne Hotels in Kuwait, said, "In accord with the hotel management's strategy to further promote tourism in Kuwait, we

take pleasure in introducing these exceptional offers in time for the "Hala February" festival celebrations, targeting both locals and foreigners." He added, "Every year, February is always filled with special events, and in celebration of the "Hala February" festival and Kuwait's Liberation & National Days, which turn Kuwait into a tourist spot as many people visit the country during this time both for leisure and business. Not only do we strive to provide our

guests with an unforgettable stay, but also offer them great value and spectacular programs that exceed their expectations."

Other than the Exceptional Room Rate Offer, the hotel has a celebratory accommodation package that brings family-oriented opportunities to enjoy the comfort of well-appointed guestrooms and suites, together with a host of dining options in our "Pay 2, Stay 3" Queen Suite Package that provides guests

with a complimentary third night for every two consecutive paid nights, which includes free Limousine airport transfer service, international buffet breakfast, complimentary access to the gym and heated Pool, and free Wi-Fi.

Millennium Hotel & Convention Centre Kuwait is one of the premier 5-star hotels in the country, offering 295 luxurious accommodations and top-of-the-line facilities that include an outdoor swimming pool, a health club with

a modern techno gym, and a sauna and steam room. Situated in Salmiya, it is 15 minutes away from Kuwait International Airport, and a 10-minute drive from prime shopping areas. The hotel also offers a variety of cuisines in which diners can choose from the international buffet to local Kuwait specialties at the Lamar International Restaurant, or simply relax and enjoy excellent coffee or tea concoctions and good conversation at the Library Cafe.



THE REGENCY HOTEL INAUGURATES THE 'FROM GREECE TO KUWAIT' FOOD FESTIVAL

In line with its continuous efforts to introduce an extensive culinary offerings from around the globe, the Regency Hotel, Kuwait in cooperation with the Greek Embassy and under the patronage of His Excellency Dr Theodoros J Theodorou, and on the 7th February, 2016 is proudly inaugurating "From Greece to Kuwait" five days food promotion at Silk Road; the

hotel's elegant main restaurant in Kuwait. The promo will feature a selective collection of Greek food specialties and flavors introduced by Greek Guest Chefs hosted from the renowned Crete, Greece based hotel "Minoia Palace Hotel". Minoia Palace Hotel's culinary team is led by Chef Yiannis Tsiourakis and Chef Papaderakis Michalis. They believe that

Greek food has its own distinctive aroma and taste. Chef Yiannis Tsiourakis's mission is to introduce the culinary delights of Mediterranean-style dishes to the people in Kuwait. Tsiourakis is one of the few chefs who uses olive oil almost exclusively as the main ingredient for all his culinary creations and second on his list of favorite ingredients, after

olive oil is horta, which are wild greens combined with meat and fish. Commenting on this event, the General Manager of The Regency hotel, Kuwait, Mr Aurelio Giraudo said "we are so excited about the debut of the Greek food festival in our Silk Road restaurant. It is another initiative that complements and sustains our positioning as

number one and the leader of luxury in the market with all that we do and offer to our clients". Silk Road restaurant in The Regency hotel, Kuwait is one of the finest restaurants, offering in addition to its finest selections of flavors and dishes, a panoramic view of the Arabian Gulf and the hotel's outdoor leisure facilities.

GUST HOSTS 24TH CROSS CULTURAL DIWANIYA

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) yesterday hosted the latest Cross Cultural Diwaniya (CCD) on its campus, where people from various backgrounds meet to exchange views and promote critical thinking and progressive discussions on the most relevant and culturally significant issues of the day. Last night's discussion touched on the topics of human rights and citizenship in Kuwait.

The event, which was open to the general public, was officially opened by CCD Founder, Faisal Al Fuhaid. This was followed by a brief introduction and two 45 minute rounds of structured discussions moderated by Dr Rania Al Nakib, Assistant Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at GUST.

CCD Founder, Mr Faisal Al Fuhaid, said, "By providing a public forum for people to discuss important issues within Kuwaiti society goes to show how seriously we take the Cross Cultural Diwaniya. Years from now, I want this to happen naturally with people hosting their own diwanias and opening them to people from different backgrounds and

schools of thought. By doing so, social cohesion and understanding amongst the people of Kuwait will increase."

The Cross Cultural Diwaniya has become a landmark of debate and intelligent discussion, and tackles important and sensitive issues head on. Recent topics examined include the correlation between religion and spirituality, feminism, the rights of migrant workers, mental healthcare in Kuwait, and the recent bombing of the Imam Al Sadiq Mosque by an ISIS suicide bomber.

Assistant Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at GUST, Dr Al Nakib, said, "Last night's Cross-Cultural Diwaniya explored the idea of transformative citizenship through the lens of human rights. Issues covered included the difference between universal rights and citizen entitlements; the tensions between human rights, culture, and religion; the demise of national citizenship; and civic responsibility and action." The Cross Cultural Diwaniya, occurs monthly, is open to everyone, and is free of charge to attend.



Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel gold winners of culinary show.

TALENTED CHEFS AT JUMEIRAH MESSILAH BEACH HOTEL & SPA WIN AWARDS AT HORECA

Top chefs from Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa competed in a series of live culinary shows and won three gold medals at the fifth edition of Horeca Kuwait. The event is the country's largest annual exhibition held for the hospitality, catering and food industries and was hosted at the hotel's Badriah Ballroom for the third consecutive year.

Chefs from across hotels and restaurants in Kuwait competed in a series of live culinary shows which

were judged by a panel of international chefs from the Middle East and Europe. Chefs at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa won gold in the live meat contest, live traditional Arabic mezze competition and live cooking out of the basket competition. Seven silver medals were won for the three plated desserts presentation, fruit carving, sushi contest, ice-carving competition and single tier novelty cake preparation.

A further eight bronze medals, eleven merits and two hygiene

awards were also won across several categories. General Manager, Hakan Petek, said: "We are delighted to have successfully hosted this exhibition for the third year which is held in high regard in the hospitality industry. Badriah Ballroom was the ideal platform to demonstrate our culinary excellence, the latest innovations and new products in the food and hospitality sector. I wish to congratulate all the chefs for their participation and I am proud of their outstanding efforts."



- 03:35 Wild Iberia
- 04:25 North America
- 05:15 Deadly Islands
- 06:02 Wildest Africa
- 06:49 Wild Things With Dominic Monaghan
- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Too Cute!
- 09:15 River Monsters
- 10:10 Treehouse Masters
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Too Cute!
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 River Monsters
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 Treehouse Masters
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 The Lion Man
- 17:55 The Lion Man
- 18:25 River Monsters
- 19:20 Dinosaurs In The Outback
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Gangland Killers
- 22:05 Treehouse Masters
- 23:00 Dinosaurs In The Outback
- 23:55 Gator Boys



- 03:40 Storage Hunters
- 04:05 The Liquidator
- 04:30 Storage Wars Canada
- 05:00 What Happened Next?
- 05:30 How Stuff Works
- 06:00 Siberian Cut
- 06:50 Cuban Chrome
- 07:40 Misfit Garage
- 08:30 Storage Hunters
- 08:55 The Liquidator
- 09:20 Storage Wars Canada
- 09:45 What Happened Next?
- 10:10 How Stuff Works
- 10:35 Fast N' Loud
- 11:25 Street Outlaws
- 12:15 Street Outlaws
- 13:05 Storage Hunters
- 13:30 The Liquidator
- 13:55 Storage Wars Canada
- 14:20 Siberian Cut
- 15:10 Cuban Chrome
- 16:00 Misfit Garage
- 16:50 What Happened Next?
- 17:15 How Stuff Works
- 17:40 Gold Rush
- 18:30 Gold Divers
- 19:20 Troy
- 20:10 The Liquidator
- 20:35 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
- 21:00 Gold Rush
- 21:50 Gold Divers
- 22:40 Catching Monsters
- 23:30 Cuban Chrome



- 03:42 Food Factory
- 07:37 How Do They Do It?
- 08:23 Mythbusters
- 09:08 How The Universe Works
- 09:53 Prototype This
- 10:38 How It's Made
- 11:00 How It's Made
- 11:23 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 12:08 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 12:53 Prototype This
- 13:38 Mythbusters
- 14:23 How It's Made
- 14:46 How It's Made
- 15:10 How The Universe Works
- 15:57 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 16:44 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 17:31 Prototype This
- 18:18 How The Universe Works
- 19:05 Weird Or What?
- 19:50 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 20:40 How The Universe Works
- 21:25 How It's Made
- 21:50 How It's Made
- 22:15 Mythbusters
- 23:00 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 23:45 How The Universe Works



- 03:10 House Of Horrors: Kidnapped
- 03:35 House Of Horrors: Kidnapped
- 04:00 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 04:45 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion
- 05:30 California Investigator
- 05:55 California Investigator
- 06:20 The Will
- 07:10 The Will
- 08:00 Dr G: Medical Examiner
- 08:50 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 09:40 Fatal Encounters
- 10:30 Murder Shift
- 11:20 Deadly Affairs
- 12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 13:00 The Will
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 California Investigator
- 15:05 Dr G: Medical Examiner
- 15:55 Fatal Encounters
- 16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 17:35 Murder Shift
- 18:25 I Almost Got Away With It
- 19:15 The Will
- 20:05 Deadly Affairs
- 20:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 21:45 California Investigator
- 22:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 22:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 23:00 House Of Horrors: Kidnapped
- 23:25 House Of Horrors: Kidnapped
- 23:50 California Investigator



- 03:15 The Hive
- 03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 04:10 Wolfblood
- 04:35 Wolfblood
- 05:00 Violetta
- 05:45 The Hive
- 05:50 Mouk
- 06:00 Lolirock
- 06:25 Sofia The First
- 06:50 That's So Raven
- 07:15 Gravity Falls
- 07:40 Jessie
- 08:05 Shake It Up
- 08:30 Shake It Up
- 08:55 That's So Raven
- 09:20 That's So Raven
- 09:45 Austin & Ally
- 10:10 Austin & Ally
- 10:35 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:00 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:25 Jessie
- 11:50 Jessie
- 12:20 Hank Zipzer

- 12:45 Fish Hooks
- 13:10 Good Luck Charlie
- 13:35 I Didn't Do It
- 14:00 Dog With A Blog
- 14:30 H2O: Just Add Water
- 14:55 Girl Meets World
- 15:20 Liv And Maddie
- 15:45 Jessie
- 16:10 Violetta
- 17:00 The Next Step
- 17:25 Liv And Maddie
- 17:50 Jessie
- 18:15 Austin & Ally
- 18:40 I Didn't Do It
- 19:05 H2O: Just Add Water
- 19:30 Violetta
- 20:20 The Next Step
- 20:45 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:10 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:35 H2O: Just Add Water
- 22:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:10 Hank Zipzer
- 23:35 Binny And The Ghost



- 03:15 Botched
- 04:10 Botched
- 05:05 E! Entertainment Special
- 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 07:50 Style Star
- 08:20 E! News
- 09:15 Giuliana & Bill
- 10:15 Giuliana & Bill
- 11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
- 12:05 E! News
- 13:05 Dash Dolls
- 14:05 Hollywood Cycle
- 15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 17:00 Stewarts And Hamiltons
- 18:00 E! News
- 19:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 20:00 House Of DVF
- 21:00 WAGs
- 22:00 WAGs
- 23:00 Sex With Brody
- 23:30 Fashion Bloggers



- 03:00 Ching's Amazing Asia
- 03:30 Ching's Amazing Asia
- 04:00 The Freshman Class
- 04:30 The Freshman Class
- 05:00 Chopped
- 06:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 06:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 07:00 Man Fire Food
- 07:30 Man Fire Food
- 08:00 Chopped
- 09:00 Grandma's Secret Cookbook Special
- 09:30 Grandma's Secret Cookbook Special
- 10:00 The Kitchen
- 11:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 11:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 12:00 Chopped
- 13:00 Guy's Big Bite
- 13:30 Guy's Big Bite
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 15:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 16:00 Chopped
- 17:00 The Kitchen
- 18:00 Siba's Table
- 18:30 Grandma's Secret Cookbook
- 19:00 Chopped
- 20:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 21:00 Staten Island Cakes
- 22:00 Mystery Diners
- 22:30 Mystery Diners
- 23:00 BBQ Crawl



- 03:25 Safe House
- 04:20 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 05:15 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
- 06:10 Cook Me The Money
- 07:05 Coach Trip
- 07:30 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 08:25 Code Of A Killer
- 09:20 Murdoch Mysteries
- 10:15 The Chase
- 11:10 Coach Trip
- 11:35 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
- 12:30 Cook Me The Money
- 13:25 Emmerdale

- 13:50 Coach Trip
- 14:20 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Murdoch Mysteries
- 15:35 Pick Me!
- 16:30 Vera
- 18:20 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 19:10 Coronation Street
- 19:35 Pick Me!
- 20:30 Vera
- 22:20 Coronation Street
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?



- 03:50 Big Fish, Texas
- 04:45 Brave New World
- 05:40 Prospectors
- 06:05 Prospectors
- 06:35 Planes That Changed The World
- 07:30 Brain Games
- 07:55 Brain Games
- 08:25 80s: The Decade That Made Us
- 09:20 World's Toughest Fixes
- 10:15 Lawless Island
- 11:10 Time Scanners
- 12:05 Taiwan: Island Of Fish
- 13:00 80s: The Decade That Made Us
- 14:00 Science Of Stupid
- 14:30 Hacking The System
- 15:00 Planes That Changed The World
- 16:00 Lawless Island
- 17:00 Taiwan: Island Of Fish
- 18:00 Taiwan: Island Of Fish
- 19:00 Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey
- 20:00 Lawless Island
- 20:50 Taiwan: Island Of Fish
- 21:40 Taiwan: Island Of Fish
- 22:30 Planes That Changed The World
- 23:20 Prospectors
- 23:45 Prospectors



- 03:00 Last Man Standing
- 03:30 The Goldbergs
- 04:00 Men At Work
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 My Big Fat Greek Life
- 06:00 Tii Death
- 06:30 Mad Love
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 Men At Work
- 08:30 My Big Fat Greek Life
- 08:00 Last Man Standing
- 09:30 Grandfathered
- 10:00 Melissa & Joey
- 10:30 Mad Love
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 Tii Death
- 12:30 Men At Work
- 13:00 My Big Fat Greek Life
- 13:30 Community
- 14:00 The Goldbergs
- 14:30 Grandfathered
- 15:00 Melissa & Joey
- 15:30 Mr. Robinson
- 16:30 Tii Death
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 Last Man Standing
- 18:30 The Goldbergs
- 19:00 The Grinder
- 19:30 Melissa & Joey
- 20:00 Bad Judge
- 20:30 Marry Me
- 21:00 Mr. Robinson
- 22:00 South Park
- 22:30 Man Seeking Woman
- 23:00 The Big C
- 23:30 Bad Judge



- 03:00 Show Me A Hero
- 04:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 05:00 Good Morning America
- 06:00 Royal Pains
- 07:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 08:00 American Crime
- 09:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 10:00 Royal Pains
- 11:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 12:00 Coronation Street
- 12:30 Coronation Street
- 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 American Crime
- 15:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 American Crime
- 19:00 Scandal
- 20:00 How To Get Away With Murder
- 21:00 Quantico
- 22:00 Rosewood
- 23:00 Allegiance



- 04:00 Northmen: A Viking Saga
- 06:00 Marvel's Next Avengers: Heroes Of Tomorrow
- 08:00 Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief
- 10:00 Age Of Dinosaurs
- 11:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 14:00 Breakdown
- 15:45 The Prince
- 17:30 Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief
- 19:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 22:00 The Bourne Legacy



- 04:00 Marvel's Next Avengers: Heroes Of Tomorrow-PG
- 06:00 Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief-PG15
- 08:00 Age Of Dinosaurs-PG15
- 09:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy-PG15
- 12:00 Breakdown-PG15
- 13:45 The Prince-PG15
- 15:30 Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief-PG15
- 17:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 20:00 The Bourne Legacy-PG15
- 22:15 13 Sins-PG15



- 04:00 Down To Earth
- 06:00 Happy Gilmore
- 08:00 Orange County
- 10:00 Down To Earth
- 12:00 Christmas At Castlebury Hall
- 14:00 Encino Man
- 16:00 Orange County
- 18:00 Pitch Perfect
- 20:00 22 Jump Street
- 22:00 Behaving Badly



- 03:00 Memorial Day (2011)-PG15
- 05:30 Two Men In Town-PG15
- 07:15 Shadow Witness-PG15
- 09:00 My Piece Of The Pie-PG15
- 11:00 Two Men In Town-PG15
- 13:00 Return To Nim's Island-PG
- 15:00 Yellow Rock-PG15
- 17:00 My Piece Of The Pie-PG15
- 19:00 Crawl-PG15
- 21:00 Reach Me-PG15
- 23:00 Afternoon Delight-18



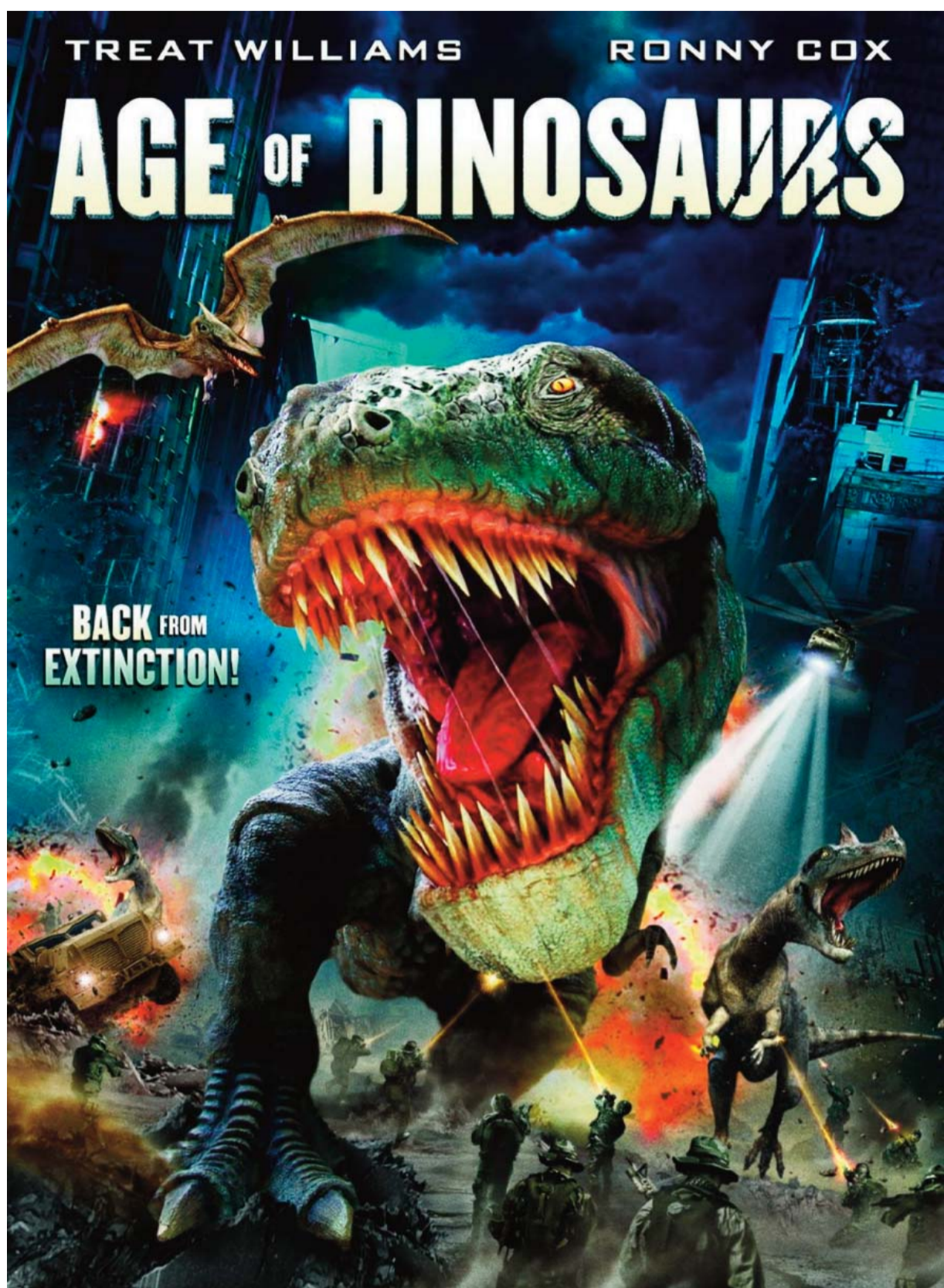
- 03:00 The Butler
- 05:15 Lost Christmas
- 07:00 Diana
- 09:00 Jodorowsky's Dune
- 11:00 Lost Christmas
- 13:00 Awakenings
- 15:00 The Fold
- 17:00 Jodorowsky's Dune
- 19:00 White Bird In A Blizzard
- 21:00 The Brass Teapot
- 23:00 Five Easy Pieces



- 03:00 Odd Thomas-PG15
- 04:45 X-Men: Days Of Future Past
- 07:00 Imogene-PG15
- 09:00 Selma-PG15
- 11:15 A Gift Of Miracles-PG15
- 13:00 Dragonheart 3: The Sorcerer's Curse-PG15
- 15:00 Penguins Of Madagascar
- 17:00 The Last Days On Mars-PG15
- 19:00 Lucy-PG15
- 21:00 I Am Soldier-18
- 23:00 Ouija-PG15



- 04:15 Ghatotkach - Master Of Magic
- 06:00 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
- 07:30 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 09:00 Echo Planet
- 10:30 Marco Macaco
- 12:00 The Tale Of The Princess Kaguya
- 14:30 Christmas Is Here Again
- 16:00 The Olsen Gang In Deep Trouble
- 18:00 Echo Planet
- 20:00 Egon And Donci



AGE OF DINOSAURS ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 21:30 Christmas Is Here Again
- 23:00 The Olsen Gang In Deep Trouble



- 04:00 Planes: Fire And Rescue-PG
- 06:00 Maleficent-PG
- 08:00 Admission-PG15
- 10:00 Fatal Instinct-PG15
- 12:00 The Maze Runner-PG15
- 14:00 Next Goal Wins-PG
- 16:00 Admission-PG15
- 18:00 Ashes-PG15
- 20:00 Boyhood-PG15
- 22:45 Before Midnight-18



- 03:40 Secret Eaters
- 04:30 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 05:00 Little People, Big World
- 05:30 Cake Boss
- 06:00 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 06:25 Randy To The Rescue
- 07:15 Hoarding: Buried Alive
- 08:05 7 Little Johnstons
- 08:30 7 Little Johnstons
- 08:55 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 09:20 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 09:45 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 10:10 Little People, Big World
- 10:35 My Five Wives
- 11:25 Cake Boss
- 11:50 Dare To Wear
- 12:40 Randy To The Rescue
- 13:30 Extreme I Do's



- 00:25 Great Balls Of Fire!
- 02:10 The Big Man
- 04:05 Teen Witch
- 05:35 Robinson Crusoe
- 07:05 Duplex
- 08:35 Billy Two Hats
- 10:15 Hoosiers
- 12:10 The Man In The Iron Mask
- 14:20 Miracles
- 15:45 Seven Years In Tibet
- 18:00 Robinson Crusoe
- 19:30 George Washington
- 21:00 Fear The Walking Dead
- 22:00 Rob Roy



- 00:00 First Baby Songs
- 00:03 Wish Upon A Star
- 00:09 The River

- 00:19 Shooting Star
- 00:23 Wish Upon A Star
- 00:28 Goodnight Teddy Bear
- 00:33 Ocean
- 00:43 Magic Lantern
- 00:48 First Baby Songs
- 00:49 Twinkle Star
- 00:59 Concertino
- 01:04 First Baby Songs
- 01:05 The Amazing World
- 01:08 First Baby Songs
- 01:10 Twinkle Star
- 01:18 Ocean
- 01:28 The Amazing World
- 01:32 Flowers
- 01:42 Shooting Star
- 01:45 Concertino
- 01:50 Twinkle Star
- 01:59 Wish Upon A Star
- 02:04 Wish Upon A Star
- 02:09 Ocean
- 02:19 Twinkle Star
- 02:29 The Amazing World
- 02:32 Moon
- 02:41 Shooting Star
- 02:45 Flowers
- 02:55 Wish Upon A Star
- 17:45 Baby TV
- 23:45 Baby TV



- 00:10 DCI Banks
- 01:00 Spooks
- 01:55 Spooks
- 02:50 BBC Entertainment
- 03:00 BBC First HD Preview
- 08:00 Doctor Who: The Time Of The Doctor
- 09:05 Doctor Who
- 09:55 Doctor Who
- 10:45 Doctor Who
- 11:35 Doctor Who

- 12:20 Doctor Who
- 13:10 Doctor Who
- 14:00 Doctor Who
- 14:50 Doctor Who
- 15:40 Doctor Who
- 16:30 Doctor Who
- 17:20 Doctor Who
- 18:20 Doctor Who
- 19:25 Doctor Who: The Husbands Of River Song
- 20:30 Sherlock: The Abominable Bride
- 22:00 Ripper Street
- 23:00 Doctor Who: The Husbands Of River Song



- 00:00 Killer Kids
- 01:00 The Haunting Of...
- 02:00 I Survived
- 03:00 Killer Kids
- 04:00 Killer Kids
- 05:00 The Haunting Of...
- 06:00 I Survived
- 07:00 The FBI Files
- 08:00 The FBI Files
- 09:00 Private Crimes
- 09:30 Frenemies
- 10:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 11:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 12:00 Beyond Scared Straight
- 13:00 I Didn't Do It
- 14:00 Crime Stories
- 15:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 16:00 Private Crimes
- 16:30 Frenemies
- 17:00 The FBI Files
- 18:00 Beyond Scared Straight
- 19:00 Crime Stories
- 20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 22:00 Private Crimes
- 23:00 Killer Kids



- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:20 Calimero
- 00:35 Zou
- 00:50 Loopdidoo
- 01:05 Art Attack
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:45 Calimero
- 04:00 Zou
- 04:15 Loopdidoo
- 04:30 Art Attack
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:05 Calimero
- 05:20 Zou
- 05:30 Loopdidoo
- 05:45 Art Attack
- 06:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:20 Calimero
- 06:35 Zou
- 06:45 Loopdidoo
- 07:00 Art Attack
- 07:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:35 Calimero
- 07:50 Zou
- 08:00 Loopdidoo
- 08:15 Art Attack
- 08:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:50 Calimero
- 09:00 Zou
- 09:20 Loopdidoo
- 09:35 Art Attack
- 10:00 Calimero
- 10:10 Zou
- 10:25 Loopdidoo
- 10:40 Miles From Tomorrow
- 11:05 Sofia The First: Once Upon A Princess
- 11:45 Jake & The Never Land Pirates
- 12:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 12:35 Doc McStuffins
- 13:00 Sofia The First
- 13:30 Jake & The Never Land Pirates
- 14:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 14:25 Special Agent Oso
- 14:40 The Hive



GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

CLASSIFIEDS



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (28/01/2016 TO 03/02/2016)

Category	Movie	Time	Category	Movie	Time
SHARQIA-1	AMERICAN HERO	12:15 PM	FANAR-2	STANDOFF	12:45 PM
	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	2:00 PM		ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	2:45 PM
	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	4:00 PM		ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	4:45 PM
SHARQIA-2	CONCUSSION	12:00 PM	FANAR-3	RIDE ALONG 2	12:30 PM
	CONCUSSION	2:30 PM		MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	2:15 PM
	CONCUSSION	5:00 PM		RIDE ALONG 2	5:15 PM
SHARQIA-3	STANDOFF	11:45 AM	FANAR-4	CONCUSSION	12:15 PM
	STANDOFF	1:30 PM		CONCUSSION	2:45 PM
	STANDOFF	3:30 PM		CONCUSSION	5:15 PM
MUHALAB-1	EXPOSED	11:45 AM	FANAR-5	THE BOY	1:00 PM
	EXPOSED	1:45 PM		THE BOY	3:00 PM
	NO FRI+SAT			THE 5TH WAVE	5:00 PM
MUHALAB-2	AMERICAN HERO	1:00 PM	MARINA-1	AMERICAN HERO	12:45 PM
	AMERICAN HERO	2:45 PM		THE 5TH WAVE	2:30 PM
	SAALA KHADOOOS - Hindi	4:30 PM		AMERICAN HERO	4:45 PM
MUHALAB-3	CONCUSSION	11:30 AM	MARINA-2	CONCUSSION	11:45 AM
	CONCUSSION	2:00 PM		ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	2:15 PM
	CONCUSSION	4:30 PM		CONCUSSION	4:15 PM
FANAR-1	AMERICAN HERO	12:00 PM	MARINA-3	EXPOSED	11:30 AM
	AMERICAN HERO	2:15 PM		EXPOSED	1:45 PM
	AMERICAN HERO	4:15 PM		ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	3:45 PM
AVENUES-2	MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	12:45 PM	AL-KOUT.1	CONCUSSION	12:00 PM
	MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	2:45 PM		CONCUSSION	2:30 PM
	MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	4:45 PM		CONCUSSION	5:00 PM
AVENUES-3	AMERICAN HERO	11:45 AM	AL-KOUT.2	RIDE ALONG 2	12:15 PM
	AMERICAN HERO	1:45 PM		ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	2:00 PM
	AMERICAN HERO	3:45 PM		ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	4:00 PM
AVENUES-4	CONCUSSION	12:00 PM	360°-1	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	1:00 PM
	CONCUSSION	2:45 PM		ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	3:15 PM
	CONCUSSION	5:30 PM		ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	5:30 PM
360°-2	EXPOSED	12:30 PM	360°-2	EXPOSED	12:30 PM
	DARKNESS DESCENDS	2:45 PM		DARKNESS DESCENDS	2:45 PM
	EXPOSED	5:00 PM		EXPOSED	5:00 PM
360°-3	STANDOFF	12:00 PM	360°-3	STANDOFF	12:00 PM
	STANDOFF	2:00 PM		STANDOFF	2:00 PM
	STANDOFF	4:00 PM		STANDOFF	4:00 PM

REQUIRED
A driver for a manager
From 7:30 - 3:30 pm
Salary KD 150
MOBIL: 97277164

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ameya Makarand Dhongade, holder of Indian Passport No: M1041651, R/o 5, Runanubandh Society, Park Avenue, D.P. Road, Aundh, Pune 411007, Maharashtra, changed my name as Amey Makarand Dhongade. (C 5121) 1-2-2016

Balaveni Dadala daughter of Dadala Pullaiah and Dadala Nagaratnamma bearing an Indian Passport No. G 0613666 and having an address H.No.31672, Rajalakshmi Nagar, Kakinada, East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, India has embraced Islam and changed the name as AYSHA. (C 5120) 31-1-2016

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation available for decent executive bachelors/ family at Abbasiya. Separate bathroom/ balcony. Near United Indian School. Contact: 50903076. (C 5122) 1-2-2016

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

salesman Required

Minimum 3 years experience in sales
 Preferably in security systems.
 Knowledge Of Kuwait Market
 Valid driving license and car.
 English language is a must.
 Transferable visa.

Send your CV to moh.gulf@gmail.com

URGENTLY NEEDED

Male or female to work in a copy center shop, with knowledge of Heat Printing and Poster Fixing with transferable visa.

Send your CV to: nan_nws@hotmail.com



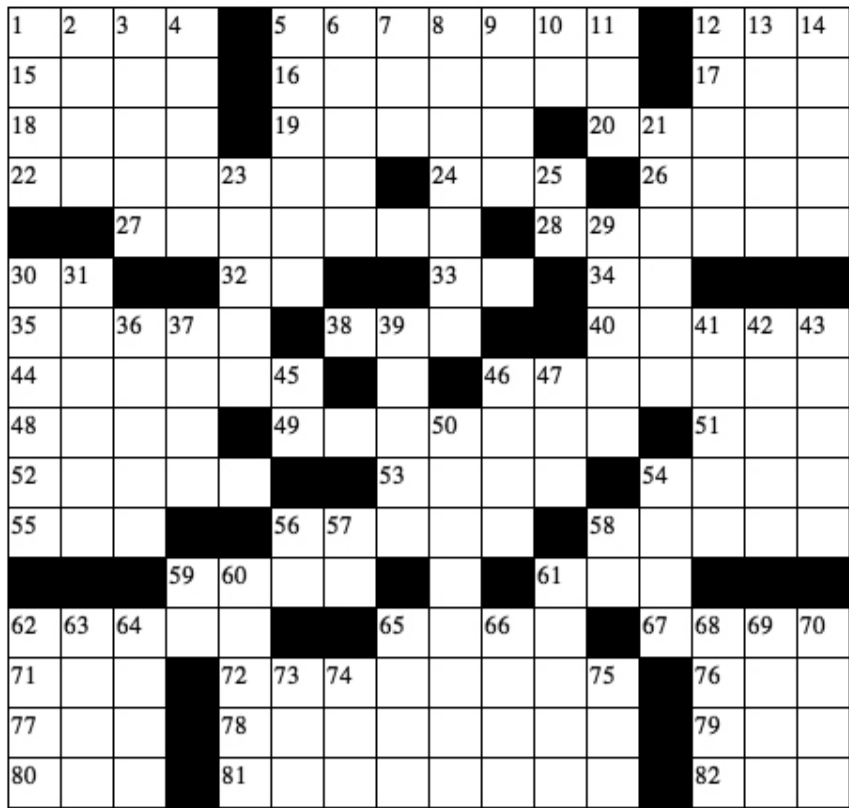
Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers to use seats

Arrival Flights on Monday 1/2/2016				Departure Flights on Monday 1/2/2016			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
BBC	044	Dhaka/Dammam	00:05	MSC	502	Alexandria	00:05
MSC	403	Asyut	00:15	JZR	528	Asyut	00:05
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	PIA	206	Lahore	00:40
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	MSC	416	Sohag	01:00
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05	MSC	404	Asyut	01:15
DLH	635	Doha	01:35	BBC	044	Dhaka	01:35
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:35
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	381	Delhi	03:30
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
CEB	7694	Manila	03:15	FDB	068	Dubai	04:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25	KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20
JZR	503	Luxor	04:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40	THY	765	Istanbul	05:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	CEB	7695	Manila	05:20
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30	JZR	560	Sohag	06:10
BAW	157	London	06:40	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	06:55	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20	THY	771	Istanbul	07:05
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40	FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50	KAC	537	Sohag	08:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25	QTR	1087	Doha	08:40
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30	BAW	156	London	08:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	SVA	513	Riyadh	08:50
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:25
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:10	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20	KAC	541	Cairo	09:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	561	Amman	10:00
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:25
OMA	641	Muscat	10:05	KAC	501	Beirut	10:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:40
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:15	KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	QTR	1071	Doha	11:00
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	IRA	666	Esfahan	11:00
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25	OMA	642	Muscat	11:05
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:20
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	103	London	12:25
KAC	382	Delhi	13:50	UAE	874	Dubai	12:30
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	13:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	FDB	076	Dubai	13:10

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

CROSSWORD 1155



ACROSS

1. A communication system using fiber optic cables.
5. Feeling or caused to feel uneasy and self-conscious.
12. An accountant certified by the state.
15. Surpassing the ordinary especially in size or scale.
16. (Japanese) Very thinly sliced raw fish.
17. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
18. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
19. A landlocked desert republic in north-central Africa.
20. Worn or shabby from overuse or (of pages) from having corners turned down.
22. Lac purified by heating and filtering.
24. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
26. A wound resulting from biting.
27. Any customary and rightful perquisite appropriate to your station in life.
28. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
30. A public promotion of some product or service.
32. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
33. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
34. An ancient city of Sumer located on a former channel of the Euphrates River.
35. A woody climbing usually tropical plant.
38. Any of several small ungulate mammals of Africa and Asia with rodent-like incisors and feet with hooflike toes.
40. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
44. Relating to the use of or having the nature of an interrogation.
48. The complete duration of something.
49. (of spatial position) In or brought into line with or into proper relative position.
51. Long and light rowing boat.
52. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
53. (electronics) Designating sound transmission or recording or reproduction over a single channel.
55. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
62. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
67. Noisy talk.
71. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
72. An act of scaling by the use of ladders (especially the walls of a fortification).
76. The cry made by sheep.
77. A master's degree in education.
78. Surveillance of some place or some person by the police (as in anticipation of a crime).
79. Electronic warfare undertaken under direct control of an operational commander to locate sources of radiated electromagnetic energy for the purpose of immediate threat recognition.
80. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
81. Old World buntings.
82. A unit of length of thread or yarn.

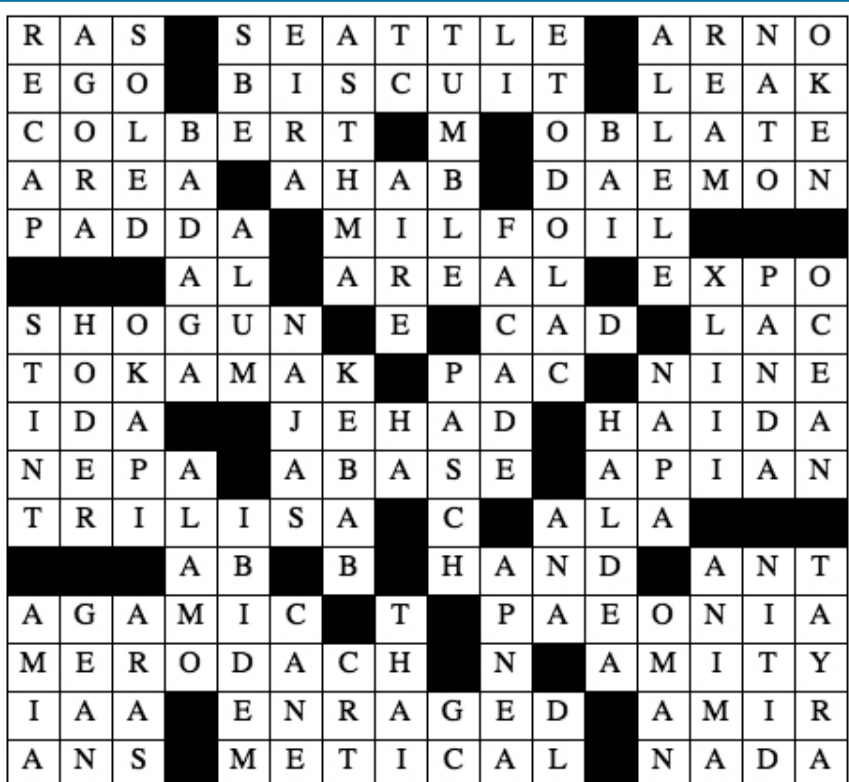
DOWN

3. Infections of the skin or nails caused by fungi and appearing as itching circular patches.
4. The skin that covers the top of the head.
5. Remote city of Kazakhstan that (ostensibly for security reasons) was made the capital in 1998.
6. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
7. The residue that remains when something is burned.
8. A celibate and communistic Christian sect in the United States.
9. The dressed skin of an animal (especially a large animal).
10. The square of a body of any size of type.
11. Small cubes with 1 to 6 spots on the faces.
12. A member of an American Indian peoples of NE South America and the Lesser Antilles.
13. A representation of the Virgin Mary mourning over the dead body of Jesus.
14. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
21. Away from the mouth or oral region.
23. Hungarian choreographer who developed Labanotation (1879-1958).
25. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
29. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
31. Force to go away.
36. Jordan's port.
37. (Babylonian) A goddess of the watery deep and daughter of Ea.
39. (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
41. A roll of tobacco for smoking.
42. A mound of stones piled up as a memorial or to mark a boundary or path.
43. The space between two lines or planes that intersect.
45. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
46. A former copper coin of Pakistan.
47. The corporate executive responsible for the operations of the firm.
50. A preacher of the Christian gospel.
54. Suggestive of the supernatural.
56. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
57. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
58. Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
59. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
60. Excessively fat.
61. The capital and largest city of Liechtenstein.
63. In bed.
64. Similar to the color of jade.
65. Cook and make edible by putting in a hot oven.
66. Any of a group of antidepressant drugs that inhibit the action of monoamine oxidase in the brain and so allow monoamines to accumulate.
68. Norwegian mathematician (1802-1829).
69. (law) A comprehensive term for any proceeding in a court of law whereby an individual seeks a legal remedy.
70. God of love and erotic desire.
73. What you can repeat immediately after perceiving it.
74. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
75. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.

DOWN

1. (heraldry) An ordinary consisting of a broad horizontal band across a shield.
2. Large elliptical brightly colored deep-sea fish of Atlantic and Pacific and Mediterranean.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is a time during which you could accomplish a lot through sheer discipline. You will prosper by staying focused on your own goals. Don't be afraid to project your image, particularly when you see that you can add some real perspective to your standing on the social scene. You can make some wise decisions that will help to increase your finances. A separate issue may come up regarding a joint venture. This will need to be revisited next week but meanwhile time will give you a chance to think. You may have a valid point when it comes to a discussion today but now is not the time to try to prove your point, just list your thoughts. Be careful of what you discuss in a group setting. Big ears are connected to a big mouth as well. Enjoy reading tonight.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You could be in the public eye today, especially with peers that want to hang out on the golf scene this afternoon you may have an invitation. You may find that you enjoy your job but a little time away from the workplace is quite pleasant. Challenges with a teenage son may be unexpected but rewarding in many ways. The way you instruct this teenager shows a great deal of involvement and interest in young people, as well as the patience that many need to display. You will be able to communicate with clear instructions and self-discipline. Research may be in order this afternoon and you can become quite enthralled with the new products that are in the stores. Many singers were born on this day-you may find that the radio music is most pleasant.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Alternative health care is a consideration this year and you may want to consult with a naturopathic doctor to get the healthiest options. Rather than trying to be adaptable to circumstances you are determined to rearrange or move things around to fit the most positive outcome. You can have a personal and positive influence on others. Other people are attracted to you naturally and because of the distractions, you may have to work a little harder than most to stay organized. Network whenever possible. Conversations involving themes of trust, responsibility and commitment can be enjoyed this evening. Love, romance and pleasurable activities are definitely accented at this time. Flowers in your home will be cheerful this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have what it takes to meet your financial responsibilities now. The only problem is that you may not know it. Money is a symbol of success, among other things. We want what money can buy, not necessarily the money itself. There are a few people with lots of perks in life and they keep going for more perks. It would be nice to see that these people share, as well as take the time to enjoy the little extras that they can buy. Wise people will achieve the second benefit... The time to enjoy what they have. Make it a point to loosen the pressures that you put upon yourself today. Join in with a loved one to co-create a beautiful meal tonight.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is a more influential quality to your lifestyle now-taking on a leadership role means more to you now than in the past. This may mean a leadership role in a religious group or a sports group or in the workplace as a guide or entertainment director. You may have designs on a move in a direction that will benefit you more prestigiously and you will go about your day finding ways to accommodate those that can help you achieve your desires. There is a need for a sharp mind and a little business expertise. After much concentration you will finally be able to enjoy the afternoon for yourself. You might decide to work toward getting a head start on your taxes-a little at a time.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You enjoy organizing and supervising fast moving projects with cooperative, inspired people. If you are trying to complete a project for charity you will have plenty of volunteer help. The secret to success here is to direct the talented where the need is and put those talented at the lead of a group. Caution with extravagant spending this afternoon. You will want to reward the workers but someone amongst you may know where pizza can be bought at a big discount. There may be a few things you have been saving your money for but there could also be some information you do not yet know. You may join a group of friends in some other fun activity later today, perhaps to celebrate a successful charity endeavor or just the fun of a carefree afternoon.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a time in which it would be easy to make bad choices. You tend to see difficult situations as you wish they were rather than as they truly are. This can be uplifting, or it might just put your head in the clouds. Difficulties, blocks and all manner of hot spots can be discovered and worked through. You have the knowledge and the resolve to accomplish positive results. People could learn from the way you can turn a difficult situation into a positive outcome. Finish every day and be done with it. Some frustrations may appear, but do your best to create a positive change and then move forward. Close personal ties to other people are a focal point for your feelings this evening, and they are all positive. Marriage, friends and children are in this arena.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

The new broom sweeps clean; old patterns of organization and power are ripe for an innovative approach. It could be your turn to help in decision-making responsibilities. Be clear about your intentions and your expectations and you will see all sorts of conflicts disappear. Activities are becoming fast-paced now-there is just no time to gain a problem for long. Use your passion to benefit your best interest and in order to gain a sense of strength and balance. Your love relationship has undergone some positive changes and will continue to gain in positive strength as long as you remain honest and up front with how you feel. Make sure your reality matches your income. It could be time to reassess your budget. You will see positive results this year.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Stop wandering around and get down to business-particularly mentally. Know where you want to go and what you want to accomplish. Taking responsibility for errors of the past and the ways you contribute to your own undoing are very important issues at this time. Dodging them may be the easier thing to do, but that only puts off a day of reckoning. A world of people out there will help you achieve your goals-listen. This may be learning to ski or successfully teaching another. You can show a great deal of compassion to the needs of another this afternoon and you are in a good position to help people, particularly because you have just a good give-and-take attitude. Later today, you will find festive involvement with neighbors and relatives.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Early morning exercise is enjoyed by you, as the best shot in the arm energizer. Pace yourself and be sure to take a water break now and then. In order to think clearly and be at top speed, you must make sure all avenues of your life are in balance. This afternoon you will find your concentration more in focus and the duties of spouse or mate can be accomplished quickly. You may have a strong need to be respected on the home front. Your power may depend more on how you relate to what is important to you, as well as what you expect from each member of the household. Clear communication will show others where to tread-boundaries perhaps.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your inner attitude has a lot to do with how you make and spend your money. You may just naturally stand in front of a store item and ask yourself if you think you will really want a particular item in a month. You may also ask yourself if you could sell this item if it became necessary. Your sense of value comes into play. You might consider how you have invested your income in the past and create plans for future investments. Now is a good time to think through any changes, adjustments, motivations or perhaps plans toward your goals. During an enjoyable lunch you may swing by a friend's house to see what they think about certain investments. A change in direction is possible. Loved ones gather



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your attitude is positive this morning and any frustrations at this time will not last long. In learning how to eliminate the stress in your life, you create better health practices and set examples for others. Listen carefully to a lecture or a program on a current radio medium today-someone may be coloring a story and you may do a little research of your own to understand the whole truth. The afternoon offers encouragement and guidance for unexpected events. Financial ties to other people are highlighted-money matters and investments are a focus this afternoon-the news is good! Faith, optimism and a yearning to explore all kinds of new horizons are some of the focal points in your life at this time. This evening you may want to relax with music.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Public Library

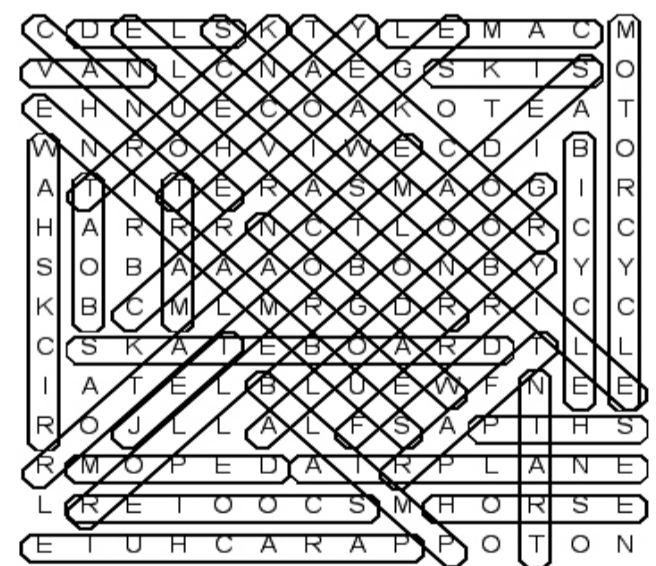
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Henry Ward Beecher quotation.



- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| APPLIED SCIENCE | ENCYCLOPEDIA | MAGAZINES | QUIET |
| ARTS | FICTION | MATHEMATICS | READ |
| BIOGRAPHY | FINES | MOVIES | RECREATION |
| BOOKS | GEOGRAPHY | MUSIC | RELIGION |
| BORROW | HARDCOVER | NEWSPAPERS | RENEW |
| BRANCH | HISTORY | NOVELS | RESEARCH |
| CATALOG | INFORMATION | OVERDUE | RESERVE |
| CHAIRS | INTERNET | PAPERBACK | SHELVES |
| CHECKOUT | LANGUAGES | PERIODICALS | SOCIAL SCIENCES |
| COMPUTERS | LIBRARIAN | PHILOSOPHY | TABLES |
| DICTIONARY | LIBRARY CARD | PHOTOCOPIER | TECHNOLOGY |
| DUE DATE | LITERATURE | PSYCHOLOGY | |

Yesterday's Solution

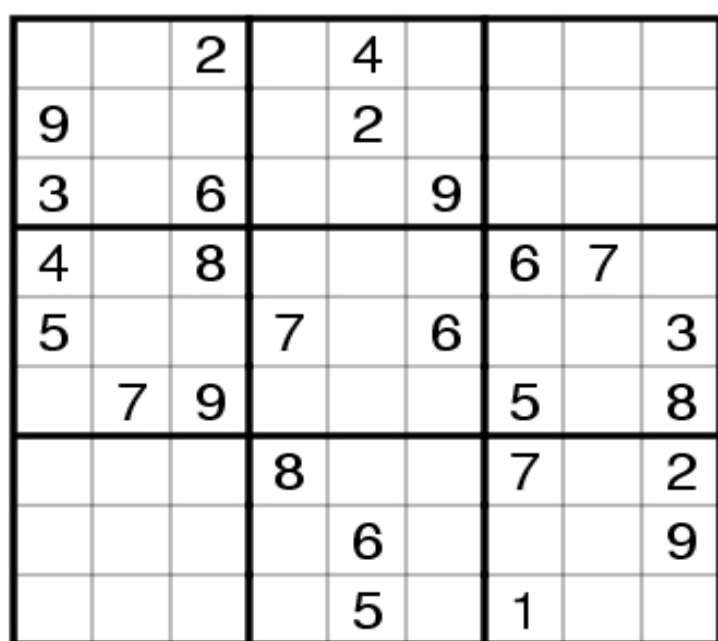
Transportation



- | | | | |
|----------|------------|---------------|------------|
| AIRPLANE | FERRY | RICKSHAW | SNOWMOBILE |
| BICYCLE | GONDOLA | ROCKET | SUBMARINE |
| BLIMP | HORSE | ROLLER BLADES | TRAIN |
| BOAT | JET | SCOOTER | TRAM |
| CAMEL | MOPED | SHIP | TRUCK |
| CANOE | MOTORCYCLE | SKATEBOARD | VAN |
| CARRIAGE | PARACHUTE | SKIS | WAGON |
| ELEVATOR | RAFT | SLED | YACHT |

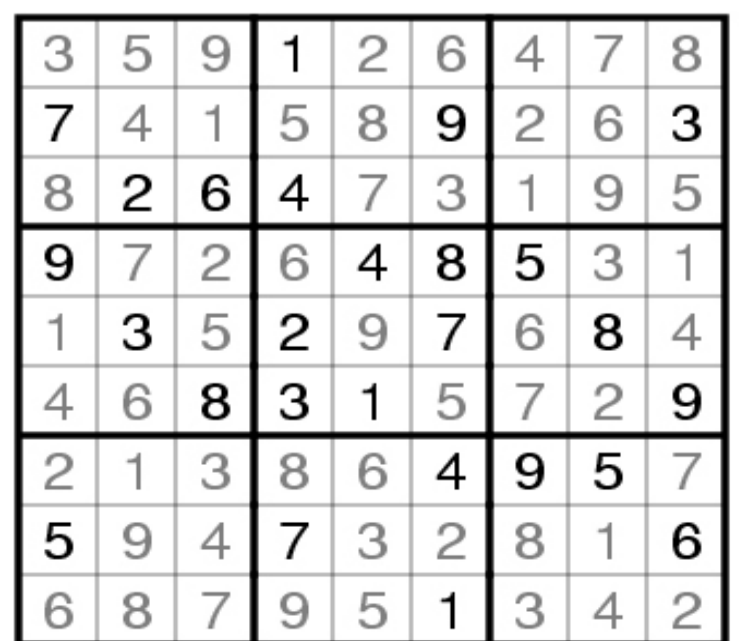
The hidden transportation method is: HOT AIR BALLOON

Daily SuDoku



medium

Yesterday's Solution



very hard

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaee Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Luxembourg	00352
Albania	00355	Macau	00853
Algeria	00213	Macedonia	00389
Andorra	00376	Madagascar	00261
Angola	00244	Majorca	0034
Anguilla	001264	Malawi	00265
Antigua	001268	Malaysia	0060
Argentina	0054	Maldives	00960
Armenia	00374	Mali	00223
Australia	0061	Malta	00356
Austria	0043	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Nigar	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	Sao Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tone	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	Toga	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
Lithuania	00370		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



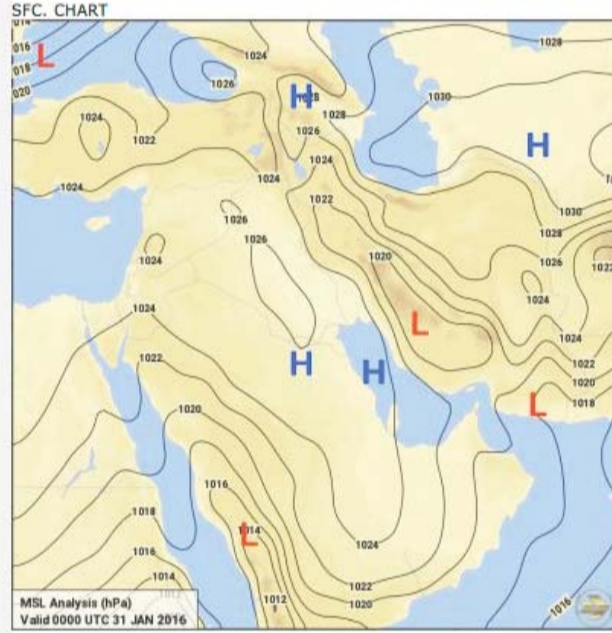
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 31/01/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 16 °C

By Day : Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h
By Night : Very cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h



Four-Day Forecast

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Expected Weather	cold	sunny + high clouds	sunny + scattered clouds	sunny
Min Temp °C	03	06	08	09
Max Temp °C	17	19	18	20
Wind Direction	north westerly	north westerly	north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 28	08 - 26	12 - 35	10 - 32

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	09		15	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	00		16	
ABDALY	01		17	
BUBYAN	03		15	
JAHRA	04		15	
FAILAKA ISLAND	06		14	
SALMIYAH	10		14	
AHMADI	08		15	
JAL ALIYAH	02		16	
QAROH ISLAND	13		14	
UMM AL-MARADEM	12		14	
NUWAISIB	05		15	
WAFRA	02		16	
MANAGISH	02		16	
SALMY	01		17	
MUTRIBA	01		15	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	14
Min Temp (°C)	01
Max Rel Hum (%)	51
Min Rel Hum (%)	16
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	43 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	06:38
Sunset	17:25

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:16
Sunrise	06:38
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:04
Sunset	17:25
Isha	18:44



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	Plastic Surgeons
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	2455050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	2455050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaezem	22636920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rfae	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Paediatricians	Endocrinologist
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 Gupare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam	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. Abdalateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Family Doctor	Psychiatrists	Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	Internists, Chest & Heart
Dr. Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581		
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047		
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0		
Dr. Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581		
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321		
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539		
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406		
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272		
Dr. Salem soso	22618787		
General Surgeons			
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044		
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148		
Internists, Chest & Heart			
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939		
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300		
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004		
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515		
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446		
Dr. Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3		

Physiotherapists & VD	Rheumatologists:	Internist, Chest & Heart	Consultant Cardiologist
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330		
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888		
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924		
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291		
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288		
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060		
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290		
DR. Mohammed Akkad	2455050 Ext 210		
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid	MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC		
Assistant Professor Of Medicine	Head, Division of Cardiology		
Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667		
Dr. Farida Al-Habib	MD, PH.D, FACC		
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077		
Fax: 25723123			



Kuwaiti singer Ibrahim Dashti



Kuwaiti presenter Iman Najm



Kuwaiti singer Musaed Al-Blushi



Iraqi singer Hatem Al-Iraqi



Moroccan singer Saad Lamjarred

Hala February festival

celebrated with Dashti, Al-Blushi, Al-Iraqi and Lamjarred

By Nawara Fattahova

For the first time since Hala February was launched 17 years ago, the festival's administration decided to hold a musical concert on Saturday. Although the next day was a regular working day, the 2,000-seat theatre at the Ice Skating Rink was fully booked. Four singers participated in the concert, and the majority of the audience comprised of youngsters who stayed at the theatre until 4:30 am.

The third musical concert of the festival started at 10:45 pm with young Kuwaiti singer Ibrahim Dashti. He participated in the popular reality show 'Star Academy' in 2009, and although he didn't win, he became famous and started producing singles, and released an album last year. He is also an actor and TV presenter. Dashti had many fans at the concert who were singing his popular songs, and he also sang a song in Turkish. As the concert started late and three other singers were on the program, the organizers made him finish

soon, so he abruptly concluded at 11:35 pm while his fans were shouting for him not to leave.

The second singer to come onstage was young Kuwaiti singer Musaed Al-Blushi, who began at midnight. Blushi has released five albums, but only a few of his songs have been popular. His fans enjoyed singing with him till he concluded at 1:05 am.

The third star of this concert was the long-awaited Iraqi singer Hatem Al-Iraqi, who came onstage at 1:40 am. He expressed his great honor and happiness to finally perform in Kuwait for the first time, although his songs are very popular in Kuwait. His fans couldn't stop applauding, whistling and calling his name. He is known for his romantic sad songs and mawwals. He started singing in the early 1990s, and became the first folkloric singer in Iraq. His fame spread internationally and he released his first album in 2002, which was followed by other albums. He concluded at 3:10 am, while fans were calling on him to stay and continue singing.

Iraqi's performance was not without controversy, as people were upset by a decision by the Ministry of Information to cut the live broadcast on KTV and radio stations 103.7 and 93.3 of the concert after Blushi finished. Some bloggers posted comments that this decision came as some people refused to have an Iraqi singer singing at the festival, while some explained that there were concerns of a repetition of the scenes that took place with Tamer Hosni the previous night.

This concert concluded with young Moroccan singer Saad Lamjarred, who came onstage at 3:45 am. Even at such a late hour, more than half of the audience was still present to enjoy the last part of the concert. He participated in the popular show 'Super Star' in 2007, and in 2009 released his first song in California. Lamjarred welcomed the audience in English and then said in Arabic that he was extremely happy to sing in Kuwait for the first time, and that Kuwait is the first Gulf country to invite him to hold a concert. He concluded at 4:30 am.



Fox's ambitious 'Grease' ups the live TV musical ante

"Grease," the 1950s-set musical romp that was a stage and screen smash in the 1970s, is rebooting as a Broadway-meets-Hollywood hybrid for its 21st-century television close up. Fox's "Grease: Live" (7-10 pm EST Sunday) aims to revisit the puppy-love story of Sandy and Danny, played by Julianne Hough and theater veteran Aaron Tveit, with a supercharged blend that weds theater's immediacy and cinematic flair. Instead of one stage, the broadcast is using several indoor sets and outdoor studio locations to create Rydell High School, including its gym and exterior, along with teen hangouts including the Frosty Palace soda shop. A small army of camera operators will be

deployed to capture the action in close-up and longer shots.

Some of the 20 cameras will be taken offline - almost unprecedented in live TV - and shifted among nearly four-dozen positions in the production, which is being shot at the Warner Bros. lot in Burbank, Calif. Cast members will be on the move too, relying on golf carts to rush them from one scene to another during commercial breaks. Rain was predicted Sunday, but umbrellas are at hand and the show will go on, producer Paramount Television said.

"Grease: Live" is building on the current small-screen fascination with musicals, which started with NBC's live telecasts including "The Sound of Music" and "The

Wiz" and may include "Hairspray," also from NBC, and, from ABC, a possible movie update of "Dirty Dancing." In a Friday night dress rehearsal performed before an eager friends-and-family audience, the intricate puzzle came together precisely, starting with an elaborate, continuous-shot opening with Jessie J singing "Grease (is the word)" as she roamed the studio and ending with an outdoor carnival scene. "We'll do it straight through, like we'll do it Sunday for 143 million of our closest friends," director Thomas Kail ("Hamilton") told the audience at the start. He is overseeing the stage direction, with Alex Rudzinski serving as the live television director.

(Kail was indulging in a flourish of ratings hyperbole - "The Sound of Music," NBC's biggest live-musical draw, was seen by 19 million viewers.) After the rehearsal wrapped on time, a beaming Hough flashed a thumbs-up sign to the crowd. In that three-hour window, cast members and an ensemble of dancers and singers frantically switched costumes and sometimes hairstyles and makeup as they pivoted from one scene to the next in real time. The TV musical includes Vanessa Hudgens as Rizzo, Carly Rae Jepsen as Frenchy, Keke Palmer as Marty, Ana Gasteyer as Principal McGee and Mario Lopez as slick DJ Vince Fontaine.

Original "Grease" stars Didi Conn, who played Frenchy, and Barry Pearl, who co-

starred as Doody, are back in cameos. A smiling Conn, decked out in a waitress outfit, drew applause and shouts from the audience when she dropped by the gym set pre-rehearsal. Other crowd-pleasing moments included a performance by guest stars Boys II Men of "Beauty School Dropout"; a cheerleader challenge between Hough's Sandy and Elle McLemore's Patty, and a cleverly-staged sequence that moves a Palmer solo of "Freddy My Love" from a girls' sleepover to a USO stage show and back again. And no surprise here: Big cheers greeted the high-energy dance contest scene in which Hough, Tveit and the entire cast got to show off their moves and the audience rocked out to "Born to Hand Jive." —AP

Sundance: 'The Birth of a Nation' sweeps top prizes



Nate Parker, the star, director and producer of "The Birth of a Nation," holds aloft the US Dramatic Audience Award for the film during the 2016 Sundance Film Festival Awards Ceremony. —AP photos



Daniel Kwan, left, and Daniel Scheinert, co-directors of "Swiss Army Man," accept the US Dramatic Directing Award.



Craig Robinson, a cast member in "Morris from America," holds aloft his US Dramatic Special Jury Award for Individual Performance.



Sonita Alidzesh, left, subject of the documentary film "Sonita," and the film's director Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami accept the World Cinema Documentary Grand Jury Prize for the German/Iranian/Swiss film.



Agnieszka Smoczynska, director of the Polish film "The Lure," celebrates onstage after the film won the World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award.



Colombian actor Manolo Cruz, left, co-director and cast member in "Between Sea and Land," celebrates with co-director Carlos del Castillo after winning the World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for Acting.

"The Birth of a Nation," writer-director-star Nate Parker's stirring drama about the life of Nat Turner and the slave rebellion he led in antebellum Virginia, won the grand jury prize and the audience award for American dramatic features at the Sundance Film Festival on Saturday night. The film's double-fisted victory sealed its standing as the sensation of the festival's 2016 edition, following its record-shattering \$17.5 million acquisition earlier in the week by Fox Searchlight.

This is the fourth year in a row that a single film has taken the top two prizes in the US dramatic competition, following "Fruitvale Station" (2013), "Whiplash" (2014) and "Me and Earl and the Dying Girl" (2015). That general trend aside, many had anticipated precisely this outcome for "The Birth of a Nation," whose rapturous reception on Monday seemed to chime with a number of issues affecting the culture in general and the film industry in particular. A seven-year labor of love for "Birth" will enter the marketplace with high hopes and expectations as an acclaimed work by a black filmmaker in an industry under fire for its lack of diversity in the wake of the #OscarsSoWhite controversy.

Creating a platform

Parker nodded to that particular issue when accepting the grand jury prize: "Thank you, Sundance, for creating a platform for us to grow, in spite of what the rest of Hollywood is doing." Parker wasn't the only filmmaker of color to make reference to diversity in his acceptance speech. Accepting his US documentary directing prize for

"Life, Animated," Roger Ross Williams, who became the first African-American director to win a documentary short Oscar six years ago (for "Music by Prudence"), noted, "In this age of #OscarsSoWhite and diversity, I want to thank Sundance for honoring me."

Just as diversity took the stage at the Screen Actors Guild that same night (with wins for Idris Elba, Viola Davis and Queen Latifah), so this year's Sundance-and its slate of dramatic competition winners-seemed to stand in especially pointed contrast to the Academy's recent woes. Acting awards were given to Joe Seo and Markees Christmas for their performances in "Spa Night" and "Morris From America," respectively, while Daniel Kwan shared the directing award with his co-helmer Daniel Scheinart for "Swiss Army Man," their divisive lost-in-the-wilderness comedy starring Daniel Radcliffe and Paul Dano.

Getting snapped

"Yes, we are the movie with a farting dead corpse, and somehow we still won this award," Kwan said of "Swiss Army Man," which premiered early in the festival and quickly became one of its most divisive and attention-grabbing entries before getting snapped up for distribution by A24. Elsewhere in the US dramatic competition, the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award went to writer-director Chad Hartigan for "Morris From America," his dramedy about an African-American teenager who has relocated with his father to Heidelberg, Germany; the film also drew an acting award for

Markees Christmas. Other thesping prizes were granted to Joe Seo for his role as an Asian-American teenager coming out against the backdrop of LA's Korea town in "Spa Night," and to Melanie Lynskey for her performance as a woman orchestrating a couples' get-together in "The Intervention." A special jury award was presented to director Miles Joris-Peyrafitte for "As You Are," his well-observed '90s-set drama of adolescent angst.

Special jury award

The US documentary grand jury prize was awarded to "Weiner," Josh Kriegman and Elyse Steinberg's juicy portrait behind the scenes of disgraced politician Anthony Weiner's mayoral campaign. The audience award went to "Jim: The James Foley Story," Brian Oakes' portrait of the photojournalist murdered by ISIS in 2014. The directing prize went to Williams for "Life, Animated," his portrait of a young autistic man and his transformative relationship with Disney animated films. Elsewhere in that category, Robert Greene received a special jury award for writing "Kate Plays Christine," his layered look at actress Kate Lyn Sheil's preparations for the role of the late TV journalist Christine Chubbuck, while director Penny Lane and Thom Styliniski for their editing on "NUTS!," a portrait of a small-town Kansas doctor who discovered an unusual cure for impotence using goat testicles.

Other special prizes were given for social impact to "Trapped," Dawn Porter's documentary follow-

ing two Southern abortion clinics, and for verite filmmaking to "The Bad Kids," Keith Fulton and Lou Pepe's portrait of several troubled adolescents at California's Black Rock High School. In the World Cinema dramatic competition, the grand jury prize went to "Sand Storm," Israeli helmer Elite Ziker's debut feature about women caught between the forces of modernity and patriarchy in a Bedouin desert village. "Between Sea and Land," Manolo Cruz and Carlos del Castillo's drama about a mother and her muscular dystrophy-afflicted son living near the Colombian coast, drew both the audience award and a special jury prize for actors Cruz and Vicky Hernandez.

Vision and design

In the same category, the directing laurels went to Belgian helmer Felix van Groeningen ("The Broken Circle Breakdown") for "Belgica," a tale of two brothers trying to launch a nightclub in Ghent. Another special jury award, for unique vision and design, was bestowed on Polish director Agnieszka Smoczynska for her 1980s-set mermaid musical-horror film, "The Lure." In the World Cinema documentary competition, both the grand jury prize and the audience award went to "Sonita," director Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami's portrait of the eponymous Iranian rapper. Michael Marczak drew the directing prize for "All These Sleepless Nights," a year-in-the-life portrait of Warsaw youth.

Three special jury awards were presented for best editing to Mako Kamitsuna and John

Maringouin for "We Are X"; best cinematography to Pieter-Jan De Pue for "The Land of the Enlightened"; and Heidi Brandenburg and Mathew Orzel for "When Two Worlds Collide." The audience award for the Next section was given to Kerem Sanga for "First Girl I Loved," a lesbian romance between two Southern California high schoolers. Earlier in the week, Ciro Guerra's "Embrace of the Serpent" received the \$20,000 Alfred P Sloan Feature Film Prize, presented annually to a film that focuses on science or technology as a theme. The Colombian film, which is nominated for the foreign-language film Oscar, bowed in the festival's Spotlight sidebar. Also previously announced, the Sundance Institute NHK Award for a visionary emerging filmmaker was presented to Japanese writer-director Atsuko Hirayanagi for "Oh Lucy!," which screened in competition at the festival.

The Sundance Institute Global Filmmaking Awards, given to emerging independent filmmakers around the world for their future projects, went to Armando Capo, "August" (Cuba); Abdella Taia, "The Treasure" (Morocco); Geetu Mohandas, "Insha' Allah" (India); and Antonio Piazza and Fabio Grassadonia, "Sicilian Ghost Story" (Italy). The ceremony was hosted by Taika Waititi, the New Zealand director and Sundance veteran whose latest feature, "Hunt for the Wilderpeople," bowed in the festival's Premieres section. Kicking off the proceedings with a stated desire to leave Park City immediately, Waititi quipped, "We're on a mountain. We're not meant to be here. We're not meant to survive here. We're dying." —Reuters



Michal Marczak, director of the Polish documentary film "All These Sleepless Nights," accepts the World Cinema Documentary Directing Award.



Elite Ziker, director of "Sand Storm," accepts the World Cinema Dramatic Grand Jury Prize.

The full list of winners

US Dramatic Competition

Grand Jury Prize: "The Birth of a Nation"
Audience Award: "The Birth of a Nation"
Directing: Daniel Scheinart and Daniel Kwan, "Swiss Army Man"
Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award: Chad Hartigan, "Morris From America"
Special Jury Award: Miles Joris-Peyrafitte, "As You Are"
Special Jury Award for Breakthrough Performance: Joe Seo, "Spa Night"
Special Jury Award for Individual Performance: Markees Christmas, "Morris From America"
Special Jury Award for Social Impact: Dawn Porter, "Trapped"
Special Jury Award for Writing: Robert Greene, "Kate Plays Christine"
Special Jury Award for Verite Filmmaking: Keith Fulton and Lou Pepe, "The Bad Kids"

US Documentary Competition

Grand Jury Prize: "Weiner"
Audience Award: "Jim: The James Foley Story"
Directing Award: Roger Ross Williams, "Life, Animated"
Special Jury Award for Editing: Penny Lane and Thom Styliniski, "NUTS!"
Special Jury Award for Social Impact: Dawn Porter, "Trapped"
Special Jury Award for Writing: Robert Greene, "Kate Plays Christine"
Special Jury Award for Verite Filmmaking: Keith Fulton and Lou Pepe, "The Bad Kids"

World Cinema Dramatic Competition

Grand Jury Prize: "Sand Storm"
Audience Award: "Between Sea and Land"
Directing Award: Felix van Groeningen, "Belgica"
Screenwriting: Ana Katz and Ines Bortagaray, "Mi amiga del parque"
Special Jury Award for Acting: Vicky Hernandez and Manolo Cruz, "Between Sea and Land"
Special Jury Award for Unique Vision and Design: Agnieszka Smoczynska, "The Lure"

World Cinema Documentary Competition

Grand Jury Prize: "Sonita"
Audience Award: "Sonita"
Directing Award: Michal Marczak, "All These Sleepless Nights"
Special Jury Award for Editing: Mako Kamitsuna and John Maringouin, "We Are X"
Special Jury Award for Cinematography: Pieter-Jan De Pue, "The Land of the Enlightened"
Special Jury Award for Debut Feature: Heidi Brandenburg and Mathew Orzel, "When Two Worlds Collide"

Other awards

Next Audience Award: "First Girl I Loved"
Alfred P Sloan Feature Film Prize: "Embrace of the Serpent." —Reuters



Miles Joris-Peyrafitte, co-writer/director of "As You Are," accepts the US Dramatic Special Jury Award.



Roger Ross Williams, director of "Life, Animated," accepts the US Documentary Directing Award.

'Spotlight' wins best ensemble at not-so-white SAG Awards



Laura Prepon, center, and the cast and crew of "Orange is the New Black" accept the award for outstanding ensemble in a comedy series.

The Screen Actors Guild Awards were not so white. While the Academy Awards remain enveloped in a crisis over the diversity of its nominees, the 22nd annual SAG Awards on Saturday presented a stark antidote to the rancor that has overwhelmed Hollywood's awards season. Awards were handed out to Queen Latifah, Uzo Aduba, Viola Davis and Idris Elba (twice), as the actors guild cast a loud vote in favor of diversity on big and small screens.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to diverse TV," said Elba in his third trip on stage as a presenter. His first two were to accept awards for his supporting performance in the Netflix child soldier drama "Beasts of No Nation" and for his lead performance in the BBC miniseries "Luther." The night's top honor, best ensemble in a film, went to the newspaper drama "Spotlight," which came into Saturday badly in need of some momentum. The ensemble award had seemingly come down to "Spotlight" or - the film with the wind at its back - Adam McKay's high finance tale "The Big Short," which last week took the Producers Guild's top award. "No way," said Mark Ruffalo, one of the film's stars.

Sexual abuse
He praised the writer-director Tom McCarthy and co-writer Josh Singer for their purposeful accuracy in penning the journalistic procedural about the Boston Globe's reporting on sexual abuse by Catholic priests. The two, he said, "took every single opportunity to tell the truth. They didn't take any cheap way. It was always the truth." Elba made no direct reference to the crisis that has swept through Hollywood in the last two weeks - which might have been far less severe had he been nominated by the Academy Awards, as many expected. But it was on the minds and tongues of seemingly everyone in Los Angeles' Shrine Auditorium on Saturday night.

Accepting the most outstanding ensemble award, comedy series, for "Orange Is the New Black," co-star Laura Prepon gestured to the cast of the prison comedy standing behind her. "Look at this stage," said Prepon at Los Angeles' Shrine Auditorium. "This is what we talk about when we talk about diversity." Individual actor SAG winners the last three years have exactly corresponded with eventual Oscar winners, which meant that SAG winners Leonardo DiCaprio ("The Revenant"), Brie Larson ("Room") and Alicia Vikander ("The Danish Girl") all appear to have cemented their status as favorites. Each won, as expected.

"For any young actors out there, I encourage you to watch the history of cinema," said DiCaprio, who is expected to land his first Oscar after four previous nominations. "As the history of cinema unfolds, you realize that we all stand on the shoulders of giants." But supporting actor will differ this year. The category's perceived favorite is Sylvester Stallone for the Rocky sequel "Creed." Stallone, though, wasn't nominated by the screen actors. Actors make up the largest branch of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, which is why the SAG Awards are a closely watched harbinger of the Oscars. But the Screen Actors Guild is massive by comparison: some 160,000 members to the academy's 6,000-plus. Voting for the SAG Awards, which concluded Friday, also overlapped with the widespread debate over the industry's inclusiveness that followed Academy Awards nominations that resurrected the "OscarsSoWhite" backlash of last year.

Signature phrase
Latifah gave one of the evening's most stirring speeches while accepting the award for most outstanding female performance in a TV



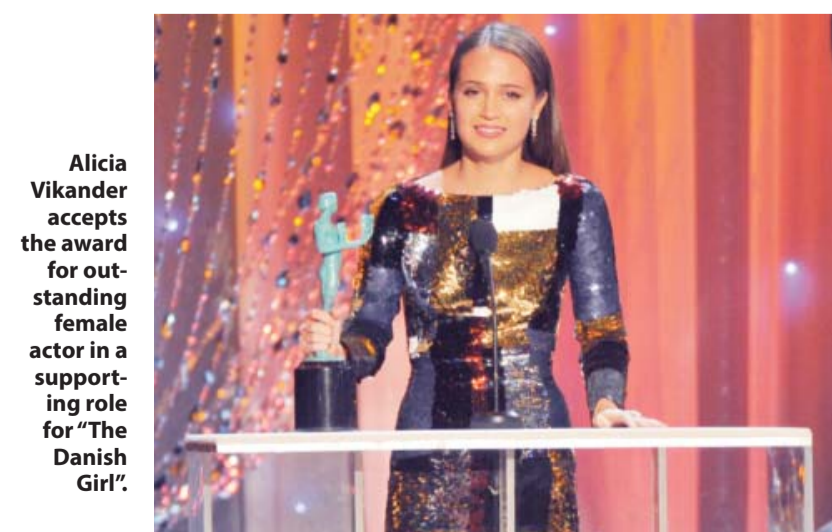
Leonardo DiCaprio accepts the award for outstanding male actor in a leading role for "The Revenant".—AP/AFP photos



The cast of "Spotlight," from left, Billy Crudup, Brian d'Arcy James, Mark Ruffalo, Rachel McAdams, John Slattery, Michael Keaton and Liev Schreiber pose in the press room with the award for outstanding cast in a motion picture for "Spotlight".



Brie Larson accepts the award for outstanding female actor in a leading role for "Room".



Alicia Vikander accepts the award for outstanding female actor in a supporting role for "The Danish Girl".



Jeffrey Tambor accepts the award for outstanding male actor in a comedy series for "Transparent".



Uzo Aduba with the award for outstanding actress in a comedy series and outstanding ensemble cast for "Orange is the New Black".

Complete list of winners at 22nd annual SAG Awards Movies:

- Actor:** Leonardo DiCaprio, "The Revenant"
- Actress:** Brie Larson, "Room"
- Supporting actor:** Idris Elba, "Beasts of No Nation"
- Supporting actress:** Alicia Vikander, "The Danish Girl"
- Cast:** "Spotlight"
- Stunt ensemble:** "Mad Max: Fury Road"

- Television:**
- Actor in a comedy series:** Jeffrey Tambor, "Transparent"
- Actress in a comedy series:** Uzo Aduba, "Orange is the New Black"
- Comedy series cast:** "Orange is the New Black"
- Actor in a movie or miniseries:** Idris Elba, "Luther"
- Actress in a movie or miniseries:** Queen Latifah, "Bessie"
- Drama series cast:** "Downton Abbey"
- Actor in a drama series:** Kevin Spacey, "House of Cards"
- Actress in a drama series:** Viola Davis, "How to Get Away With Murder"
- Stunt ensemble:** "Game of Thrones"
- Life Achievement:** Carol Burnett—AP

movie or miniseries for HBO's Bessie Smith tale "Bessie." "I hope that anyone out there who does not come in the package that people say you should, keep fighting for it," said Latifah. "Flip those rocks over. Keep pushing, keep turning, you can do it. You build your own boxes, not people. So knock that thing away and do you!" Backstage, Latifah said diversity was good business: "Hopefully our business will continue to supply the demand that people are asking for. The people want it. Give it to the people." Aduba, accepting her second straight SAG Award for best actress in a comedy in "Orange Is the New Black," didn't address the topic straight on. But she praised creator Jenji Kohan for making "a show that reflects and represents so many people."

For the third time, "Downton Abbey" won best ensemble in a drama series. Best actor in a TV comedy went to Jeffrey Tambor for the acclaimed Amazon series "Transparent." Kevin Spacey won his second SAG Award for "House of Cards" - another win for Netflix on the night. The great comedian Carol Burnett accepted the SAG lifetime achievement award from presenters Tina Fey and Amy Poehler. Recalling the uphill battle she faced, Burnett remembered being warned that "comedy variety is a man's game." She then dramatically shook her head and mouthed: "No." Surveying the room, she concluded with a tug of the ear and her signature phrase: "I'm so glad we had this time together."—AP



Idris Elba poses in the press room with the award for "Beasts of No Nation" and the award for outstanding male actor in a TV movie or miniseries for "Luther".



Sarah Silverman, left, and Jason Bateman present the award for outstanding male actor in a comedy series.



Queen Latifah accepts the award for outstanding female actor in a TV movie or miniseries for "Bessie".



Joe Manganiello, left, and Sofia Vergara arrive at the 22nd annual Screen Actors Guild Awards.



Julian Ovenden, from left, Tom Cullen, Allen Leech, Kevin Doyle, and Jeremy Swift pose in the press room with their awards for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series for "Downton Abbey".



Julianne Moore presents the award for outstanding male actor in a leading role.



Demi Moore presents the award for outstanding cast in a motion picture.



Carol Burnett accepts the Screen Actors Guild life achievement award.



Tina Fey, left, and Amy Poehler present the Screen Actors Guild life achievement award.



Diane Lane, from left, Bryan Cranston and Helen Mirren introduce their film "Trumbo", nominated for best cast in a motion picture.



Viola Davis accepts the award for outstanding female actor in a drama series for "How to Get Away with Murder".



Kristen Wiig, left, and Jon Hamm present the award for outstanding female actor in a comedy series.



Kevin Spacey accepts the award for outstanding male actor in a drama series for "House of Cards".

Lifestyle

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'Spotlight' wins best ensemble at not-so-white SAG Awards

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Ten bright uses of color on the red carpet

Whether the dresses boasted cutouts, sequins or Angelina Jolie-esque slits, color electrified the SAG Awards red carpet. Here are 10 of the night's brightest color purveyors.

- 1) Alicia Vikander:**
The best supporting actress winner and fashion world's latest IT girl wowed in a shimmering Louis Vuitton gown with sequined blocks of color.
- 2) Claire Danes:**
Also playing with color blocking, the "Homeland" star chose a Stella McCartney gown with contrasting shades of blue—which she accessorized with a Tiffany & Co diamond and lapis bracelet, diamond earrings and rings.
- 3) Anna Faris:**
Channeling Old Hollywood glamour, Faris went for a red short-sleeved Naem Khan number with simple diamond studs.
- 4) Uzo Aduba:**
The best comedy actress champ channeled a winner right from the start with this metallic green gown and boxy clutch.
- 5) Lily Rabe:**
Rabe's romantic yellow and white Lela Rose dress, paired with a bold red lip, came straight off the SS16 runway.
- 6) Nicole Kidman:**
The "Grace of Kelly" nominee picked a glitzy pink, lavender and rose metallic Gucci gown with sequin embroidery and trompe l'oeil detailing.
- 7) Sofia Vergara:**
Vergara took her electric pink fitted gown up a notch with a chunky David Webb double scroll necklace and diamond earrings.
- 8) Julianne Moore:**
Moore sure loves to get her sparkle on, as seen here with an iridescent lime number with cutouts—to which she added 25.27-carat Chopard diamond earrings set in platinum, and several diamond rings.
- 9) Laverne Cox:**
Cox chose a whimsical Prabal Gurung gown in a deep red hue, plus delicate Lorraine Schwartz jewelry.
- 10) Brie Larson:**
The "Room" star caught eyes—and the prize-wearing this slit- and cutout-boasting Versace dress in an complementary powder blue color.—Reuters



Christina Ricci



Julianne Moore



Brie Larson



Laverne Cox



Lily Rabe



Uzo Aduba



Anna Faris



Sofia Vergara



Nicole Kidman



Alicia Vikander